

Reminiscences of a Scottish Country Parish.

BY AN OCTOGENARIAN.

For the Review.

I THE PARISH.

It is often said that the aged live in the past, that, while the events of yesterday are almost forgotten ere the next day dawns, the scenes and transactions of early years are as clear to the mental eye and can be recalled as vividly as if they had been seen and enacted but a short time ago. With many of the aged such is doubtless true and the writer is no exception to the general statement. Such being the case he ventures, with the kind permission of the Editor of the REVIEW, to give to its readers from time to time some Reminiscences of a Scottish Country Parish where he spent his boyhood days. He does so in the hope that these reminiscences of by-gone days may be interesting to the older readers of the REVIEW of Scottish parentage or birth, in revising the memories or traditions of their early days, as also to the younger people as they contrast the state of matters in the time and homes of their grandparents with the changes which have taken place during the last three quarters of the century about to close its record.

The parish was a large one and was situated in one of the North East Counties of Scotland. From its inland situation it remained untouched by the tide of advancement which was at the time rapidly spreading over other parts of the country. The central part was some twenty miles from any city or town and as there were no railroads then or influx of summer visitors, the speech and habits and customs of the people were in the beginning of the second quarter of the century much the same as they had been for the preceding fifty years. In its outward features it consisted of hill and dale with some very beautiful and romantic scenery, which attracts crowds of tourists now in the summertime. Within its bounds there were two very ancient castles, one of them long since gone to decay but interesting to many as the home of the maternal ancestors of the famous Lord Byron. The other is a grand baronial pile in good preservation with some of its towers dating from the commencement of the 14th century, with all their traditions of sieges and dungeons and secret chambers, not omitting even its haunted parts, where the ghost of a lady was often seen at the midnight hour. A winding river pervaded the parish, famous for its salmon and its pearls. So abundant was the former at one time that the servants were accustomed to stipulate that they should not at certain seasons have it on their table more than three times in the week, while the largest of the pearls in the Crown of Scotland and in the crozier staff of the Bishop of the Diocese were found in its waters. At one time it must have been largely wooded, as the remains of great oaks and pines were often found embedded in its peat mosses, corroborating the tradition that it had been one of the hunting grounds of the Scottish kings.

The parish was some fourteen miles in length and some eight to ten in breadth, with not much waste land, but pretty thickly settled by a thriving, industrious and simple class of cottars and farmers. At the time to which we refer there were no chapels of ease and no dissenters (with the exception of the Episcopalians) in the parish. All belonged to and attended the parish Kirk on the Sabbath, many travelling long distances on foot. It was not considered lawful to use a horse or conveyance on the Sabbath except at the yearly Communion when the Aged and Infirm were conveyed in carts seated on sacks filled with straw. Since that time two new parishes have been endowed and one chapel of ease in connection with the Established Church, besides a Free Church, while the population has not increased but rather decreased during the past fifty or sixty years, the spiritual oversight and facilities for public worship among the Presbyterian people have increased fourfold. The Kirk and its surroundings will be our next.

Man's Body.

BY A PHYSICIAN.

For the Review.

Whether we believe with the majority of theologians that man was created by a special fiat of the Creator's will, or whether we accept the teaching of leading scientists that man's body is a development from lower forms of animal life, we cannot but believe that

**"Trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home."**

No other work of nature can compare with the human body in the accuracy of its processes, the economy of its workings, the simplicity of its laws, the ingenuity of its mechanism, or in the perfect harmony and co-operation of its several parts. In machinery use is made of upwards of three hundred mechanical movements. All of these are adaptations or modifications of the movements of the human frame-work.

The circulating system, by which the blood supply of the body is distributed, is a system of hydraulics, so perfect, so wonderful, that with all his ingenuity man has never yet even attempted to imitate it. The blood is conveyed to every minute part of the body by means of a mesh-work of capillary blood-vessels which are so uniformly distributed that in no part can the point of the finest needle be inserted without wounding one of these. Through this circulatory system, oxygen, which is so essential to life that without it death ensues in a few minutes, is carried from the lungs throughout the whole system to purify and re-vitalize. The carriers of the oxygen are living organisms, called corpuscles, so small as to be visible only under a microscope, and so numerous that their reddish color gives the characteristic color to the blood. In a teaspoonful of blood there are about 15,000,000 of these. To keep this blood stream in circulation the heart works on steadily, beating about seventy times a minute during the whole of the lifetime of the body. To keep from getting tired it takes a short rest after every beat, and to keep from wearing out it has its own means and power of self-repair.

What keeps the heart going? A conducting wire—a nerve—connects it with a little power-house, a nerve-centre, in the brain. This power-house generates its own electricity. It has an advantage over the power houses that supply our street cars and other machinery: it supplies not only the force which keeps the heart in motion, but also a second force which keeps it from going too fast, thus guarding against accidents. In the conducting nerve-wire there is a separate strand for the conduction of each of these forces.

Wonderful as is the architecture of our bodies more wonderful still are the physiological laws in force in them, and the beneficent devices by which they are protected. He who denies that the natural laws of the human body are the laws of God should first study the physical effects of the ignoring of these laws. Every breach of any one of these laws invariably brings its own punishment. The diseases caused by the abuse of the appetites and passions of the body destroy not only the immediate victims themselves, physically or mentally, but are handed down to the innocent and irresponsible children of succeeding generations. In the United States 60,000 premature graves every year cover over the sad history of that many men and women who sink below the level of the beasts through their degrading appetite for strong drink. In Canada 5,000 similar graves tell every year the same lamentable story.

And what shall be said of that still more deluding form of licentiousness by which men profane their bodies, created to be temples containing the holiest shrines of life, giving them over into the possession of the fiends of carnal lust. The appalling extent to which men and women are the slaves of sensuality is known only to medical men. Christian ministers do not see the more depraved side of life. In their contact with the world the better side of human nature is turned towards them. The other side is concealed. If they could see that other side, as physicians and