

The Young Churchman

"Feed my Lambs."

No. 2.]

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[Original]
Grassdale.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNIVERSALIST.

One Friday towards the close of autumn, and during the absence of Charles Beverly for a day on a visit to a sick friend, some little excitement was created in Grassdale by the appearance of an ill-written, and worse spelled notice on the door of the school-room, which was the great advertising medium of the place. This document set forth that on the following Sunday a sermon would there be preached "by the Rev. Sampson Growler, a Deacon of the Reformed New Connexion, Old Light, Free-will, Remonstrant Universalists,"—the public at large being invited to attend for edification and enlightenment.

Saturday witnessed the arrival of the important personage thus announced who, about noon, entered the village on horse-back, with a capacious brace of leathern bags strapped to his saddle, together with a faded cotton umbrella to protect his broad-brimmed white beaver from the assaults of chance showers.

It must be confessed that Mr. Growler did not present the most prepossessing of conceivable exteriors. He was a short, bandy-legged man, more than *inclined* to obesity, and with a countenance deeply furrowed by small-pox. His eyes, moreover, had a sinister, furtive cast, which prevented him from looking any one steadily in the face, conveying the impression that he did not elish an overly minute scrutiny. To sum up, Mr. Sampson indulged in a pair of huge green spectacles, as much, perchance, to hide the above mentioned defect, as to aid imperfect vision.

The "Reverend" pilgrim having no acquaintances in Grassdale, was somewhat at a loss where to seek quarters for himself and his pack. On surveying the various dwellings within view, that of our friend Beverly attracted his regards, as promising from its exterior recommendations a softer couch and a choicer meal than any of the neighbouring home-steads. Thither, accordingly, the Deacon shaped his course, and in a few minutes was knocking for admission at the door of the selected mansion.

Charles, having by this time returned, answered the summons in person;—and as no one, "gentle or simple," who craved lodging and refreshment at his hands, was ever dismissed, hungry and foot-sore from his threshold, he at once acceded to the request of Sampson, and invited him to enter.

No sooner had the itinerant divested himself of his hat, overcoat, and glasses, than Beverly at once recognised in him an ancient, though by no means cherished acquaintance. Having subsequently learned from Charles a few particulars of his visitor's history, we shall communicate them to our readers, before further following the course of our narration.

Sampson Growler had been apprentice to a respectable shoemaker, in the village where Beverly was brought up. Of an idle, unsettled disposition, his school-days were trifled and frittered away in mischief and folly, so that when he became indentured to Mr. Crispin he could read but little and write less. Young Growler carried his unprofitable habits with him from the classroom to the work-shop—and, save when his master's eye was upon him, seldom applied himself with industrious fidelity to the duties of his calling. He feared not God, and