

In addition to this class of highly talented and cruelly suppressed preachers, there is another of a kindred stamp, and one more numerous still. There is that multitudinous species of amiable, accomplished, and judicious hearers, who feel themselves abundantly qualified to teach the preacher how to do his work. What a pity that professors' chairs are not more numerous, seeing that the number of persons who believe themselves well adapted to the training of preachers is so great, and can find no proper scope for the exercise of their peculiar gifts!

The kind of criticism to which preaching is often subjected, presents a mine of wealth, out of which, if properly and energetically wrought, our Joe Millers and Dean Ramsays might soon make fortunes. We are all acquainted with the lady, who has not the presumption to understand her favorite preacher, and the gentlemen in whose eyes clear thinking and clear statement are evidences of shallowness, and the simplicity of genius a proof of intellectual weakness. We are quite aware of those literary tastes, to which euphonious polysyllables are so very palatable—of that admiration of scholarship, which grammars and lexicons alone can gratify—of that love for deep thinking to which mists, and clouds, and labyrinths are so attractive. We know that there are lively imaginations to which the boldest metaphors are not too bold, and lovers of the sentimental who never tire of stars and oceans, mountains and cataracts, bulwarks and battlements, however unceremoniously they may be introduced to notice, and we know the penalty of failing to meet these varied wants. One man allows his thoughts to be occupied during sermon, with his business or his pleasures, and then complains that he has not been edified; another is dissatisfied, because the text has not been explained, in accordance with some principle of interpretation, which in his wisdom he has seen meet to adopt; and a third is filled with great indignation, because the discourse has not been constructed on some peculiar plan, which he happens to admire. Even on a matter so small as the fashionable pronunciation of a few insignificant words, the fame and the fate of the preacher, are often suspended. With such and similar kinds of criticism preachers have been conversant from time immemorial, and have learned to bear the infliction without any loud complaint; but it would appear from some signs of the times, that their powers of endurance in this respect are destined, through the wonderful enlightenment of the nineteenth century, to be still further taxed.

* * * * *

As to this outcry about preaching, we beg leave to remark, in the first place, that we do not believe in the reality of the alleged

grievance. We cannot help thinking that our pulpit reformers must have been very unfortunate, as hearers of the Gospel. If sermons are preached in which there is nothing new, in thought or argument, illustration or phraseology, in which there is nothing but harrowing descriptions of the sinner's doom, in which the discoveries of science and the results of sacred criticism, are entirely ignored,—and these some would have the world to believe are the leading characteristics of Scottish preaching,—if sermons of this stamp are preached, then those who are compelled to listen to them are very much to be pitied, and far be it from us to treat their complaint with levity. Such preaching must be very injurious to the moral, the spiritual, and even the intellectual nature, of all on whom it is inflicted. We do not believe, however, that such descriptions are applicable to the Scottish pulpit. They do not certainly apply to the church with which we are connected, and we have no wish in this matter to think ourselves superior to other denominations. Even on a mere superficial view of the case, there is much that is fitted to make a reflecting mind, question the reality of the evil complained of. Look at the antecedents and the circumstances of the men who fill the pulpits of Scotland. It is well known that, as a general rule, it is only when young men show a taste and an aptitude, for intellectual pursuits, that they either think of studying for the ministry, or are encouraged by their friends to do so.—It is well known that every Presbyterian preacher—despised though many of them be, must have passed through an intellectual ordeal, which many of our most successful men in other walks of life, could not have stood. We hear it sometimes insinuated that there exists a species of highland smuggling, by means of which some have found their way into the pulpit who could not have otherwise succeeded; but no one surely will venture to assert that it exists to such an extent as to have any perceptible effect on the general character of ministerial qualifications. As an equipoise to this, it may be mentioned that it is no uncommon thing to see a youth who has passed unscathed through a college curriculum, kept back from the pulpit, in consequence of intellectual deficiency, by an obscure country presbytery. It is well known that the ordinary recreations of ministers, are of a literary stamp. They find their balls and concerts, in the magazine and the review. They read the newspapers, and are usually well posted up in politics. They strive to keep ahead of the times in their acquaintance with science and sacred literature. There are not many of them, so far behind as not to be able to tell you something about Darwin, and Colenso, and Renan, and give their