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"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Ps. 137, v.5.

Encourage your Minister.

BY REV. ALEXANDER CLARK.

There is just about as much human nature in ministers as in any other class of men, and they would be good for nothing if there were any less. They are sensitive to heat and cold, physically and spiritually, as other folks. They understand the meaning of a smile or a frown quite as well as persons of other vocations do. Hence the advice we volunteer to-day.

Perhaps no other men have so many conflicting elements, such contradictory impulses, to deal with as ministers. They must hear the interior histories of domestic troubles, and of individual wrong-doing, and must go and come at the call of ecclesiastical council, or of unknown hearers, at any time, on any business, under any circumstances. Not an hour is absolutely their own for self or family. They must adjust their pastoral visits, their private words, and their public recognitions, just exactly by form and figure, so that there shall be no possible chance for critics and eavesdroppers to accuse them of partiality; and they must know every particular virtue of every particular member of the Church, so that, in the event of a funeral, it may be rehearsed and commented upon without the discount of any conceivable mistake. *They*, the ministers, must be the subjects of perpetual parlor twaddle, and the subjects of their sermons the last imaginable themes to practice upon in life. Their wives must do exactly so and so, and go here and yonder precisely as some sanctified sister points. Their children

must move and talk gracefully as young angels, with garments neat and bright as theirs. Their relatives must all be sound in the faith, fashionable in their apparel, and sparing in their calls. Such is the programme which prevailing custom prints from the plate of stereotyped orthodoxy.

Now, a minister who engages in his profession under this system of restraints and exactions, more than any other man, needs your encouragement, if you are his friend. He needs the warm sunshine of your smiles to beam through the clouds that sentimental professionalism has begloomed him in. Then meet him as a natural man, made of the same stuff that is worked up into ordinary sinners. Don't put on your holy face, and draw out some monotonous grievance or distress, merely because you are talking to the minister. Don't be afraid that he'll strike your name from the Church register, or that it will be blotted out of the Lamb's Book of Life, if you chance to introduce some other topic of conversation than the languishing state of the Church. If you meet your pastor, it is not at all necessary that you should inform him that somebody didn't like his last sermon; or that somebody else said he was partial in his visits, or that somebody else said that he heard somebody tell somebody else that the congregations were not so large as they used to be. Don't worry yourself lest the minister shouldn't hear all the little buzzing insectarianisms that may be noised about; don't look solemn, and say, with a sigh,—“ Things aren't like they formerly were; ” “ Something's wrong in our Church; ” “ Our prayer-meeting isn't as interesting as our neighbors' ; ” and all such nega-