

ende to Heaven, that she should have been granted life enough to witness her son's promotion to a charge, which, in her eyes, was more honourable and desirable than an Episcopal see—heard her chalk out the life which they were to lead together in the humble independence which had thus fallen on him—he heard all this; and had no power to crush her hopes and her triumph by the indulgence of his own romantic feelings. He almost mechanically through the usual forms, and was inducted into the living of St. Ronan.

As old age rendered her inactive, she began to regret the incapacity of her son to superintend his own household, and talked something of matrimony, and the mysteries of the muckle wheel. To these admonitions Mr. Cargill returned only slight and evasive answers; and when the old lady slept in the village church-yard, at a reverend old age, there was no one to perform the office of superintendent in the minister's family. Neither did Josiah Cargill seek for any, but patiently submitted to all the evils with which a bachelor state is attended, and which were at least equal to those which beset the renowned Mago-Pico during his state of celibacy. His butter was ill churned, and declared by all but himself and the quean who made it, altogether unentable; his milk was burnt in the pan, his fruit and vegetables were stolen, and his black stockings mended with blue and white thread.

Every hour that he could spare from his parochial duties, which he discharged with zeal honourable to his heart and head, was devoted to his studies, and spent among his books. But this chase of wisdom, though in itself interesting and dignified, was indulged to an excess which diminished the respectability, nay, the utility, of the devoted student; and he forgot, amid the luxury of deep and dark investigations, that society has its claims; and that the knowledge which is unimparted, is necessarily a barren talent, and is lost to society, like the miser's concealed hoard, by the death of the proprietor. His studies also were under the additional disadvantage, that, being pursued for the gratification of a desultory longing after knowledge, and directed to no determined object, they turned on points rather curious than useful; and while they served for the amusement of the student himself, promised little utility to mankind at large.

Bewildered amid abstruse researches, metaphysical and historical, Mr. Cargill, living only for himself and his books, acquired many ludicrous habits, which expose the secluded student to the ridicule of the world, and which tinged, though they did not altogether obscure, the natural civility of an amiable disposition, as well as the acquired habits of politeness which he had learned in the good society that frequented Lord Bidmore's mansion. He not only indulged in neglect of dress and appearance, and all those ungainly tricks which men are apt to acquire by living very much alone; but besides, and especially, he became probably the most abstracted and absent man of a profession peculiarly liable to cherish such habits. No man fell so regularly into the painful dilemma of mistaking, or, in Scottish phrase, *miskennin* the person he spoke to, or more frequently inquired at an old maid after her husband, at a childless wife after her young people, at the distressed widower after the wife at whose funeral he himself had assisted but a fortnight before; and none was ever more familiar with strangers whom he had never seen, or seemed more estranged from those who had a title to think themselves well known to him. The worthy man perpetually confounded sex, age, and calling; and when a blind beggar extended his hand for charity, he has been known to return the civility by taking off his hat, making a low bow, and hoping his worship was well.

Although the length of our extracts may afford the captious an opportunity to cavil, instead of offering any excuse, we only wish they may increase a desire to peruse the work among such as have not yet seen it; and that they may feel as much enjoyment from it as we have. In the selection of them we have indulged our partiality for what we consider the most striking and beautiful qualification in this author, namely his delineation of character.

The plot of *St. Ronan's Well* may be briefly detailed. Francis Tyrrel, and Valentine Bulmer Tyrrel are the sons of Lord Etherington. The first the offspring of a secret marriage, entered into when abroad.