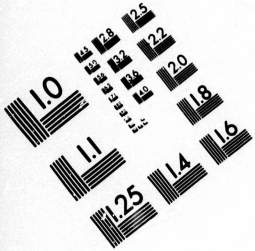

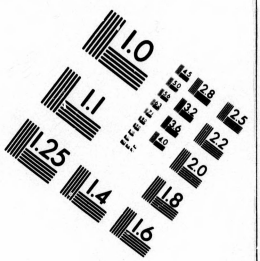

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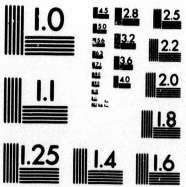

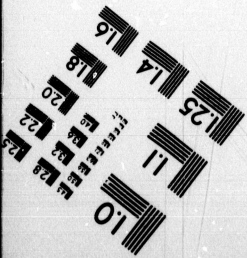

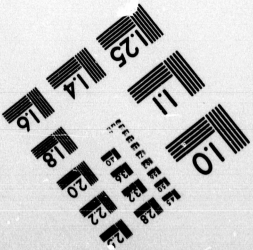

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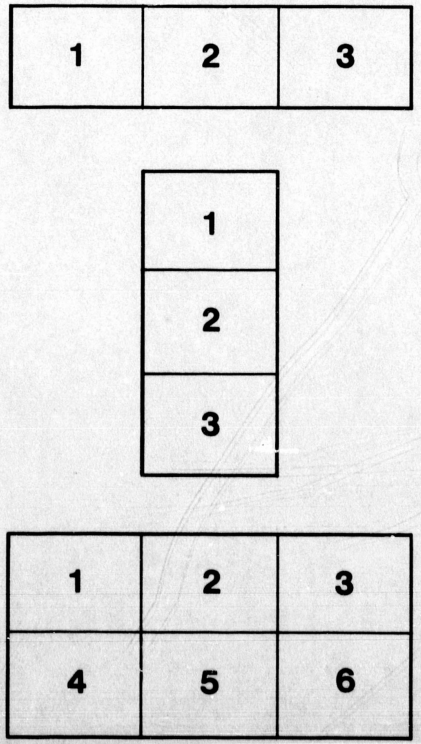

Dr. Gerard
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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

OF

CLERICAL LIFE.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM CHEETHAM.

"To serve God and love Him is higher and better than happiness, though it be with wounded feet, and bleeding brow, and hearts loaded with sorrow."—ENIGMAS OF LIFE.

"Troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."—PAUL.

Montreal:
LOVELL PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO.
1879.

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine, by WILLIAM CHEETHAM, in the office of the Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa.

PREFACE.

THE following pages have been written during an inevitable temporary cessation of stated ministerial labor, and in the sincere hope that they may do some good, and in some humble measure further the interests of truth, and promote the glory of God.

Of the merits of the work the Author has nothing to say, except that he has done his best to produce something not entirely void of interest and instruction. His object has been to keep within the limits of charity, truth, and probable fact. "To hold" (in this particular department of life) "as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

That certain weaknesses are inherent in all Christian organizations, and that certain abuses have crept into the Church, the most superficial observer,

if he has any candor, will freely admit. Some of these are freely dealt with in the light of reason, principle and Scripture.

In delineating character, and in reading such delineations, two things should guide writer and reader alike,—truth and charity.

That there is a wide difference, in many points, in human nature and actual life, all must freely admit. At the same time we should remember that our knowledge of men is necessarily fragmentary and imperfect. Some very good people might not appear so good if we knew them better, and some whose characters are not so attractive may be much better than our surface knowledge of them reveals.

It is a consolatory reflection that the final judgment, in relation to all human affairs, is in the hands of One who combines perfect knowledge with the most impartial justice and the tenderest mercy.

BROCKVILLE, Ontario, 1879.

Lights and Shadows of Clerical Life.

CHAPTER I.

Paul Vincent—Bewdley College—The sweating process—The Professors—First experience in Candidating—Tanborough—The extending of a call discouraged for certain reasons, both wise and sufficient.

PAUL VINCENT was within six months of the completion of his college curriculum. He had been several years in one of those institutions which undertake to educate, almost gratuitously, promising young men for the Ministry. He had gone through an extended course of study, the final examination was passed with honors, and now he was calmly looking forward, and trying to get a glimpse of the dim, uncertain future. Strain his mental vision as he might, he could not cast the horoscope of his future destiny, and no friendly Sibyl was at hand to help him out of his difficulty. He did not then realize so vividly as afterwards how wise and beneficent is that arrangement which hides the future from us. Had he been able to see what he so much desired he might have sunk down

in utter dismay at the prospect, so manifold were the difficulties of the way which Providence had marked out for him.

He was not of a sanguine temperament; was nervous, sensitive, and somewhat foreboding; liable to expect trial, and anticipate difficulty; but he was endowed with a strong will, a good deal of self-control, and great patience. His natural and acquired capabilities for the work to which he had consecrated his life were above the average. He had an indomitable love of truth for its own sake, and duty was to him as precious and sacred as life. Although not void of ambition, it was by no means dominant in him, and it was subordinated to the accomplishment of a higher will than his own. What the All-Wise meant him to be and to do he desired above all else. Still he did not contemplate as by any means beyond the range of possibility that he might attain considerable eminence and distinguished usefulness. The day-dreams of youth had their way with him, like other mortals of his class. He was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and great self-denial and perseverance were required to attain his present position. He, therefore, expected a fuller and wider exercise of these qualities in the future.

The Seminary building, in which he was acquiring his preparatory education, and whose classical

precincts he was destined in a few months to leave, was situated on the summit of a hill. It was a fine commodious stone edifice, built very recently, and opened on the day of his entrance. The architecture was Gothic, and the noble pile of solid masonry was certainly very imposing. Its grounds, of seven acres, were laid out with great taste and artistic finish. In the centre of the building were the library, of considerable dimensions; the lecture hall, where all the literary and theological skinning was periodically done; the dining hall, capable of seating about fifty, and the private apartments of the Professors, and class rooms. The cooking and gossiping region was in the rear, in close proximity to the kitchen garden and the wood and coal supply. The wings contained fifty-two small rooms, two of which, a dormitory and a study, were allotted to each student. At the base of the hill upon which this classical edifice stood a small river meandered through countless acres of well cultivated land; the railway horse snorted and puffed and ploughed its way a little beyond; and the smoke of countless chimneys, rising out of two great manufacturing towns in the distance, added a sombre coloring, but did not destroy the beauty of the scene.

About two miles in the rear might be found the small straggling village of Bewdley, from which the college took its name, and whose principal object of

interest was an old church, which dated back to troublous times; where a good man preached, and where the students were expected to attend, once or twice, every Sabbath. Sometimes they had to preach, to assist the good man, whose health was failing. This was always looked upon by them as a very trying ordeal. Why? Because their fellow students were there, with their newly sharpened wits, ready for a complete dissection of the body of the sermon; and the Professors were present, able, if they were so disposed, to cut even to the joints and marrows. As might be expected, under such circumstances, it was a sweating process, and confusion worse confounded was the order of the day. There was one source of satisfaction, however; as each one had to take his turn in this duty, it necessarily become the fortune of each to be at one time the subject of dissection, and at another the dissector. For every time that one had to endure the knife, he had the ultimate satisfaction of using it twenty times upon his fellows. This was grim satisfaction, but it was satisfying nevertheless.

The Professors, three in number, were men of consequence and note.

The President was a thorough out and out theological John Bull. He was a fine, fatherly, staunch old fellow; hale and hearty, though in the sere and yellow leaf; passionately and fondly attached to

the young men under his care; dignified as a general, yet compassionate and tender; careful of his own reputation, and equally careful of that of others; ravenously fond of Hebrew roots, and the Hebrew Bible was the breath of his life. He could speak sternly to his students about their little weaknesses and follies; but woe be to the man who attempted the same operation in his presence. He would defend them, through thick and thin, when anybody else began to pick holes, and find fault in them.

The Resident and Classical Professor was a man of an entirely different stamp. He was much younger, rather feminine, more of a gentleman than a man. He was very learned, and very fond of books. He could write anything from a critical dissertation on the "Babes in the Wood" to one equally critical on the Greek article. In class, he could stretch out his critical paw, and crush a poor unthinking mortal with the stealthy strength and suddenness of a tiger. His questions were not always intended to elicit the actual knowledge of the pupil of the question in hand; they too often had the apparent intention of inviting defeat, and producing discomfiture. Many a face "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" has become suddenly the very picture of health in his presence, but the blanch that has followed has been fearful to behold. Still the smooth-coated tiger would come again,

until his prey would fairly gasp for breath, and wish to sink under the floor, to escape from that relentless presence. This, however, was a vain wish. The floor would not open and give him a welcome subterranean embrace. Both the man and the hour were there, and he must abide both until the dinner bell rings, and then the torture is over. He was not a bad man; he was a good man taken as a whole. He had immense erudition, but he was not great. His sensibilities did not seem to extend far beyond himself. It was a serious flaw in an otherwise good character, that a self-forced exhibition of the difference between his own vast acquirements and the slender information of others should be a source of transient gratification to him.

The Assistant Professor was a Goliath in stature; tall, broad, stout, and with a countenance open and manly; but with two eyes, deeply sunk in their sockets, which somewhat marred the general expression. He was emphatically a good man, and a good-natured man, but when that is said the description is about complete. He was not overburdened with classic lore, but he had sense enough to know it, and honesty enough not to wish to pass for what he was not. He did not shine as a classic, but he did shine as a man. There was an innate modesty in him which tended to make his mental diminutiveness still more apparent; but he did his work kindly,

considerately, manfully, conscientiously, and up to the full measure of his capacity.

It was under these gentlemen, of such opposite temperaments and qualifications, that Paul Vincent had been drilled for some years. He had profited by the instructions of his tutors, and was well-nigh ready for his work; but where he was to go, or where to settle, was yet an unsolved problem.

One morning he received a letter containing an invitation to spend his last short vacation, occurring about Christmas time, with a church in the large provincial town of Tanborough. This place afforded a possible opening for a settlement, and therefore he took care to preach his best sermons, that they might produce the desired effect in that direction,—a proceeding of doubtful wisdom, truly, but, as it is practised by older and, should be, wiser men, it need not be severely condemned in so young a man. He was anxious to produce a good impression, laudable enough in itself, and secure a footing and beginning in so important a sphere. The town had a large population, mostly of the middle and working classes; had immense manufactories, whose chimneys spouted large volumes of smoke, causing dimness to reign everywhere, and obscuring the rays of the sun; and boasted the possession of the largest enclosed market in the county.

The church was a solid square brick building,

not by any means elegant or imposing, nor in an elegant situation. It was situated in what was technically called a lane, but it was a lane of more than usual width, being about thirty yards wide.

If the exterior of this ecclesiastical structure was uninviting, the interior was more so. It was quite, or nearly, square, with a deep gallery running right across at one end, a pulpit with more the appearance of a medium-sized puncheon than anything else, a large square space for the choir below, and high-backed pews which seemed formed to invite the worshippers to sleep. In this place for three successive Sundays the young preacher had to pour forth his sonorous eloquence, the effect, or non-effect, of which was to decide whether he was a fit and proper person to become pastor of the flock worshipping there. His success was far beyond his expectations. It soon began to be whispered abroad by the knowing ruling few that Mr. Vincent was evidently the coming man; that under his regular ministrations the congregation would soon outgrow the old edifice; that a new and larger one would have to be built, etc.

Paul, although a young man, was not of a sanguine temperament, and he was not carried away with the rising tide of enthusiasm and rosy expectation, but he nevertheless kept his thoughts to himself; he did the thinking while others were

doing the talking. Some things regarding the past history of the Tanborough church had come to his knowledge which were anything but satisfactory or re-assuring. He happened to know, from indubitable evidence, that it had an established reputation for getting rid of pastors more expeditiously and less ceremoniously, than it got them. He, therefore, wisely made up his mind to regulate his movements with extreme caution—knowing that, if he commenced his ministerial career with a church that might suddenly turn round and manifest a diposition to kick him out, his prospects for the future would not be improved.

The vacation came to an end, and he returned to his academical retreat. He had not been back two weeks before he received an invitation to preach in the same place two Sundays more. This he promptly declined, and for two reasons. First, because his small stock of sermons was well-nigh run out; and second and mainly, because he had in the meantime made up his mind that it was better not to give any encouragement to the extending of a call which, judging from his present feelings, he would probably decline. Some reverend gentlemen pursue the opposite course; they resort to all sorts of petty artifices to encourage calls, with no intention of accepting them, but simply using them to create and bolster up a fictitious importance and reputation.

A discerning public may be left to judge whether such a course is honorable, or worthy of honorable men.

Upon the receipt of Mr. Vincent's letter, declining, very courteously but firmly, to visit the church again, a letter was received in a few days, explaining to him the reasons for their wishing to have a further hearing of two Sundays. The writer explained, at considerable length, that there was an almost universal appreciation of his personal qualities, and his abilities as a preacher; that, at the meeting held to consider the extending of a call, there was not a dissentient voice; that a vote to extend the call was moved, seconded, and would undoubtedly have been carried unanimously, but that the chairman, who was no other than himself, at this juncture interposed, and recommended a little further consideration and delay. For what reason? Because a city gentleman of considerable repute had declared that, as a church, they had, in the past, shown less discretion and care in the choice of a pastor than he was accustomed to bestow upon the selection of a domestic servant. Having this very caustic remark in view, and smarting somewhat under its influence, they wished to be so deliberate in this case as to ensure a better character for circumspection in the future. This was no doubt a laudable wish; and it was especially complimentary to the candidate, that

the further trial which was desired was simply a ceremonious concession to outside opinion, and not a distrust of his suitability and powers. His mind, however, was made up, and he saw no adequate reason for changing it. He, however, visited the church once more, to show that the attitude he had assumed, adverse to their wishes, was not regulated by ill-will but by sound judgment.

CHAPTER II.

Paul Vincent receives an invitation to visit Shepherdston—Second experience in Candidating—Mortimer Shelburne, Esq.—His eminent qualifications—Travelling experiences—The little Shelburnes—The old church—A ride in a one horse chaise with a model Deacon—A model call respectfully declined.

A FEW weeks after the closing of the correspondence with the church in Tanborough, Mr. Vincent received the following letter:

SHEPHERDSTON, *March* 13, 18—

MR. PAUL VINCENT,

Bewdley College.

DEAR SIR,—I have been duly informed by a reliable and worthy gentleman of my acquaintance that your academical studies are drawing to a close. I presume, therefore, you are now contemplating the time when you will, with much emotion and a deep feeling of responsibility, commence your life-work. The church in Shepherdston has been, unfortunately, without an under-shepherd for some time. The friends are desirous of supplying this great want as soon as possible. I am, therefore, earnestly requested to invite you to supply the pulpit for two Sabbaths. May the Lord direct both you and us. I remain,

My dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

MORTIMER SHELBURNE.

This letter was somewhat of a surprise, but it was duly considered, and in a short time an acquiescent reply was duly despatched.

Mr. Mortimer Shelburne was what is called, in some church circles, a head deacon. That is, he reigned supreme in the Shepherdston church community. It was his special prerogative and business to rule everybody in the church—the pastor included. From his oracular decision, in any matter, there could possibly be no appeal. His will was law. Not that these monstrous doctrines were openly promulgated, or that these prerogatives were openly arrogated by the good deacon. These assumptions of power were not openly proclaimed, but they were silently acquiesced in by the great body of the community. They had somehow come to the conclusion that Deacon Shelburne knew a great deal more than they did about things in general, and church affairs in particular; that he gave a great deal more than anybody else to the support of the cause, according to his means; that he never missed a prayer meeting, not even when there was sickness in his family, or when he had the toothache himself; that, in short, he was the life and soul, bones and marrow, of the whole concern; and what could they do without him? No one was better qualified than he to drop a gentle admonition to the pastor about the necessity of not

being conformed to this world; and he could labor with erring brethren, and bring them back to repentance and a more consistent life. He also could "carry the bag," but in a much nobler and purer spirit than his illustrious predecessor, who, stung with guilty remorse, went out and hanged himself.

Not the least important of his qualifications was the nice, conscientious, and perfectly clean, way he had of performing very disagreeable duties. If, for instance, his keen scent told him that the cause was failing, and that "Zion" was languishing, and that great dissatisfaction was spreading on every side, he could inform the pastor, with tears in his eyes, that a change was inevitable and desirable. He had seen this dark, inauspicious cloud rising for some time, but he had hoped it might pass over, and leave a clear sky; but instead of that it deepened, and must soon burst in torrents of resistless fury. He therefore felt it to be his solemn and sorrowful duty to adjure his dear pastor "to escape for his life, and stay not in all the plain." If the church was vacant, and a pastor was to be settled, he took a leading part in the business. If a candidate for the position was before them, no one thought it prudent or necessary to express an opinion until Deacon Shelburne had had his say, and given his verdict. Thus by long, patient working, overground and underground, he had, by general consent, acquired a prescriptive right to have

his own way. It was the general opinion, founded upon many years of close observation and experience, that the good deacon would have his way; and that he was so spiritually-minded, and gifted with so much humility, that he couldn't see how the church could succeed, unless on all occasions he was permitted to prevail.

This much being premised, it will be readily understood why the invitation to Mr. Vincent, to supply the church in Shepherdston for two Sundays, came from Deacon Shelburne. Who else could know that Mr. Vincent was open to such an invitation, and a likely candidate for the office of pastor? Who else would dare to take upon himself such grave responsibility? Who else was likely to know, in advance, by the very handwriting of the young academician, and the terms in which he addressed his superiors in social status, what kind of a man he was? Who else was so deeply concerned for the welfare of the Shepherdston Zion?

Mr. Vincent not only accepted the invitation with alacrity, but he soon put himself in a position to fill the engagement. He was to be in the Shepherdston pulpit on the following Sunday, and he must contrive to be at his destination on the Saturday, at least. He packed his valise, taking special care to put his sermons among his clean linen, as they—the linen and the sermons—would be required almost simul-

taneously. Fifteen minutes brisk walking brought him to the railway station, at which he took his ticket for Framingham, one of the principal manufacturing towns in that part of the country. Arrived in Framingham about 9 o'clock p.m., it was a necessary part of his programme to stay there the night, and leave by an early train on the morrow for Shepherdston, which he hoped to reach about 4 o'clock p.m. He stayed the night at a Temperance Hotel. The real, though not the ostensible, reason for his selection of such a place was, that the state of his exchequer necessitated temperance, on his part, in every possible acceptation of that word. He retired to rest supperless, because he had a conscientious, pecuniary objection to taking supper. He rose very early the next morning, feeling somewhat chilly, drowsy, and, if it must be confessed, creepy. He found himself exactly at six o'clock a.m. seated in a large airy carriage,—especially airy,—with a ticket in his side pocket, which had been issued to him upon the distinct understanding that he should be put down, all safe and sound, in Shepherdston, precisely in ten hours. It was that kind of a raw cold morning, peculiar to that part of the country, which makes the flesh creep, and the nerves quiver. He felt the cold keenly, coming as it did from certain open windows, which some accommodating people would insist upon keeping open, to let, as they said, the

fresh air in. Like a true philosopher, as he could not bring his circumstances and surroundings to his mind, he brought his mind to his circumstances. To improve matters, the train in which he was being whirled along at the rate of something over ten miles an hour had the eccentric habit, common to its class, of shunting off, for indefinite periods, in particular out-of-the-way places. As there was nothing particular to see outside except a stray cow or sheep, it was necessarily very dreary and monotonous work. Exactly to the minute, however, at 4 o'clock p.m., the train drew up at Shepherdston, and Paul Vincent, valise in hand, and feeling very cold, alighted. Rubbing his eyes, and looking about for the purpose of taking a deliberate view of his whereabouts, he was somewhat chagrined to find that Shepherdston was not in his immediate visual proximity. He began to think that, possibly, he had been made the dupe of a pious, but cruel hoax. He made some enquiries, however, and was soon relieved of his temporary perplexity by the assurance that Shepherdston was about a mile and a half from the station, in a north-easterly direction. Thither he quickly bent his steps. He had a conscientious objection to taking a cab, which might have kept his boots clean, and saved him much trouble and annoyance—for the same cogent reason which influenced him to refrain from supper the preceding night. As he was neces-

situated to commence the journey upon temperance principles, he thought he would be artistically consistent, and end it on the same.

Shepherdston was a small country town, having a population of about nine thousand, composed mostly of small tradesmen and very poor people. Its architectural pretensions were not great. It had the appearance of a triangle considerably elongated, with shops ranged on two sides and one end, and the market house dumped down in the middle. The miller, the maltster, the draper, the banker, the grocer, the apothecary, a retired clergyman, and Mortimer Shelburne, were the chief magnates of the place. To the residence of the last-named gentleman Paul Vincent wended his way. He was received graciously, and due enquiry was made as to his health, which enquiry was duly answered by the bland and polite affirmation, that it was never better than now. He was ceremoniously introduced to Mrs. Shelburne, a stout, rosy, matronly lady, with a winsome, open countenance, and also to the little Shelburnes, of whom there were about ten. These latter were very hearty, but somewhat unmethodical, in their demonstrations of delight at the appearance of the new preacher. They kissed him, and pulled his fine flowing locks, in which he took great pride; trod upon his new boots and corns; whirled round him, catching hold of the tails of his fine new frock coat, which by

these youthful antics ran the risk of being torn to tatters. He heard a crack once or twice, which sent the conscious blood to his cheeks, fearful of a broadcloth wreck, which his slender finances would scarcely be adequate to repair. He took all in good humor, however, and praised the children, which of course he was expected to do; declaring that they were fine, healthy, good-looking children and exact fac-similes of their progenitors.

Mortimer Shelburne has appeared in these pages, as yet, only in his official character. What he was as a man, and what his outward appearance, have not yet been touched upon. A few words will suffice. He was tall, lean, wiry, with twinkling downcast eyes, and a complexion the exact tint of a tallow candle. He was shrewd, intelligent, and nervous. He had the undoubted opinion that Mortimer Shelburne was equal, if not superior, to anybody, and everybody, and somebody else, besides. Place a suit of gray cloth on a bean pole, and the description is complete.

The church in which Mr. Vincent was expected to preach on the morrow was situated a little outside of the triangle. It was built, doubtless, many years before the triangle was thought of. A narrow gateway, and a perfectly smooth path, led to this ecclesiastical structure. On either side of the path there was a long stretch of green sward, dotted

in the spring time with buttercups and daisies, and adorned with a weeping willow here and there. The uneven surface showed plainly that many were there lowly laid in the quiet sepulchre of rest who had fretted their little life upon the stage, and passed away to another, and let us hope a better world.

The church, which was very old and very dilapidated, had a unique appearance. The main part of the building, which was the church proper, was of brick, and almost square; low roofed, and with small windows through which the light had to struggle for an entrance. A school room, which was evidently an after-thought and an after-growth, stood in the closest proximity on the north side, and on the north of that a small parsonage. The interior of the church was, if possible, still more unique. A deep gallery at one end and running along the two sides, with a big hole knocked through the wall on the north side, to utilize the upper school room for the accommodation of worshippers when occasion required. There was a veritable box of a pulpit, which required leanness in the man who entered; a small window on each side, which, with the additional ingenious contrivance of a sort of glass bird cage in the centre of the roof, afforded the only means for lighting the edifice. Truly it was a dim, religious light.

In this peculiar building, commonly called a church, Paul Vincent was to "hold forth" two Sabbaths. The day came, the hour, and the man. As he entered the pulpit all eyes were fixed upon him. The youthful aspirant for office was closely scanned from every nook and corner in the quaint edifice. Knowing nods and almost imperceptible winks were exchanged on every side. His first words—"Let us pray"—uttered in a deep bass voice, produced a visible effect, and all heads instinctively bowed before that Majesty, which is so intangible and yet so real. He read the grand old hymns with deep feeling, and the Scriptures with that just emphasis which is said to be the best commentary. He preached to them, with the fervor worthy of a Melancthon, of a living Christ, of a dying Christ, of the nails, and the spear, and "the side from whence flowed blood and water," and of that infinite compassion which could suffer so much and forgive so much simultaneously. That he did not exert his youthful powers in vain was sufficiently evidenced by audible sobs and streaming eyes, and now and then a devout amen, which would not be repressed. The effect was a full attestation of his sincerity and powers, and he was abundantly worthy of so gratifying a result. He was poor in worldly substance, but he had a clear head, a pure soul, an unwavering faith, and a warm heart, which enshrined a mine of wealth, every separate

coin of which bore the image and superscription of the Great King.

The Shepherdston community in general, and Mortimer Shelburne in particular, were so well pleased with the services rendered by Mr. Vincent for the two Sabbaths, that they condescended to invite him to remain two Sabbaths more. It is almost needless to say that he accepted the invitation readily, fully assured, in his own mind, that the further trial would deepen the favorable impression already made. He discoursed with the same simple, fervid eloquence which characterized his previous efforts. He visited the sick and the dying, comforted the mourner, and helped the poor and needy, as far as his slender finances would admit. He gratefully accepted all the kind attentions and hospitalities which were so freely tendered him. The "head deacon" was very affable, and was so condescending as to take him for a ride in his one-horse chaise, showing him the country round, and explaining the various objects of interest, archæological and otherwise, that were met with. He also dwelt with much emotion and rare amplitude upon the original powers and brilliant qualities of the previous beloved pastor of the church, who was with them so many years, and whose loss they all deeply deplored. He had worked well with the pastor, and the pastor had worked well with him, and it was the de-

lightful conviction of both that one was a model pastor, and the other a model deacon. They had always understood each other perfectly, and together they had pulled the church gloriously and smoothly along. They never differed about who was to be the head, inasmuch as they had a perfect understanding by which the honor of the post was divided equitably between them. The pastor was nominally the head, he really so, and both were satisfied. This was an admirable arrangement, and, in the profound judgment of the deacon, was absolutely necessary to the welfare of any church.

What could Paul Vincent say in reply to all this astute reasoning? Not much. Like most young men of his class, he had much book-learning, and little worldly wisdom. He supposed that every man was strictly straightforward and honest, because he was so himself. The great world of intrigue and deceit he had not yet entered, and was not even aware of its existence. He did not know much of the actual working of churches, but he had some knowledge, which he owed to his faithful tutors, of those divine principles upon which churches are supposed to be founded. He therefore ventured, humbly and reverentially, to suggest that some of the propositions laid down by the good deacon were not in exact accordance with New Testament polity. Ah! young man, better and wiser would it have

been for you to have bitten your tongue through, than have uttered, however deferentially, such sentiments in such a presence.

The deacon fell into a profound silence, relieved only here and there, by a casual, meaningless remark. He was evidently rapt in the contemplation of the beauties of nature, which had before escaped his attention. He was a little cold and shy. Mr. Vincent noticed the difference, but he attributed it to any and every cause except the true one. He thought he had a slight attack of colic, and the appearance of the good deacon's face gave a coloring of probability to such a supposition; or, if not that, some prospective and difficult business transaction—such as meeting a note for a considerable amount in three days—might be occupying his mind, and causing him to be nervous and silent; or, which was the likeliest supposition, but his travelling companion did not think of it, he might be revolving in his massive brain some deep-laid scheme, the execution of which should avert threatening difficulties, and secure the perpetual welfare of the Shepherdston Zion. . . . The one-horse chaise arrived at last in front of Mortimer Shelburne's residence, and Paul Vincent took his temporary leave of that gentleman, and retired to his temporary lodgings. It was his first ride in that memorable one-horse chaise, and it proved to be the last.

There were other men of note in that community besides the "head deacon." The apothecary combined in himself three men, and in his business three distinct departments of worldly dealing. He was a semi-doctor, consulted by the poor, who could not afford the services of a regular practitioner. He was a dispenser of drugs, which was his legitimate calling, and he was a printer.

The miller was a rosy-faced, chubby little fellow, nearly as round as a ball. He was always good-tempered, and on the best of terms with himself and everybody else. He was an enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Vincent; thought he was the right man in the right place; was exceedingly well pleased with him, as indeed he was with everybody. Miller was his name and miller was his trade, and a good smiling soul he was.

The draper was a little consequential, but very urbane and pleasant. He had good possessions to boast of, a charming wife, a beautiful daughter, a promising son, and a good paying business. He and all his were deeply attached to Mr. Vincent.

The retired clergyman had in his day been "a burning and shining light" in the Shepherdston pulpit, and, after passing through much tribulation, had prudently retired. He was advancing considerably in years, and the sun was getting a little too hot for him. He had a good living, however, provid-

ed by the indefatigable industry of his noble wife, whose appearance was as regal as a queen's. They endorsed Mr. Vincent's candidature very fervently.

So far all things seemed favorable to the youthful aspirant. His abilities were of no mean order, and they were recognized and appreciated. He was beloved by all classes. There was every outward appearance of the utmost unanimity of opinion and feeling in the community. Everybody said, and surely everybody must be right, that Mr. Paul Vincent, of Bewdley College, near Framingham, would certainly be called, heartily and unanimously, to the pastorate of the important church in Shepherdston.

This unfortunate world does seem well nigh full of contradictions, illusions, and disappointments, and, unfortunately, they come in and thrust themselves before us at the most inconvenient times. If they would deign to give us a short notice of their intention to wait upon us, we might make some sort of preparation to meet them; but no, on they come, without being polite enough to say, "by your leave." As Shepherdston was a part, and a not unimportant part, of this veritable world, the common experience of mundane vicissitude fell to its lot. About ten days after the memorable chaise-ride, rumors were industriously and quickly circulated that Mortimer Shelburne was not so favorable to Mr. Vincent's

candidature as he had been. He had dropped hints, here and there, that possibly they might do better by waiting a little longer; that it was not wise to be in a hurry in so momentous a matter; that one a little older, and with more experience, might be more suitable for so important a sphere; and he had reason to know that such an one, eminently suited to the post, might be had.

Mr. Vincent had finished his allotted term of probationary service, and was already back again among his books in Bewdley College, there awaiting the expected call. That model communication came at last, and with nervous trembling he read as follows:

SHEPHERDSTON, *April* 20, 18—.

MR. PAUL VINCENT,

DEAR SIR,

At a meeting of the Church in Shepherdston, called for the purpose of electing a pastor, the following motion was moved, seconded, and carried:—"That Mr. Paul Vincent, who has supplied our pulpit so acceptably for the last four Sabbaths, be, and is hereby invited to become pastor of this Church." For the motion 83,—against 33.

The following motion was then moved, seconded, and carried: "That Mr. Paul Vincent be invited to supply this Church for three months." For the motion 73,—against 43. It is my duty, my dear Sir, to notify you that you are expected to inform me, as early as possible, whether you accept the invitation for three months.

I remain,
My dear Sir,
Very truly yours,
MORTIMER SHELBURNE.

There are some things you cannot touch without spoiling,—the delicate bloom of a plum, for instance. You may look at it, and admire it as much as you like, but don't handle it, you will spoil it if you do. All the beauty is on the surface. Rub that off, and there is nothing left but a thin skin, a little fruit, and a small stone. There are some productions of the human mind, or of collective mind, that are so inimitably unique and chaste, that they should not be touched with rough, unsanctified hands. The above letter is a specimen. How that massive, sanctified, diaconate brain must have schemed and worked to produce such a masterpiece of sincerity and straightforwardness! No wonder his complexion was the opposite of blooming, if he had come to regard such work as dignified, legitimate, and worthy of his best powers. An invitation to the pastorate, carried by a large majority. And then on the top of that an invitation for three months, carried by a large majority too!! It was an excess of kindness that might melt the hardest heart. Well done, Mortimer Shelburne! You knew what you were about, didn't you? Never mind whether the poor simple flock, who meant to do right, did or not. It was a masterstroke worthy of Machiavelli, or Richelieu, and your bones ought to rest with theirs. Then how kind it was to sharpen the young gentleman's dull wits by pointing out to him that it was the latter resolution

he was to pay particular attention to. The first was nothing; that is, nothing to him. Take the advice of an old friend, and mend your ways in time. If you keep on like that, you will not be likely to attain a distinguished position in the upper world, whatever your position in this may be. They don't encourage such tricks there. The entrance is effectually barred to everything "that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie." Nothing is admitted but what will bear to be looked at in the full glare of that sun that never sets.

Paul Vincent, upon first reading the letter, was surprised; then he had a feeling of disappointment; then disappointment was succeeded by a hazy kind of bewilderment; then he called to mind the ride in the chaise, and starting from that point, a logical sequence of thought led him to the light. With a sigh, scarcely perceptible, he quietly took his pen, and indited a letter declining the call for three months, and took his leave of Shepherdston for ever.

CHAPTER III.

Paul gets discouraged—He receives an invitation to visit Crossberry—Douglas Sinclair looks in upon his old chum, and states his views and experiences—The journey to Crossberry—Mr. Bullethead and his trunk—The Gorilla question—Simon Jehu and his old tumble-down coach—A loquacious companion—Josiah Buncombe of the Nag's Head—A bird's-eye view of Crossberry—Samuel Chedworth, Mrs. Chedworth, and nine little Chedworths—The old church redolent of the memory of Bunyan.

THE young candidate for ministerial honors was grievously disappointed, as what else could he be under the circumstances, even more so than he cared to admit to himself or express to anyone else. He was cast adrift once more upon the dreary sea of uncertain expectancy. In what direction to steer his frail bark he knew not. A few weeks more would bring him to the close of his college course, and the future was full of darkness and uncertainty. He began to think that possibly he had mistaken his vocation; that, notwithstanding the generous and unstinted commendation of his tutors, examinations successfully passed, and evidences, too marked to be mistaken,

of a rare aptitude for usefulness, he might be in the wrong path. He searched his heart in vain for any design that was not honest, for any motive that was not as pure as could be expected from an erring mortal. His sky was overcast. He was stumbling along in the dark, as best he could, trying to catch a glimpse of light that might point out the right way; he did not look long in vain. The darkness which enveloped him passed away, and the sun shot his beams athwart his path once more. His name and fame had travelled somewhat, and he received a pressing invitation to supply the vacant pulpit of the Church in Crossberry for a few Sabbaths. Where Crossberry was he had to find out by consulting that handy book of reference — "Bradshaw." What Crossberry was would take a little longer time to find out. Whether it was a city, a town, a village, or a long stretch of habitable continuity, with its centre everywhere and nowhere, or whether it was a mere geographical expression, were important points that remained to be resolved in due course. A minute examination of the outside of the envelope revealed the important and gratifying fact that Crossberry had a post office, for there the name was stamped plainly enough. It was a most decisive stamp too—plain, clear, full, with every atom of every letter fully brought out;

showing that the postmaster, at least, had an idea that the name and the place were of some consequence. While he was taking a last lingering look at that decisive stamp there was slight tap at his study door. "Come in," said Mr. Vincent.

In stepped a fine gentlemanly young man about Mr. Vincent's age—Douglas Sinclair, student, and senior of his year.

"Hollo, Vincent! how are you this morning, old fellow? What—what is this assaults my sense? Fe-fo-fan, I smell—offering incense at the shrine of 'Bacca' very early this morning, eh Vincent? Don't you know that you are breaking the sixth and last article in the constitution of this illustrious institution. Look here: 'No smoking allowed in the College, or on the front terrace.' That's plain enough sure, ah, well, I won't peach on you, old fellow. Hand me a match, and we'll make the transgression mutual."

Mr. Sinclair lighted his meerschaum, and while he was getting the steam up, and getting red in the face over it, silence and smoke reigned supreme. When the steam was fairly up Douglas Sinclair resumed his discourse.

"I say, Vincent, I have a particular conscientious regard for that sixth article in the constitution. That, and the first, which enacts that the young gentlemen shall rise at six a.m., take my fancy

amazingly. Those two articles were no doubt intended, by the wise heads that framed that constitution, to be repressive of vice, and promotive of virtue. I have observed that they invariably have the effect intended for the first six months, and then, like a good many other kinds of medicine, they gradually lose their influence. It was so with the humble individual who is now addressing you. For the first six months,—that is, until the first examination was passed, and I was deemed a fit and proper person to be placed upon 'the foundation,'—I invariably rose at the first dong of the bell, and appeared exactly at half-past six a.m. at prayers, seven times in the week. After that I had a virulent and protracted attack of somnolence, and it was necessary to relax the rule to accommodate the disease, and I have been suffering from it, more or less, ever since. Still I hold to the theory of early rising, and I believe those old 'fogies' meant well who ordained that we should rise at six. Whether they reduce the theory to practice, and thus far honor the said constitution, is a matter I have not yet been able to determine. I have broached the subject once or twice with one or two, but the response has invariably been a dignified reserve. I took that to mean: 'Young gentleman, you had better mind your own business,' so I leashed my tongue, and was mum. And then as to

the incense. For the first six months I offered that morning, noon and night outside the college walls, but after I was placed on the foundation I felt a growing interest in this fine aggregation of solid masonry, and transferred the offering to my study. I found the alteration work well, notwithstanding the rule, and so I continued it."

"Sinclair, you are very philosophical, and your reasoning is worthy of a devout student of Whateley, no doubt; but I have, just now, something on my mind more important than all this—listen."

"Well, what is it old fellow? I am all ears. If it's anything I can help you in, I am your most humble servant."

"I have just received an invitation to Crossberry to preach a few Sabbaths; and I am considering whether I had better go. Do you know the place, or the people?"

"Crossberry?" Mr Sinclair knitted his manly brow to quicken the circulation in the region of his massive brain. "Crossberry? Why, yes, I know Crossberry. Now I remember I have an old aunt living there whom I visited once, and from whom I have certain expectations, which may bear fruit when the old lady has 'shuffled off this mortal coil,' as the immortal bard says. Crossberry is considerably in the interior; it's a queer old town, but there are some good people in it. A little old-

fashioned they are, but hearty and good. You get off at Crossberry junction, and, after a seven miles ride, in an old tumble-down coach, you arrive at Crossberry. But I say, Vincent, changing the subject for a little while with your permission, I had a remarkable experience last Sunday. It was as good as a pantomime. I was preaching the 'Anniversary Sermons' at Bockden, and I had the good fortune to make an important addition to my stock of knowledge. I found out that D. V. have a meaning other than that usually attached to those orthodox letters. I was preaching in the morning, and just as I reached the third head of my eloquent discourse I heard something like a crackle in the vestry, close to the pulpit stairs. By and by, I smelt something that had the odor of mutton chops, and, carrying on two mental processes at once, I came to the conclusion that my dinner was in closer proximity than I had imagined. It is almost needless to observe that I brought my discourse to a somewhat abrupt termination, feeling that the outward man needed to be renewed. I pronounced the benediction, opened the pulpit door, stepped down about twenty steps at three strides, entered the vestry, and there, sure enough, the frying pan was on the fire, and the chops cooking. Over the fire place was a large handbill two letters of which, printed large, and enclosed in brackets to make them significant, fully explained

this extraordinary phenomena, 'Bockden—Anniversary Sermons. Two sermons will be preached in the above place (D. V.) on Sabbath, June 18th, 18–, by Mr. Douglas Sinclair, of Bewdley College, &c.' I saw it all at a glance—quite a new light—*dinner in the vestry*."

"Well done, Sinclair. That was quite an acquisition, a new light, as you say; but as you have now had your say, and I have listened very patiently, let us return to the subject in hand—Crossberry."

"Well, my dear fellow, I have not much more to say now. I hope you will accept the invitation. Go by all means, and see the place. Give my kind regards to my old aunt, and tell her that her hopeful nephew is always thinking about her. I hope you will come back with a hearty and unanimous call in your pocket. Adieu, for the present, and keep a stout heart. There goes the bell for the Hebrew class. I must be off, and face the music."

The irrepressible Douglas gone to his Hebrew, Paul was left to his silent cogitations once more. Should he accept the invitation? Yes, he should, and would. He quickly took his pen, and indited a letter, and addressed it to Samuel Chedworth, Esq., Crossberry, near Crossberry Junction, for from that gentleman the invitation had come. The letter was duly despatched by the next mail, leaving at 4 p. m.; and would probably be delivered in Cross-

berry about noon the following day. From the date fixed in the letter of invitation, Mr. Vincent would be expected in the Crossberry pulpit the following Sunday. No time must be [illegible]. Immediate preparation must be made for the journey, which was a long one. In two days the valise was again packed with a small assortment of clean linen and old sermons; also a number of other things of various and indispensable utility.

The train which whirled him along the line of the Great Northern was of the slow-coach, eccentric kind, affording him ample time for reflection before he reached Crossberry Junction. His main occupation during the journey was making various and sundry annotations on "Bradshaw," committing choice parts of it to memory; and making a complete and compendious catalogue of its many advertisements, for convenience of future reference. These, with now and then a stretch of the legs and "a whiff," when the train took a notion of shunting off on a siding, pleasantly, if not profitably, occupied the time.

A great deal might be written upon that much-neglected subject, "how to conduct yourself in a railway train." There are some poor mortals as unfit to travel by rail as a North American Indian. They are so restless and boorish, and manifest such utter disregard for the feelings of others. They are

a perpetual nuisance to the guard, the station masters, the porters, the passengers, and, in fact, everybody. There was one of this class in the compartment in which was Mr. Vincent, and in consequence that gentleman's devout study of "Bradshaw" received constant interruption. He had a large trunk in the luggage van, duly and fully described as to its projected destination, about which he was as perpetually anxious as if it had been chuck full of gold pieces. Every time the train stopped, he popped his bullet head out of the window, and bawled out, at the top of his voice: "Guard! Is my trunk all right?" "Yes, all right," blandly replied the guard. But the question was repeated so often, in the progress of the journey, that the guard very rightly lost his patience, and silenced the officious intruder by telling him in plain English that he wished Mr. Bullethead was an elephant instead of an ass that he could take care of his own trunk. He was, unfortunately, not the only nuisance. There was his mate sitting near him; this "customer" seemed half drunk, and he fixed his fiendish eyes on a little nervous gentleman that sat opposite him. He was evidently intending to have some fun, as he thought, and so he commenced: "I say, Governor, what's your name, and what's your occupation? What does your mother call you, and what do you do for a

living?" The nervous gentleman meekly replied that he was not aware that that was any business of his.

"O, yes, it is, but if you don't like to answer the aforesaid questions answer me this: Are you a man?"

The nervous gentleman, thinking he must alter his tactics, again meekly replied that he had been accustomed for several years to look upon himself in that light.

"Well, then", said the irrepressible, "I beg leave to inform you that you are very much mistaken. I've been reading some clever books lately, by Darwin and others, and I've come to the conclusion that we're all gorillas. I'm a gorilla and you're a gorilla, and the only difference is that I'm a big gorilla and you're a little gorilla. Now don't call yourself a man again, it ain't scientific."

Just at this point of this interesting dissertation the train slackened, and then came to a stand, and the shrill voice of the porter called out Crossberry Junction. Paul Vincent picked himself up out of the corner of the carriage, and seizing his valise stepped out, wondering how long the gorilla question would hold out, and glad to be out of hearing of it.

The old tumble-down coach which Douglas Sinclair had made mention of was outside the

station, waiting for its complement of passengers for Crossberry. Mr. Vincent paid his fare in advance, and stepped in, or rather stepped out, for, as there were more passengers than the interior would accommodate, he took his seat with the driver on the box. Simon Jehu, for that was the driver's name, after calling out "all right," drove off at a rattling pace. When the horses had settled down to a good easy trot Mr. Vincent ventured a remark or two, with the view of drawing out of the old driver some information about Crossberry.

"Mr. Jehu, you seem to be advanced considerably in years. Have you resided long in Crossberry?"

"Wa'll, yes, young man, I'se be sixty-two next May, and I'se lived in Crossberry all my life."

"I trust your long life has been pleasant and enjoyable on the whole?"

"Wa'll yes, its been purty fair, but I'se had my ups and downs, like bigger and better folks. We had lots o' chil'en—my missus and me—but they died young mostly; some wi' hooping-cough and some wi' measles, and some, as lived longer, died o' consumption; and then my old missus died, twelve months come next June, and I be lonely now. But, excuse me, sir, if I may make so bold, what be your name, and baint you been in Crossberry before?"

"My name is Paul Vincent, and I have not had

the pleasure of visiting Crossberry before. It is my first visit."

"O! you be the new preacher, baint you? Ah! they be looking out for you. They be talking about you a great deal. They say you be very clever, and very larned, and very handsome, and very—what do they call it?"

"Eloquent," suggested Mr. Vincent.

"Ah! that's it, elocunt."

"Well, I don't know how they can have arrived at the conclusion that I am handsome, as I am not aware that any of them have seen me yet."

"Ah! well, I 'spose they expect you to be that. It's one o' the qualifications, like. They 'spose you be young, and, in consequence, they 'spose you be handsome."

"Well, my friend, I hope they may not be disappointed."

"Wa'll, yer passable, I think, from what I see wi' yer hat on. The last minister they had was an old gentleman, as old as me. He weren't young enough, nor handsome enough to suit the young folks, so they thought they'd rather have a younger man; and the old gentleman he got to hear of it and left."

"Did he seem to regret his leaving much?" asked Mr. Vincent, with much concern, and with evident manifestations of sympathy.

"Wa'll, he didn't show it much like, because ye see,

sir, he were a kind o' big sort o' man in his younger days like, and he respected hisself a good deal, so he didn't show his feelings. But I 'spose he did feel it, for ye see a good many o' the older folks liked him, and he were sorry to part wi' um."

Mr. Vincent was silent, but the old man continued.

"Ye see, sir, there's lots o' young ladies in the church, and they think a minister should be handsome like, and their fathers and mothers, as should know better, don't correct um."

Mr. Vincent was still silent. Not a question more would he ask. He had heard enough to satisfy him, for the present. He was thinking deeply, painfully, of the old man that was gone, who was not considered handsome; of the young man that was coming that might be so considered, or might not. He felt he had been subjected to a process of pre-degradation. He felt it a mortal offence, in advance, that looks were to weigh in the scale of fitness for a spiritual work. So the world wags, Mr. Vincent, and the church too; keep straight on and keep your eyes open and you will learn many things yet. You have completed your education, and you are just beginning it. You are entering another college where sterner lessons are taught, and not so cheaply as in the one you left yesterday. There you got your education free, and your board

for nothing, and only had to pay for certain inevitable et ceteras. Here, in this more practical academy, you will pay for every lesson, and twice or thrice over, if you don't keep a sharp look out. You will find a tremendous necessity for the admonition—"Let thine eyes keep straight before thee."

These practical moralizings, and Mr. Vincent's deep thinking, must stop here, as, from all appearances, the old tumble-down coach has already pulled up at the 'Nag's Head'. Mr. Vincent rouses himself, and jumps down, valise in hand, from the box seat, and, looking around, finds himself in the small town of Crossberry. He took his position for a few minutes on the pavement in front of the 'Nag's Head', to get a cursory view, from so favorable a position for observation, of this medium-sized hamlet, which was technically and ostentatiously called a town. The hostelry behind him was evidently considerably advanced in years, small, low-roofed, and with its main entrance through an archway, about six feet wide, through which Simon Jehu had just driven his two nags and coach—the former to be left in the stables, the latter to be dumped down in the yard, till they would be required the following day. These latter operations were performed rather quickly, as the old driver was already in the bar-room, quietly blinking at the blooming maid behind the

counter, and smacking his lips, not over the maid, but over a glass of something hot. This was his usual mode of driving the cold out, and warming up after a journey.

The landlord, Josiah Buncombe, was a stout red-faced, blustering fellow, fond of dogs and wine, with a voice like thunder, and lungs made of leather. When he was roused his delicate intonations were very much like the roar of a lion. The story was current in the town that, in once submitting to a medical examination, for the purpose of effecting an insurance upon his valuable life, the physician ventured to ask as a final question, somewhat ironically, whether his lungs were sound. Yes! roared out Josiah, would you like to hear me "holler?" The physician intimated that he was perfectly satisfied with what he had already heard, and begged him not to "holler," as it would cost considerable to replace the roof of his family residence, if it should happen to go off in the explosion. Mr. Buncombe was duly passed, and certified as a fit and proper person to be insured, for one thousand pounds,—plus an extra premium for being a publican. Had the premium been increased in the due proportion of his being a sinner also, it might have been rather heavy.

The market place, opposite the "Nag's Head," resembled a menagerie in the under portion of it. It was cased in with perpendicular iron bars, through

which you could look, and grin, and nothing more. The upper part would hold about a hundred medium-sized bags of different kinds of grain. In this menagerie the farmers from the country round met once a week to do business, discuss politics, and scandalize their neighbors. Crossberry was made up of one long street, the High Street, running from east to west, with two streets branching off, north and south, about three parts of the way down, thus forming a cross. From this singular conformation it probably took its name.

Mr. Vincent, having made a note of these and sundry other observations, personal and geographical, turned his steps eastward, and soon arrived at the residence of Samuel Chedworth, Esq. This residence, situated on the east end of the High Street, on a small piece of rising ground, was covered with a thick growth of ivy, with sundry openings, as if cut through the ivy, for door and windows. It had about two acres of ground behind, and about the two hundredth part of an acre in front. The house turned completely round would have been a decided improvement. Here, however, Mr. Chedworth, Mrs. Chedworth, and nine little Chedworths, spun out their existence as best they could. Mr. and Mrs. Chedworth hoped Mr. Vincent might enjoy his visit to Crossberry, and that it might prove a permanent advantage to himself and the Church. The little

Chedworths didn't say anything about the Church, but they manifested their respectful attention in other ways. Two jumped on his knees instanter, one climbed on the back of his chair and performed sundry operations with his black flowing locks; two others made a simultaneous side attack, and balanced themselves on the chair by clutching the sleeves of his black cloth coat, and the remaining four whined and waited till the others were tired of their pranks, so that they could commence the same operations. All of which attentions the aforesaid young gentleman received cheerfully and gratefully, and made a desperate attempt to seem pleased. Tea was announced, and the little Chedworths dismissed to the nursery, much to their mortification, and much to the inward delight of Mr. Vincent, for after the long ride in the train, and the after excursion in the old tumble-down coach, he felt tired and hungry. The smoking urn was brought in, and placed in front of Mrs. Chedworth. Mr. Chedworth placed himself in a position exactly opposite the toast, and where he could have a good front view of Mr. Vincent. Mr. Vincent was opposite Mr. Chedworth, and took under his special supervision and care the cake and marmalade. After a blessing, asked by Mr. Vincent at Mr. Chedworth's special request, the three fell to a general exchange of tea, toast, marmalade and small talk. While they are thus pleasantly and

profitably engaged, let us fix the apparatus, and take "a view" of the interesting trio.

Mr. Vincent is about twenty-two years of age. He is a little over the medium height, only two inches short of six feet. His hair is long, black, and glossy as a raven, with a slight tendency to curl. The figure is erect, the brow high and intelligent, the eyes grey, and expressive more of deep thought than vivacity. The predominant expression of the countenance is honesty. An acute observer had said,—"You won't find two sides to his face." Nine persons out of ten from a casual, or even an extended, observation would say: "There goes an honest man; that man may differ from you, and hold his own against all comers, but he won't trick you; if he strike you, metaphorically speaking, it will be fairly in the face, and not behind."

A strictly honest man, honest in every sense, is not only the noblest, but the rarest work of God. An honest man will not cheat; will not fawn; will not unduly praise; will not bear false witness against his neighbor, even to a confidential friend; will not stab behind; will not seem to be what he is not; will not work under ground like a mole; will not be pleasant with his lips to another, when his heart is far from him; will not barter the fair fame of another for an idle word; will bear good fortune with meekness, and ill-fortune with constancy; will act as in the

sight of the All-Seeing always. He will not barter principle for pelf, and he will go to the cannon's mouth, if duty call, and save his life by losing it.

Mrs. Chedworth—begging her ladyship's pardon for not taking her photograph first—is under the medium height, and ladylike in appearance; somewhat thin, but not disproportionately so; an oval face, with a skin not of the smoothest, and a complexion of a decidedly dark cast. The eyes are keen, piercing, fiery, and can, when occasion calls, pour forth any quantity of burning lava, like two slumbering volcanoes. She has a firm decided, imperious temper, and yet a perfectly smooth manner; slow, protracted, wily in giving offence, but quick to take it, and quietly pertinacious in remembering it.

Mr. Chedworth is a thin, wiry man; nervous, restless, impetuous, but withal good-natured, and fairly good-tempered. He is of medium height and age, very fond of children—which he needs to be—of whom he has nine, with a fair prospect of each one being duplicated in the ordinary constitution and course of nature. He is the head man in the Crossberry Zion, combining in himself the three important offices of Deacon, Treasurer and Sunday School Superintendent. He has great reverence for the sacred office, and for any one who happens to fill it according to his ideas, which, it must be confessed, are a little straight-laced. Fifty-two times in

the year he is punctually in his place in the Sunday School. Twelve times in the year he punctually and reverently distributes "the elements;" and to the day—which is saying a great deal—he, with business regularity, pays the pastor's salary. He is fond of power, and has his weaknesses and faults, but they mostly lean to virtue's side. He always tries to be a friend, where compatibility of temper admits of it, and when he cannot be a friend, he tries to be not an ungenerous enemy.

By this time the tea, toast, cake and marmalade are well-nigh disposed of, and consigned to that gastronomical limbo where they undergo the process of dying with a certain hope of resurrection in the shape of new blood, renewed nerves, and strengthened muscles. The cloth was removed, the tea things stowed away on a very neat tray by a very neat servant, and conversation resumed until nine o'clock. Then the nursery door was opened, and the little Chedworths came trooping in. The grand old Bible was handed out, and devoutly read, and prayers as devoutly said. After which Mr. Vincent retired for the night; glad enough to stretch his weary limbs, and recline his weary head and rest. He tried to sleep, but succeeded only in dozing and dreaming. The events of the day danced before his wayward fancy: Mr. Bullethead and his trunk; the gorilla pantomine; the old tumble-down coach and Mr.

Simon Jehu; the edifying conversation with that gentleman; the old pastor who was not considered handsome, and the young one that might be; the thundering, roaring voice of Josiah Buncombe; the polite attentions of the little Chedworths, etc. He rose in the morning not much refreshed, but resolved to do his appointed work manfully and well. Preaching was to him what the bugle, the smell of powder, and the gleaming sabre, are to the war horse; it roused his metal, and made him all himself.

He wended his way to the church, accompanied by the whole of the Chedworths, forming quite a procession of no mean dimensions; walking through green fields and along smooth, gravelly walks, for a mile and a half, until a turn in the path brought him in sight of half-a-dozen cottages, and the Crossberry Zion. It was a plain brick building, with no pretensions to elegance, but of ancient date. It was a sacred spot, hallowed with the memories of two hundred years. Some had met there who had, unflinchingly, paid for their fidelity to conscience by submitting to the pillory and the dungeon. It was redolent of the memory of Bunyan, for there the "Immortal Dreamer" had lifted up his voice more than once, and exhorted the faithful to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. Probably he had discoursed, in his plain inimitable

way, of "the land of Beulah" and "the Delectable Mountains," and "the Shining Ones." Paul Vincent was in a delicious reverie when he ascended the pulpit, thinking of these things, and feeling that he was indeed "compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses." Roused with such touching memories and overshadowed by such a presence, he spoke, pathetically and eloquently, of the Cross and Passion, of the World's Sacrifice; of the mighty sufferings, and the still mightier love; of that unexampled natural phenomena, "when all nature shuddered at the groans of its expiring God." For five consecutive Sundays he preached in the Crossberry pulpit, with increasing earnestness, and it must be added, with increasing acceptance. Whether he was considered handsome is not of sufficient importance to mention, but he was regarded as answering fully to the other characteristics mentioned by old Jehu. During his temporary stay he paid a short visit to Douglas Sinclair's old aunt, that he might be able to render a satisfactory report to that gentleman on his return.

CHAPTER IV.

Paul Vincent receives the hearty commendation of Samuel Chedworth—The little Chedworths mourn his departure—He returns to Bewdley College—Old Jehu discourses on the young lady, the "Ched'orths" and the family "Consarn"—A matrimonial plot—Douglas Sinclair welcomes his old chum back again—Some things learned outside the College—A call from Crossberry received and accepted—Paul Vincent becomes the Rev. Paul Vincent, and effects two important settlements simultaneously—He marries "the girl he left behind him."

SAMUEL CHEDWORTH expressed to Mr. Vincent, at the close of his five weeks term of probationary service, the pleasure and profit with which he, and the church generally, had listened to his ministrations. He was very warm in his personal expressions of approval, and hoped if the church, in its wisdom, should see fit to extend a call, Mr. Vincent would see it his duty to accept it. He expected to communicate with him, upon this inportant subject, in a very few days, or, at most, a week. He had made it his business to ascertain the feelings of the people in the church and out of it, and he was happy to say that the impression was very favorable. He handed Mr. Vincent a good round sum, in solid cash

as a pecuniary acknowledgment of his services; and intimated that all the points which had passed in review between them, in view of a settlement, should be attended to, and, if possible, adjusted to meet his wishes.

The little Chedworths were loud in their lamentations at the prospect of the new preacher's departure, but, when quietly informed by Mrs. Chedworth that Mr. Vincent might come back and stay with them always, they dried their tears, and kissed him goodbye.

Mr. Vincent, passing quickly down the street, valise in hand, once more found himself in front of the Nag's Head, waiting for old Simon, and his tumble-down coach, to convey him to Crossberry junction. Having waited some time without seeing that redoubtable individual, he ventured to peep into the bar, and saw a full explanation of the delay. The old driver was, as usual, blinking at the maid, and smacking his lips over a glass of someting hot preparatory to his departure. It was evidently an inflexible rule with him to regale himself in this manner at both ends of the journey, for the double purpose of keeping the cold out and driving it out. It was not so much that he liked the liquor, as the necessity he felt for warming up, and preserving his health; and also because he felt so lonely since his "old missus died, twelve months come next June."

He made his appearance in about five minutes, smacking his old lips, and cracking his whip; jumped on the box seat by the side of Mr. Vincent, and crying "all right," went off at a rattling pace. When he had cleared the High street, and got about half a mile out of Crossberry, he distinctly heard the melodious voice of Josiah Buncombe calling after him; but, after a moment's reflection, he whipped his horses and went on.

"Whose voice was that?" asked Mr. Vincent of the old driver.

"Wa'll, sure; don't yer know? That's Josiah; nobody else in Crossberry could make sich a noise as that."

"Well, my friend, had you not better wait a little? Maybe a passenger for the Junction has arrived late and wants to get on to meet the train. It will only make a difference of two or three minutes, and we have plenty of time. Pull up and wait a little."

"Wa'll, no, I shall go on. It's only one o' Josiah's pranks. He be fond o' tricks, and he likes 'hollering,' and airing his lungs."

"You don't mean to say, my old friend, that he uses his lungs that way for simple amusement?"

"Wa'll, yes; he knows he be a good hollerer, and he's as fond o' hollering as a child likes sugar. Queer chap, Josiah, good chap too. Ye should hear him holler when he's fresh like. It's like 'Ombwell's

menagerie. If I may make so bold, Sir, be ye coming back to Crossberry ?"

"Well, that is a question I am scarcely in a position to answer. It depends upon a decision I am yet to be made acquainted with."

"Wa'll, I hear they be going to give ye an— What do they call it ?"

"Invitation," suggested Mr. Vincent.

"Ah ! yes, that's it, an inwitation. Sammy Ched'orth likes yer, and the missus, and the chil'en, and most every body likes what they like."

As the old driver had volunteered so much information bearing upon Mr. Vincent's future prospects, and as he seemed to be of a very gossiping and garrulous nature, he thought he might as well drain him of that article at once, and have done with it. He adopted a shorter and more distant tone. "Have you any further information, Mr. Jehu ?"

"Wa'll, yes, they say ye be clever, and larned, and handsome, and—What do they call it ?"

"Eloquent," again suggested Mr. Vincent, out of sheer compassion for the old man.

"Ah, yes, that's it—elocunt."

"Anything else ?" asked Mr. Vincent, with some asperity.

"Wa'll, yes ; they say it's an adwantage ye're not married."

"Why so?" asked Mr. Vincent with a touch of indignation in his tone.

"Wa'll, ye see, sir, there's lots o' young ladies in the church, as I told ye before, and they think ye be the right kind o' man to make a good husband for one of um."

"Am I to understand, from the latter part of your observations, Mr. Jehu, that the good people in Crossberry have actually been so concerned for my welfare as to pick me out a wife—some one particular person, who is deemed by them very suitable; and that they intend to stimulate my uxorious proclivities in that particular direction by all available means, if they get the chance?"

"Wa'll, yes, if I understand yer elocunt question, Sir, there is a young lady in particular as thinks ye very handsome, although she baint very handsome herself. She be a teacher in the Sunday school, and has a little money, and is a great friend o' the Ched'orths. They think a world on her, especially Sammy; and they would feel a kind o' 'bliged if the future minister should happen to hev the same wiews."

"But suppose the future minister did not entertain the same views, and did not, in consequence, marry this useful young lady? What then, Mr. Jehu?"

"Wa'll, sir, that's more'n I be able to tell.

Maybe the young lady might change her wiews about the minister, and mightn't think him handsome; and the Ched'orths might change their wiews, and then what ud happen I baint able to tell. Ye see, sir, it's a family consarn, and they hang on to one another."

"What do you mean by a family concern, Mr. Jehu? Please explain yourself. I confess to a feeling of some little interest in this benevolent scheme, which you seem to know so much about. It's a new phase of life to me. Pray go on."

"Wa'll, ye see, sir, this young lady's brother sets the tunes, and Sammy Ched'orth be her uncle, and he gives the hymns out, and he be most everything else beside, so that if the new minister meets their wiews and marries this young lady, Sammy's niece, the consarn will be in the family. It'll be snug like, all round."

The old driver filled his two-inch pipe, and commenced smoking, and Mr. Vincent, in an under tone, said, whew! and remained silent, wrapt in meditation until the old tumble-down coach reached Crossberry Junction. Here they both alighted from the box seat, and the passengers, of whom there was a full complement inside, stepped out. The old driver soon put up his horses in the stables of the Junction Hotel, and quickly made his way to the bar, where he was soon engaged in the agreeable

occupation of smacking his lips over something hot. Mr. Vincent went into an ante-room, to wait the arrival of the train, which was due in twenty minutes. As he had a long journey in prospect, he thought he could not do better than occupy this short space of time by taking a few sandwiches and a cup of hot coffee. On time to the minute the train steamed into the station, and he stowed himself away, as comfortably as he could, in the corner of one of the carriages. Mr. Jehu, who had by this time finished his something hot, and crossed over to the station, bid him good-bye for the present, and hoped to see him again soon; and, as their intercourse on the box seat had made him somewhat familiar, he bade him remember the young lady and the Ched'orths and the family consarn.

After a journey of ten hours, with nothing to lighten the tedium except more extended annotations on "Bradshaw," he arrived at Bewdley College. He was met by his old chum, Douglas Sinclair, who greeted him with demonstrations of delight.

"How are you, old fellow? Glad to see you. I thought you were not coming back to 'this land which yields us no supplies' any more. Got a hearty and unanimous call in your pocket, eh?"

"Well no, I haven't a call in my pocket, Sinclair but it's coming, I expect, in a few days, or a week at the most."

"Did you ride in the old tumble-down coach? Did you take the box seat by the side of old Jehu? I look upon that as the post of honor. Besides, the old chap's quite a character in his way, and as loquacious as a washer-woman."

"Yes, I had the post of honor both ways, and the garrulous old fellow talked to his heart's content. He is a character, as you say. He seems to know everybody, and every body's business, besides his own, and perhaps better than his own. I got a good deal of information from him, and one piece of intelligence I didn't much like."

"What was that, my dear fellow?"

"Why the holy and secret conclave in Crossberry has picked me out a wife, in advance."

"Whew!" said Mr. Sinclair. "Vincent, that's rather awkward. Doesn't at all fit in with either the past or the present. What would 'the girl you left behind you' in Eastborough say, if she heard of that nice little arrangement?"

"Well, Sinclair, from all I can see, or hear, or think, 'the girl I left behind me' has nothing to fear. I regard an honorable engagement as sacred and binding as an honorable marriage, so I'm not likely to add one to the long list of broken hearts. Besides, taking the lowest view, a change might not be, by any means, an improvement. No, I shall stick

like a leech where I am, true to my first and only attachment."

"That's right, old fellow. You are honest, anyhow. But did you see my old aunt?"

"Yes, I saw her, but I had nearly forgotten all about that business till about the last day, when, to oblige you, I called to see her."

"Ah! I'm glad you did. I hope the old lady's well, but drawing gently nigh the land of rest."

"Well, she seems very hearty and strong, and she made a good many enquiries about her hopeful nephew. You may be sure I served an old chum by giving as favorable a report as the limits of truth would fairly allow. But as to drawing nigh the land of rest; if that operation is going on, and I sincerely hope it is, it is progressing, from all appearances, very slowly. She's tough, evidently, and may live a great many years yet. Don't be too sanguine and expectant, Sinclair; she might outlive you. Waiting for dead people's shoes is not an ennobling occupation, and is not always a profitable one. 'Blessed is he that expecteth nothing.'"

"Why, Vincent, you're getting quite a philosopher. You'll be fit for the Professor's chair in no time if you keep on like that. Really, now, speaking, not metaphorically, but literally, where did you pick up that aptitude for moralizing, etc.?"

"Well, Sinclair, I've picked up something the last

few months that I never would pick up within these walls if I stayed here till doomsday, or lived as long as Methuselah. My visits to Tanborough, Shepherdston and Crossberry have not been wholly in vain. I have seen and learnt many things. I am beginning to experience the first dawn of the very practical idea, that, possibly, there is a good deal of trickery and unreality in the world; that things are not always what they seem; that men are perpetually engaged in carrying out their little schemes for personal and selfish ends; that the question is not, how to secure the greatest good for the greatest number, but how can I secure my own individual advancement and profit? that the glory of God as the chief end of man is perpetually lost sight of; that there is more truth than poetry in the statement that the 'heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;' that the Church itself is not free from the blighting, blasting contagion of trickery and devilishness, which reigns supreme in the world. Ah! Sinclair, as I have gone thus far, let me out with a truth or two that may possibly be of some benefit to you some day. Here in this Institution, which good men founded, and which good men continually support, we are drilled, morning, noon, and night, in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, French, Mathematics, History, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Logic, Rhetoric, and many other

things which would make a list as long as your arm from your shoulder to the tip of your middle finger. We get a little smattering, too, of Hebrew criticism and New Testament Exegesis. But the great problems of human life are never touched upon, and, above all things, we are never told how widely at variance are both the Church and the world with those grand principles the exposition of which is to be the occupation of our future life. We, therefore, go from this place with a fair knowledge of books, and of what men should be, and in the guilelessness of our hearts we expect them so to be, but we soon get disappointed. We find that the silent assent of the understanding is given to a thousand things from which the homage of the heart and the service of the life are perpetually withheld. Here are older and wiser heads who have gone through the mill, perhaps more than once, and know both the world and the church thoroughly; and yet they never throw out a hint for our benefit about the wickedness of the one or the deceitfulness of the other. New Testament Exegesis, fiddlesticks! If they would give us some human heart and life exegesis it would be more to the point and more useful."

Mr. Sinclair fairly gasped at the conclusion of this rhetorical explosion proceeding from his old chum, and as he was not disposed to dissent from

any of the propositions laid down, nor was likely to gain any further information about his old aunt, he judged it prudent to retire.

In less than a week the expected call from Crossberry came, and, as there is generally something unique about such documents, a copy is here presented:

CROSSBERRY.—*Near Crossberry Junction, July* 1, 18—

MR. PAUL VINCENT,
Bewdley College,

DEAR SIR,

Although you are already aware of the nature of the feelings of the people here regarding yourself and your ministry, and their wishes for a continuance of the latter, it nevertheless becomes my duty thus officially to inform you of the precise result of the meetings held on June 24th and 27th. At the former, which was exclusively a church meeting, and largely attended, a resolution calling you to the pastorate of this church was unanimously passed. The expressions of approval of yourself personally, and of your capabilities for filling this important position, were warm, enthusiastic, and unanimous. I am happy to say, my dear sir, there was not a dissenting voice. On the 27th there was a meeting of the church and congregation combined, when the same gratifying result was reached. We willingly accede to your request for four Sundays in the year as a vacation. We purpose giving you a very liberal pecuniary support to begin with, and shall do what we can to increase it; and, should your ministry prove as acceptable as we anticipate, we may reasonably expect soon to be able to do so. And now, my dear sir, let me conclude by saying that I sincerely pray, and fervently hope, that He "who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden

candlesticks," may incline your heart to accept of this invitation. Let me hear from you as soon as possible.

Believe me,
Very sincerely yours,
SAMUEL CHEDWORTH.

Mr. Vincent was not long in considering what answer to return to this document. He must make a beginning somewhere, and Crossberry, from all appearances, was not an unpropitious opening. He was within three weeks of the termination of his college career, and this seemed to be a sphere providentially opened for the exercise of his abilities. He notified his acceptance in a brief note to Samuel Chedworth, and was soon after informed by that gentleman that the communication had been received with enthusiastic delight by the Crossberry community.

He was expected to commence his stated labors in a month. What remained to be done in the meantime? Get married, of course, like a sensible man, and effect two important settlements simultaneously—take the responsibility of a church and a wife at the same time. Such an arrangement would double the burden and divide it, too. There would be two to bear it. Besides, if there was any truth in Mr. Jehu's suspicions about the matrimonial plot, it would be the quietest and most effectual method of squashing that little arrangement. "The girl he left behind him" was quietly informed

of his intentions, and no objections were made, except such delicate little hair-splitting and feminine evasiveness as were meant to be the orthodox preliminaries of a full acquiescence.

If there is one thing in particular which the inhabitants of this prosaic world could be well pardoned for being effectually sick of, it is that of an elaborate description of a wedding, with all its major and minor accessories. As far back as the memory of the oldest man there has been the same humdrum description of the "brilliant affair;" the youthful, blushing, blooming bride; the manly, handsome bridegroom; the magnificent trousseau; the fashionable assemblage; the costly and elegant presents; the fair youthful bridesmaids and the handsome groomsmen; and finishing up with a poetical and highly figurative description of the immaculate whiteness and gossamer texture of the bride's attire.

Mr. Paul Vincent's exchequer would not admit of a "brilliant affair," neither did his taste or desires prompt him in that direction; and "the girl he left behind him" had the good sense to coincide with him. There were two hearts as soft as the finest gossamer, and true as steel, which more than made up for the usual fashionable accessories. Accessories there were, but they were such as were absolutely necessary to clothe decently the central

fact:—a modest, unassuming ceremony in a plain edifice, one bridesmaid and one groomsman, a fair assemblage of sensible people and a good breakfast, two carriages and two pairs of greys, plenty of good wishes and an old shoe, and two or three lines of an official announcement in the Eastborough *Gazette*, to wit: "At Eastborough church, on the 21st instant, by the Rev. Alonzo Winfield, assisted by the Rev. W. J. Betworth, the Rev. Paul Vincent, late of Bewdley College, to Miss Amelia Fairchild, eldest daughter of the late Robert Fairchild, Esq., of Eastborough."

For the special benefit and gratification of the weather-wise, it may be briefly stated that the morning of that auspicious day opened with thick heavy clouds, which soon developed into a down pouring of rain that had the appearance of a deluge, making a literal inundation in the streets and gutters. Then the sun burst out and shone as if it had been that luminary's first appearance for many a day, and so resolved to do his best. Whether this was a true augury of the future of the happy pair remains to be seen. The honeymoon was spent in one of those pleasant watering-places on the northern coast, but it soon passed away, as all things earthly do, and these two, one now, were summoned to real life, to common joys, common hopes, common sorrows, and common victories.

CHAPTER V.

Reception of the new Pastor and his wife—The first sermon—Old Jehu and Josiah Buncombe welcome "the elect of Crossberry"—Settling down to house-keeping—Squire Rosewood and his family—Visit to Crossberry Park—The old mansion redolent of the memory of "The Merry Monarch"—Pen-and-ink sketches of the Squire and his family—Little Toppy—The Squire states his views on ministerial support.

THAT bright little spot of blooming green, the honey-moon, is past, the first ripe fruit of the nuptial tree is plucked, the journey to Crossberry is an accomplished fact temporary apartments are secured, congratulations on a somewhat limited scale have been exchanged, and the Rev. Paul Vincent and his newly-wedded wife, await with some anxiety, not unmixed with pleasure, their first appearance in that quaint old edifice redolent of the memory of Bunyan:—the former to be heard and seen; the latter to be scrutinized with eager and pardonable curiosity. That Sabbath morn was warm, and bright, and clear, answering well to the warmth and brightness in the two hearts that now beat in unison as

one. A pleasant walk of a mile and a half brought them to the Crossberry Zion; the scene of much future labor and holy toil. Samuel Chedworth and the other officers of the church received them warmly, and with much seeming urbanity and kindness. Punctually, to the minute, the youthful Pastor ascended that pulpit fragrant with so many pleasing memories. His youthful wife was allotted a seat in a pew at the foot of the pulpit stairs, where she was well nigh as conspicuous as her husband. Both could be well seen, and it might be intended they should be. Whether this was the motive of the arranged close proximity of the interesting pair, or whether it was intended as a benevolent concession to a supposed wish to be as near each other as possible, is a question which must be consigned to the limbo of insoluble motives and facts. Human nature is somewhat mixed, and its motives are not always easy to understand. The Pastor could not help observing, from certain quick furtive glances cast to a quarter contiguous to himself, that the attention paid to him, though good, was not altogether undivided. There was evidently a mute eloquence in the corner pew, contending somewhat with the vocal and more demonstrative eloquence of the pulpit. During the singing of the first hymn, the Pastor, who with a quiet eye and an attentive ear was taking in everything worth observation, noticed a deep bass voice

more than usually loud, and taking a furtive glance over the side of the pulpit, saw at once from whom the huge volume of sound proceeded. It was Josiah Buncombe, of the Nag's Head, using his leather lungs with all his might, and by his side was Simon Jehu, driver of the old tumble-down coach. With sorrow it must be confessed that it was not any particular reverence for the house of God that brought them to the sanctuary, but rather the novelty of the occasion. The Pastor was glad to see them, nevertheless. Coming once, they might come again, from a better motive, and receive some good. He remembered with glowing compassion and tenderness that the Master whom he served came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He discoursed with much unction, simplicity and power, upon the mutually dependent life subsisting between pastor and people; and concluded by exhorting his hearers to cultivate unwavering faith and steadfastness in every good work. The gist of the sermon may be expressed tersely in the well-known aphorism: "United we stand, divided we fall." A truth which other churches may take to heart as well as the one in Crossberry. The church's welfare and the pastor's are indefeasibly identical. They stand or fall together. If one be injured, the other will be equally affected. If one be blessed, the other will share the blessing. Lower the character

and standing of the pastor, and you lower the character and standing of the church. Raise the character and standing of the pastor, and you raise the character and standing of the church. These simple principles, obvious enough to "the children of this world, who are wiser in their generation than the children of light," unhappily, if understood, are little acted upon by the Christians of the nineteenth century. Many a minister is shorn of his character and standing by the petty malignity and diabolic malice of those who should know better; and who are insane enough to suppose they will even profit by his misfortunes. It is well if he has patience enough to take with equanimity the spoiling of his goods, and the loss of all things, till the final adjudication is given, from which there will be no appeal. But it need not be a matter of surprise if there should be one now and then of this unfortunate class, less patient and more human than his fellows, who, having been shorn of his reputation by the Philistines, like Samson of his locks, should lay out his last remaining strength to pull the temple down, and lay himself and his malignant traducers in one common ruin.

The sermon was concluded, the last hymn sung, and the benediction pronounced. Then commenced the usual round of handshaking and mutual congratulation between the Pastor and his flock. The

saints underwent this ceremonious operation inside, while the publicans and sinners, the outside supports, waited outside for an opportunity of grasping the new preacher's hand, and wishing him well. Foremost among the latter were Josiah Buncombe and Simon Jehu. Simon blinked his eyes, and extended his old palm to be pressed first. "I'se be glad to see ye, sir, and glad to hear ye. May be an old man's blessing baint worth much, but I give it ye freely, and I wish you well, sir." Then taking him aside a step, still holding his hand, he whispered softly in his ear, not to say anything about what had passed between them respecting "the young lady, the Ched'orths and the family consarn." He bid the old man rely upon his discretion, and have no fear on that score.

Josiah next stepped forward, introduced by his friend Jehu. He grasped the preacher's hand like a vice, and made the blood leave that region instantly, and the bones crack.

"I am glad, sir, to have this opportunity of paying my humble respects to the elect of Crossberry. I came down this morning to hear you, not because this is my general habit, but to oblige Simon. He likes you, sir, and speaks well of you. Glad I came. I like your voice, sir. You've a good voice. Lungs sound I should say. A good voice produces a tremendous impression, sir. It's like a sledge hammer;

when it comes down it's sure to tell, and break something."

"I am exceedingly obliged to you, Mr. Buncombe, for your kind wishes and appreciation, and I hope you will come again, and often. I knew you were here by observing your remarkable voice in the singing."

"Ah! ah! did you hear me sing, sir? Glad of that. Shows you noticed me. I like to be noticed by other and better folk. Does a man good, sir, to know he's noticed by a distinguished gentleman like yourself."

"Well you would be sure to be noticed, Mr. Buncombe, in any assembly and at any time, your vocal powers are so remarkable. I distinguished your voice above all the rest in the congregation."

"Ah! ah! ah! that was nothing, sir, would you like to hear me 'holler,' sir? Beg your pardon, sir; I didn't mean that; I'd forgotten it was Sunday. But some day, sir, ye shall hear me 'holler.' I should like to have your opinion, sir, about the soundness of my lungs. Good morning, sir."

"Good morning, Mr. Buncombe."

The first Sabbath in Crossberry passed pleasantly and profitably, and Mr. Chedworth expressed to his Pastor, at its close, the pleasure and profit with which he and the people generally had listened to his ministrations. Monday came with its inevitable

Mondayishness, and yet, withal, a feeling of temporary relief from the urgency of theological thought. The first and most urgent thing requiring attention and settlement was the securing of a suitable house. Crossberry did not boast the possession of a parsonage, which was certainly a defect, and somewhat of an inconvenience. Every church, especially in rural parishes, should have a parsonage. There are many advantages incident to such an arrangement. It is a permanent addition to the salary. It secures a residence without trouble and without fail, and within an easy distance, generally; and it obviates the necessity of removal at a time when it may be inconvenient, and, consequently, imparts a feeling of homely security. After a not very extended search two houses presented themselves, varying considerably in size and rent. The more eligible one in point of convenience and situation was selected. It was soon furnished, not luxuriously, but comfortably, and the young Pastor and his wife settled down to house-keeping. One servant of all work was engaged and added as a necessary adjunct to a small family. The house was somewhat large, detached, airy, roomy, and at the western extremity of the town. It had a large conservatory at the south side, with grape vines already showing ripe clusters of luscious fruit, purple and white; a garden of about three-quarters of an acre, stocked

with every variety of fruit tree, and enclosed in a brick wall about six feet high.

The various members of the community soon commenced their kindly calls, and were kindly and courteously received. Invitations poured in, which had to be attended to as circumstances and time would permit. One little billet, enclosed in a large envelope, intimated that Mr. and Mrs. Rosewood, of Crossberry Park, would be glad to be favored with the Rev. Mr. Vincent and Mrs. Vincent's company to lunch the following day; and that their carriage should call for them exactly at twelve o'clock. The invitation was accepted, and an answer to that effect immediately despatched. On the morrow, punctual to the minute, the family coach of Roscoe Rosewood, Esq., arrived. The Pastor and his wife stepped in, and had a pleasant drive to Crossberry Park, which was about a mile from the town. The kind host and hostess stepped out in front of the old mansion, to give their guests a kindly and welcome greeting. After fifteen minutes spent in introductions and mutual congratulations, lunch was announced. It was served in the old dining-room, wainscoted with cedar, and redolent of much merriment and feasting in the far-off retrospect of years. Here the "Merry Monarch" of England had more than once feasted with his favorite concubine; and that is her portrait looking pleasantly down upon you, and smiling so

bewitchingly, with a basket of flowers upon her left arm. Ah! thought Mr. Vincent, as he gazed upon the enchanting piece of canvas, beaming, and so life-like, it is no wonder that a monarch of such loose principles was attracted by such a face. Then he thought of the last act in that merry, but, in the moral aspect, sad life, when the dying King bid his brother, who was to succeed him in the regal office, "not to let poor Nellie starve." The table groaned under the weight of joints of beef, roast and boiled, turkeys, geese, fowls, boiled ham, vegetables, etc. This bountiful repast, technically called a lunch, being disposed of, the ladies adjourned to the drawing-room, while Mr. Rosewood and Mr. Vincent took a quiet stroll around the place. While they are thus occupied, let us make a rough pen-and-ink sketch of the former gentleman. He is eminently worthy of a better artist, for he is one of Nature's gentlemen.

Roscoe Rosewood is about forty-five years of age, broad, stout, slightly stooping, florid complexion, an open countenance; a high forehead, and tending to baldness; eyes indicative of shrewdness, and a mouth indicative of moderate firmness. The prevailing expression is benevolence. The hungry and the destitute, coming to his door, are never turned empty away. Kindness and goodness flow out of him as naturally and spontaneously as water

from a spring. He is not a member of the Crossberry Church, but he and his family are regular attendants, and he is a liberal supporter of the cause. His kindliness of heart and benevolence of life put to shame the meagre philanthropy of many whose pretensions are higher, and who profess to be the followers of Him who spent all His life in doing good. If a poor laboring man brings him a message from a distant neighbor, he is not permitted to depart with a supercilious look, or a cold "thank you"; a full supply of food and drink is placed before him, and he can eat and drink till he is satisfied before he departs. If an unthinking boy should be found out in a slight trespass, or a small depredation, he is not hauled up before the magistrate, and sentenced to six months imprisonment, for so slight an offence as stealing a turnip. He is taken in, and locked up for an hour; and then released, and fed, and sent home with a kindly warning, and a kind admonition to be a better boy in future. Said a laboring man once: "The man who injures Squire Rosewood ought to be hanged."

Mrs. Rosewood is physically robust and stout like her husband, but taller by four or five inches. A complexion not florid, but dark; a forehead indicative of moderate intelligence. Sundry twitches of a somewhat small mouth, and constant, unconscious blinking of the eyes, show a highly sensitive organization, and

indicate that she is probably a considerable nervous sufferer. These things, clearly observable, partly obscure, but cannot wholly hide, the general expression of kindliness and great benevolence.

They have seven children, pledges of wedded love, and the source of wedded joy; all girls, and varying in age from six years to fifteen. Without exception, they have inherited from their parents the general expression and character of unostentatious benevolence. It is their evident delight to be kind, affable, and useful to others. A happy family, blessed with contentment, and with that medium condition which is the seed plant of true social enjoyment; a commodious residence replete with every convenience, and embowered in oak and chestnut; a plentiful endowment of worldly substance, more than enough to gratify every lawful wish or desire; the possession of both the power and the wish to throw the mantle of kindly practical benevolence over their less fortunate neighbors; and the desire to please breathing in every word, and running like a golden thread through every action.

Squire Rosewood and the Pastor have been making a pleasant tour through the conservatories and the well-kept garden, and have been looking at the prize cattle and the poultry, and now they are just entering the park again. The clink of the gate has

startled up from his cool retreat, under a wide-spreading oak, a Highland pony. He is little more than the size of a Newfoundland dog. He has a long tail, and shaggy coat and mane; he cannot see, but he pricks his ears, and immediately recognises the locality of the sound, and starts off at an easy trot in the direction of the Squire. He at once knows his kind master when he hears the kindly voice and feels the familiar hand stroking his shaggy mane; he paws his feet and pricks his ears and rolls his sightless eyeballs in mute eloquence, and would speak if he could.

"That is the smallest pony I think I ever saw, Mr. Rosewood; he seems to know you well, and seems very fond of you."

"Yes, sir, this is Toppy. I bought him several years ago, and had a little gig made to fit him exactly. The gig holds two of moderate size comfortably. Mrs. Rosewood and I used to drive him, but he's getting old now and is stone blind, and we don't like to trust him with the children. He's a good goer though, and for eight or ten miles he'll go as fast as my grey mare, but he requires careful handling; he does nothing now, and has plenty to eat, and lives like a gentleman. I don't like to sell him, because he might not get good usage. The gig is in good order, and will accommodate you and Mrs. Vincent well; and you can have both any time you

want. He's doing nothing, and a journey now and then will do him good."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Rosewood, for your kindness. I'm not much of a driver, but I think I can manage him. Mrs. Vincent and I will take a ride with him some day. We can make a day of it, and visit several families at a distance."

At a word from the Squire Toppy trotted off again to his cool retreat under the oak, while Mr. Rosewood and Mr. Vincent walked up the avenue in the direction of the mansion.

"You have a pleasant home, and seem to be possessed of almost every earthly comfort, Mr. Rosewood."

"Yes, sir, I've a good deal to be thankful for. I've five hundred acres, a pretty fair balance at the banker's, a pleasant home, as you say, and I am blessed with a good wife, and seven affectionate, dutiful children. I had a queer bringing up though in my young days. My mother died when I was quite a youngster, and my father took to bad habits, and was drunk most of his time. His unfortunate example might have ruined me, but it created in me a feeling of disgust, and I fortunately took the right turn, and by the blessing of God have done well."

"You realize that you are a steward of God's mercies, Mr. Rosewood?"

"I do, sir; I make no profession; I'm very thank-

ful, and very happy; I like to do a good turn to a neighbor, and I always hold what I have with a loose hand. That's my principle, sir,—not to hold too tightly what you have. There are some folks stick like a leech to everything, great or small. To get anything out of them, for any purpose, is like drawing their heart's blood. They squirm like an eel at the bare mention of money, unless you have some to give them, and then the change is instantaneous and marvellous. When I knew that you were coming to Crossberry, sir, I doubled my subscription, without asking, and so did others; and I shall be glad to give more if it be necessary. I believe in a minister having a good salary, not only enough to keep him and his family respectably, and place him above worldly care, but enough to meet every requirement of his standing, education, and taste, and enough to leave a sufficient surplus for his family in any event, and for old age when it comes. Yes, sir, 'the laborer is worthy of his hire,' for he has given up every prospect of worldly advantage to serve the highest interests of others, and his support is not a charity, but a plain duty."

"I am glad to hear you express such broad, liberal, and, I may add, common-sense views, Mr. Rosewood. I wish they were more generally held, and more generally acted upon. It would be an immense advantage to men of my class if they were, but, un-

fortunately, they are not. We feel a delicacy in expressing ourselves upon this question, fearing that our motives may be misconstrued. Now and then, an old veteran, who has grown venerable and influential in the service, especially if he has plenty of means, and is independent of everybody, may stand up with impunity, and give the churches a good drubbing upon this question; but a young man is supposed to keep quiet, take what he can get, much or little, and be thankful for small mercies. Why, a minister can scarcely refer to money in any shape, or in any connection, however innocent, without incurring the liability of being charged with mercenary feelings."

"That is so, sir. I hear them sometimes talking that way about a minister being fond of money, and I just laugh at them for their simplicity and folly. I tell them there's very little liability of a minister getting worldly-minded, because they afford him so little chance. They think there is a vital connection between poverty and spiritual-mindedness,—that the former produces the latter, but they don't recognize the connection as having any possible application to themselves. There's many a man, pretty well to do, who doesn't pay as much towards the salary of his minister in the course of the year as I pay a small boy for blacking shoes and doing odd jobs."

"But, Mr. Rosewood, judging from your standpoint, how do you account for the prevalence of these small views and this meagre liberality, in relation to ministerial support? It cannot be because the Bible is either silent or not sufficiently explicit upon the question. The references, exhortations and illustrations are abundant. 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' 'If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?' 'The laborer is worthy of his hire.' 'Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.' 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse.' 'There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.' And there are many others that might be mentioned. Besides, the genius of the Gospel is the very essence of munificence and liberality."

"Well, I am not able to go very deeply into the scriptural argument, sir. You are much better qualified for that than I, but from my standpoint, which is an outside one, and, judging by common observation and common sense, the causes are many: there is first the inherent selfishness of human nature, which is sufficiently marked in all, but more marked in some than in others. Then there is a considerable lack of proper instruction and training.

People should be informed, guided and drilled in the performance of this duty, as well as any other. If to give be a sacred duty, and not something which people may do, or leave undone according to their pleasure, it should be illustrated and enforced with as much amplitude and persistency as its importance merits. If it be not a duty, why leave it alone; don't say anything about it, even on special occasions, but leave people to do just as they please. Excuse me, sir, if I suggest that ministers are not unfrequently remiss in explaining and enforcing this duty from the pulpit. They should not mind what people may say and do say. If it be a part of 'the whole counsel,' they should declare it, whether men will hear or forbear. And then it may be, sir, that sufficient attention is not paid to small subscriptions and small subscribers. There are many, and they are generally the largest number, who cannot give much, but they should be encouraged to give what they can, however small. As the Scotch say:—'Many mickles make a muckle.' Why, sir, one of the main elements in the very successful financial policy of the greatest finance minister the world ever produced was the scrupulous attention he paid to littles. A friend of mine, the other day, bought a large estate from a nobleman, who was obliged to sell on account of the failure of his fortune from extravagance in

various shapes. He bought the whole as it stood; land, mansion, furniture, everything. In coming into possession he noticed the absence of a small cabinet, curiously inlaid, in one of the rooms. He mentioned the matter to His Lordship, who admitted it had been removed by his orders, and did not suppose that so small a thing would be either prized or missed, as it was of little worth except as a family keepsake. 'Allow me to remind your Lordship,' said the purchaser, 'that if I had not, all my life, paid strict attention to little things, I should probably not have been able to buy your estate; and allow me to suggest that, possibly, if your Lordship had been more careful of littles, you might have been under no necessity to sell it.' There was more truth than poetry in that quiet rebuke, sir. And then I have two neighbors here, not many miles off; they are brothers, have fine estates, and are worth millions. Have any dealings with them, even on a small scale, and you will find how the smallest account will undergo their personal supervision. They will scrutinize every item closely, and see that they have their money's worth before they pay down the cash. And then, sir, there is one other matter I wish to mention. Every subscriber, however small his subscription, if it be in full proportion to his means, should be treated as courteously, as respectfully, and as gratefully as the largest subscriber. Let him feel

that he is recognized and appreciated, when he has done up to the full measure of his capacity."

How long the Squire might have continued in this eloquent, common-sense strain, if the ladies had not been seen coming down the avenue to enquire, in a somewhat bantering tone, the reason of so long an absence of the two gentlemen, it is difficult to conjecture.

They took a quiet stroll round the park together. The children came trooping along behind, and were soon enjoying themselves among the haycocks, and in taking rides, in turn, upon little Toppy, who seemed to enjoy the fun as much as they. They watched the children in their gambols and frolic, and wondered which was best, the poetry or the prose of life. A child, or a philosopher, might say both; but most people would probably dispute the point, and arrive at no satisfactory conclusion. Both are best in their proper season.

The Pastor and his wife reluctantly signified their wish to return, as they expected to make some calls before the evening closed upon them. They were pressed to stay longer but could not. The carriage was ordered round to convey them home, but they preferred to walk; and bidding a hearty and thankful adieu for the present to the Squire and his wife, they sped slowly along, the Pastor's wife talking, while he was quietly musing. He was think-

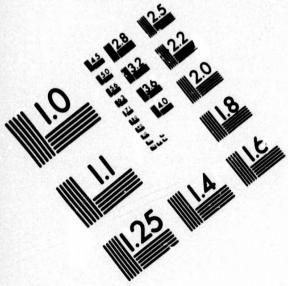
ing of the Squire's liberal views and common-sense observations upon an important and practical subject; of his having made no profession, and yet withal so kindly, benevolent, and enlightened; and he thought that, possibly, he would preach next Sunday from the text: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

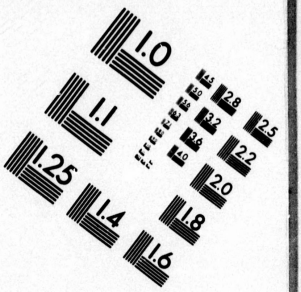
CHAPTER VI.

Non-statistical—Sketch of work—Peculiarities of the sphere and people—Class distinctions—A difficult problem—A pastoral reverie—"The gates ajar"—One step from the sublime to the ridiculous—An important meeting, at which Josiah Buncombe and others state their views—Equine accommodation—Theology and finance.

THOSE who expect, in these pages, elaborate statistical statements of what are called "spiritual results" will be liable to considerable disappointment. There will be a modest record, here and there, of "something attempted, something done"; but the various articles will not be ticketed and marked in such large flaming characters as to attract public attention. Neither will they be subjected to the arithmetical process, multiplied and re-multiplied, and then multiplied again, so as to present an array of facts and figures that shall redound to the glory of the modest hero or any one else.

Every century is marked with some dominant characteristic, or some special peculiarity. The latter part of the nineteenth century is a statistical period. Everything is tried by statistics; measured by statistics; proved or disproved by statistics.





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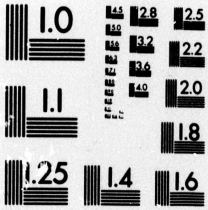

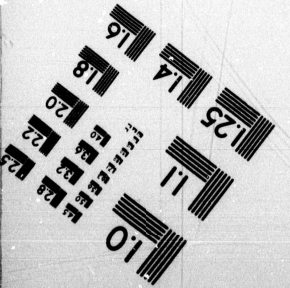

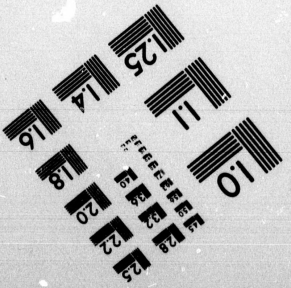

Every piece of individual, collective, ecclesiastical, or national glorification is built upon a statistical foundation. The great question, paramount above all others, is, not what an individual, a social community, a church, or a nation has done, but what can they, individually or collectively, show they have done, in such a way that others can see as well as themselves. Can they put the results in the window, and let others look, and wonder; or, what is better, put them in figures that a school boy, who has just learnt the multiplication table, can understand. Statistics,—large pictures for small boys,—are the distinctive feature and glory of the age in which we live. They form a ready, formidable, and unimpeachable argument, by which anything and everything can be proved or disproved, applauded or condemned. People seem to forget that there is another book, writ with an immortal pen, wherein every human thought and transaction are carefully recorded; and that, possibly, at the last day it may be discovered that there is a considerable divergence between that record and the statistical records of the world and the church.

It may be presumed that the pastor of the Crossberry church, if he lived in the statistical period, was but slightly affected by the prevailing statistical distemper. The Crossberry community had already come to the conclusion that their young

pastor was somewhat of a character in his way, possessing, in a marked degree, originality of thought and fearless independence, both in speaking and acting; that, though young, he was a little old-fashioned and not fond of dumb show, and that he brought to the exercise of his chief function modesty of demeanor, solid ability, and a judicious reserve of real power. He told his congregation more than once, or twice, or thrice, in simple direct terms, that he was more concerned about being good and doing good, than seeming to be the one or being able to prove the other. That he was desirous, above all things, of doing his duty faithfully, and that he could confidently leave the results in His hands whose bounden duty and pleasure it was to take care of them. That he did his work fully, as well as conscientiously, is evident from a plan drawn out carefully and gummed neatly to his study wall. It was not meant for any eye except his own, but another may assume the office of noting its various particulars and publishing them.

Sunday, preaching: morning, half-past ten; afternoon, half-past two; evening, half-past six. Monday evening, prayer meeting, at 8 o'clock. Tuesday evening, preaching, at 7 o'clock, to a small, affiliated congregation, in a neighboring parish, Wednesday evening, meeting for religious conversation. Thursday evening, a lecture. Friday even-

ing, Teachers' meeting. Saturday evening, prayer meeting. Friday, work in the study, from nine a.m to six p.m. Saturday, ditto. In addition to these duties may be added those of visiting the sick and the mourners, burying the dead, and marrying the living.

It will be seen from this sketch of labor, which the Pastor never showed to others, except so far as it was made apparent by hard, persistent work, that his position was not in his own estimation, and could not be in that of others, a sinecure. It was quiet, hard work all the week through, and he evidently meant it to be such. He desired to be "a workman needing not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The amount of head and heart work involved in the foregoing list of weekly engagements cannot be estimated by the many—the few only can understand. Four sermons, one lecture, four meetings, two days of protracted hard study, visiting, and other duties, in one week, and these repeated the year throughout, are certainly enough to tax to the utmost the most complete consecration and the most splendid abilities. The amount of nervous force expended in the performance of such manifold duties is immense, but, unfortunately, seldom thought of until it is suddenly discovered, from certain unmistakable symptoms, that nature refuses to be further imposed upon, and

imperiously demands a season of protracted rest for the recuperation of her powers. It is singular, too, how curiously and complacently good men can look on, and never utter a word of kindly expostulation or warning, while a pastor is visibly working himself to death; as if, like De Quincy, they considered murder, and especially self-murder, one of the fine Arts.

The inhabitants of Crossberry were what is called, in a general way, an agricultural community, being made up of a few rich men, a fair number of small tradesmen, some well-to-do farmers, and a large percentage of dependent, poor people. Class distinctions were drawn with a firm, imperious hand. These distinctions were observed, where, above all other places, they should never be, in the house of God; but the Jewish plan was reversed, the poor occupying the higher seats in the synagogue. They mounted the stairs on all occasions, special or otherwise, and reverentially looked down upon their more opulent brethren below. The spirit of distinctiveness was carried even further than this. While the richer part of the community, occupying the body of the church, sat in families, and promiscuously, the sexes were divided in the galleries, the masculine portion occupying one side and the feminine portion the other. The Pastor noticed this arrangement as somewhat singular, and asked the reason of

it, thinking there might be some special cause for so exceptional a phenomenon. He received the answer, which is always given, when no intelligent or sufficient reason is at hand,—"it has always been so."

The poorer and more dependent portion of the community, with one or two exceptions, formed the church; while the opulent and more intelligent were, what Lord Brougham claimed to be in relation to the Established Church, regular attendants and outside supports. Thus, unfortunately, the legislative functions, so far as they existed, were exercised by the dependent and least intelligent class; while the main support constantly lay with those who had nothing to do with the management of affairs. The evils attendant upon this anomalous condition were constantly felt. Two, especially, were early noted by the young pastor. First, it gave a preponderating influence to the two or three more intelligent ones who happened to be in the inner circle; and, second, it constantly exercised a depressing influence upon the outsiders, whose good-will and support were, in no small measure, necessary to the stability and prosperity of the cause.

In the political world taxation without representation is said to be tyranny, and there is much logical plausibility in the proposition. Some have gone so far as to apply this principle to the Church, and hence have arrived at the conclusion that the Church should

not take support, or even expect it, from any one outside of its pale. Whatever may be said about the tenability or correctness of the premises, one thing is certain, if they are once granted the conclusion is irresistible. Perhaps a solution of the problem might be found where truth is generally found, in a middle course. Let the Church occupy itself with its *spiritual functions and work*, and accord, at the same time, to the whole community of worshippers and supporters the right to manage all matters which are related to business and finance.

"The spirit of hearing" in the Crossberry community was considerable. The attendance upon the services was invariably good. They never seemed tired of hearing good sermons preached, and they loved their young pastor, not only for his personal qualities, but especially for the clearness and fidelity with which he exhibited the truth.

The Sabbath day was strictly and devoutly observed by all classes. Not a brawl or anything unseemly was to be seen or heard in the streets, but quietness and decorum reigned supreme. Not a drunken person was to be seen the year throughout; and this was not the result of legislative or municipal enactments, but of the moral sense of the community which constantly frowned down all excess and unseemly exhibitions.

Next to the flock of which the young pastor had

been made overseer, the object which most engaged his reverential affections was the quaint old edifice in which he preached. He loved to stroll into the church, and seating himself in a corner pew, all alone, indulge in a delicious reverie for hours. See him there now,—he, the living, surrounded by the pious and noble dead of two centuries. The graveyard is full of noble dust, and monumental marble, and numerous tablets adorn the walls of the sanctuary. There is one small tablet, on the right hand side of the pulpit there, which speaks of one held in grateful and undying remembrance, as "the sagacious counsellor, the faithful pastor, and the eloquent preacher." He served the Church seventeen years, and then was called up higher to do better and holier service there. Another attests the seraphic fervor and indefatigable industry of one who finished his course joyfully, after forty years of holy, fruitful toil. That one built in the solid wall there which divides the church from the vestry carries you back to a time when "the Immortal Dreamer" must have been hovering about here, with his homely garb, his broad face, his manly brow, his plain speech, and his almost inspired capacity for telling what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." A goodly company bowing before the throne now, and blending their voices with "the multitude which no man can number," were first taught to tune their harps here. Near,

perhaps very near, this "cloud of witnesses" may be now, looking with eyes that flash celestial brightness upon the sacred spot, upon the cold marble tablets on the wall, upon the youthful figure wrapt in delicious reverie in the corner pew. An intangible presence fills the solitude, the shadows deepen, the clouds begin to roll, and swathe themselves into rainbow brightness, and a path of gold; a momentary glimpse of unspeakable magnificence, is obtained; an echo of the far-off distant choir is heard; 'there are the shining ones,' 'the great white throne,' 'the pure river of water of life clear as crystal,' 'the flowery meads,' 'the jasper pavements,' 'the golden streets,' 'the white-robed throng,' 'the King in His beauty.' The youthful figure slowly rises, and steps out of the corner pew. It was a dream, and yet not all a dream. His reverie will be profitable to others as well as himself, for next Sabbath he thinks he will preach from the text: 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be.'

There is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous—so the Pastor found, after stepping out of the church, where he had been enjoying a delightful thought communion with the great and good of the past. He was greeted by a dozen members of his congregation, who were engaged in the very prosaic, but necessary occupation, of examining some old rickety, wooden sheds, which were de-

signed to afford temporary accommodation for the horses and vehicles of those members of the congregation who were under the necessity of driving to church. They had been allowed to fall into a condition of great dilapidation, and were very much in need of thorough repair, if not of re-building. The Committee of Ways and Means consisted of all those who made constant use of them. There were present: Squire Rosewood, Samuel Chedworth, Nathan Rosewood (brother of the Squire), Deacon Graswell, John Swellew, Phineas Cumbermore, Obadiah Walker, Ebenezer Scamp, Walter Pettigrew, Robert Smallwell, Josiah Buncombe and Simon Jehu. The latter two gentlemen had been induced to attend the church pretty regularly since the new pastor's settlement, and, in common with others, had made free use of such equine accommodation as was afforded. They were, therefore, considered as having some interest in the present movement, and had been summoned to assist in the deliberations upon the "ways and means."

Squire Rosewood, being the one of most consequence and influence, financially, was unanimously voted to the chair. The latter article not being on hand he took his seat on the stump of a tree, and immediately called the meeting to order and said:—"Gentlemen, the object of our meeting is tolerably well known to most, if not all, of you. Neverthe-

less, a few words of formal explanation may not be out of place or totally unnecessary. (Hear, hear.) You must not, gentlemen, jump at once to the conclusion that I am going to offer these explanations, because you hear me thus speak. I have no such intentions. I shall confine myself exclusively to my duties as chairman, and do all I can to guide your deliberations to a successful issue. There is one present, whom we all highly respect and delight to honor, who can state briefly and clearly the object of this meeting—I refer to our highly respected Pastor. I would venture the conjecture that he has had more to do with bringing us together on this occasion than appears on the surface. We all know his innate modesty, and that he loves to do good by stealth. (Hear, hear.) Were he not present I could and would say more; but I know it would be painful to him to hear even his just praises sounded here, or anywhere else. I call upon the Pastor to address you."

The Pastor responded and said,—"My friends, I may as well, at the very outset of my few remarks, frankly admit the soft impeachment thrown out by the Chairman, that I have had something to do with your coming together on this occasion. As I have been furtively, but publicly, challenged upon this point, it would be false modesty in me to affect ignorance or perpetuate concealment. It was cer-

tainly my wish, if not my design, that you should meet here on this occasion, to consider and devise means for remedying an existing evil, which is too apparent to every eye to need any description. I have full confidence in your wisdom and liberality. The need of something being done will, I presume, not be questioned; therefore, the only questions remaining for consideration are two:—Shall these old sheds, which have afforded shelter and accommodation for your horses and vehicles so long, be pulled down and new ones erected in their stead; or are they capable of such solid repairs as will make them available and serviceable for many years to come? And then there is the further question, are you, gentlemen, who are most intimately concerned in this matter, prepared to meet the expense incident to such re-building or such repairs?"

At the conclusion of this speech, the chairman, seconded by a general call, requested Mr. Buncombe to state his views. That gentleman responded with alacrity, and clearing his throat with about a dozen ahems, commenced:—

"Gentlemen, I wish to know, in the first place, whether I am speaking sufficiently loud?"

"Yes, go on Josiah; we hear ye well enough, no fear o' that Josiah," whispered Simon Jehu.

The chairman also intimated that, possibly, Mr,

Buncombe's very mildest tones would be distinctly heard, and be most acceptable.

When this interruption had subsided, the speaker cleared his throat again, and re-commenced :—

"Gentlemen, I am glad to have that distinct, emphatic, and I may add, universal assurance, that you can hear me; for what is the use of a man speaking if he cannot be heard. It is always a pleasure to me, gentlemen, to lift up my voice. (Hear, hear.) I may say, gentlemen, that I like the elect of Crossberry, whose presence and counsel we are favored with on this occasion, because he has a good voice, and knows how to use it. Like the prophet, he lifts up his voice with strength, and is not afraid. As to the immediate question in hand, I think I could soon prove to you, gentlemen, the necessity not only of repairing, but of re-building, that dilapidated equine establishment. It is in such a perfectly rotten condition that I have every confidence I could blow the roof off by 'hollering' at it. (Hear, hear.) Will it be acceptable to you, gentlemen, if I put that little theory of mine to a practical test? (No, no, echoed on all sides.) Well, gentlemen, I am sorry your unanimous voice denies me what would be both a pleasure and a privilege. I often think when I put my nag in there, that he must think, if he thinks at all, that there is a strange connection between singing and bad accommodation. I go in for re-

building, gentlemen. Knock the old concern down, and put up something that the poor beasts will regard as respectable. The financial aspect of the question, gentlemen, is, I confess, a little too deep for me, and I leave that willingly for more capacious minds to grasp, and more eloquent tongues to descant upon."

Mr. Buncombe made full use of his immense lung power to lay particular emphasis upon the last sentence in his remarkable speech. At his suggestion too, and with the general concurrence, the chairman called upon Simon Jehu.

The old driver, with great diffidence, responded as follows :—

"Respected friends and neighbors, I'se be no speaker. I be sixty-three next May, and I ne'er wor a speaker; but as I hev been honor'd by being called on this occasion, I may obsarve that I agree in the remarks as has been remarked upon by Josiah, and the Pasture, and the Squire. I'se nothing more to say, friends, and I beg leave to retire."

Suiting the action to the word, the old man, all unconscious for the time being of his own whereabouts, or the precise geographical location of any one else, stepped back, and trod upon Mr. Buncombe's toes; and that gentleman, being particularly sensitive in that region, set up a tremendous howl, which, in the stillness of the graveyard, resounded

like the crack of doom. All present felt the stunning effect of the tremendous vocal concussion; the old sheds seemed not wholly unconscious, and an effectual damper was put upon any further speechifying. The conservative proclivities of the gentlemen present being in the ascendant, it was resolved that the sheds should be thoroughly repaired; that Deacon Graswell should superintend the work, and that the Pastor should be respectfully requested to collect the necessary funds. The meeting separated, after passing the usual vote of thanks to the chairman. The Pastor took his seat along with Samuel Chedworth, at that gentleman's invitation, and the two drove off together in the direction of Crossberry. As soon as the horse had taken the turn, got into the high road, and settled down to an easy pace, a desultory conversation commenced.

"What do you think of the meeting, Mr. Chedworth? Is the result satisfactory, and such as you expected?"

"Well, sir, I think we got through tolerably well. I was a little afraid, at one time, that Mr. Buncombe would spoil everything. There is no saying nay to him, when he once begins. What is in him must come out of him, and in his own peculiar fashion. I am glad, though, he has taken a notion of coming to church, and sending his children to Sunday School. He and they may receive some good; anyhow they can get no harm."

"Well, do you know, Mr. Chedworth, I have taken quite a fancy to that man, with all his eccentricities and boisterous, rollicking humor. There's a great deal of individuality in him. He's quite a character; his physical vitality seems to be immense. He has enough of that article to stock a dozen men, and keep them going for a life time. It seems almost as if he would burst, if he didn't take a pride in using his lungs well on every available occasion. His overflowing vitality seems to find a vent in that particular direction. I am glad, as you say, he has taken a notion of coming to church pretty regularly. I trust he may become savingly affected. Why, if he were a converted man, and his spiritual fervor bore any sort of proportion to his physical vitality, he might become a prodigy for usefulness; in fact, a second Paul. Let you and I, Mr. Chedworth, take God at His word, instantly, as touching this one thing, and pray for him. Who knows what Almighty grace may do for him, and through him."

Mr. Chedworth was silent for a few moments, evidently musing,—then he said:

"Well, sir, I confess I am not so sanguine as you are, and perhaps I have not as much faith. I have known Mr. Buncombe many years, and I confess my knowledge does not help my faith. I know God can do wonderful things when He willeth to do them. If God willed this He would, no doubt, do

it; but how can we ascertain anything decisive or satisfactory about it?"

"Why, easy enough, Mr. Chedworth,—take His word for it. God stakes His own existence upon the reality of His willingness. 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' Surely, that is plain enough."

"Yes, my dear sir, that is true enough, but, bear in mind, it is a general statement. When we come to a particular application, the case is different. The question is, not what God willeth in general, but does He will in that particular direction, and in this particular case?"

"I think so, Mr. Chedworth, and for this reason,—the greater includes the less. If God's designs of mercy are toward mankind in general, and as a whole, they must, as a matter of logical necessity, be toward any particular individual. Besides, God must be as full and impartial in His willingness to bestow spiritual benefactions, as He is in the bestowment of temporal blessings."

Mr. Chedworth was again silent for a few moments and mused. It is difficult to admit a consciousness of defeat, in any matter, great or small. The Pastor judged that he was wishful to discontinue the discussion of the subject, without being under the necessity of saying so. He, therefore, judiciously contrived to cut the matter short, and let his theo-

logical antagonist down easy, by resuming his observations:

"Mr. Chedworth, this is a difficult subject, and one which has been a battle-ground for centuries, for some of the acutest intellects. It is, therefore, not very likely that we can settle the matter in a day. With your permission we can talk over the subject again, another time."

At the conclusion of these judicious observations Mr. Chedworth brightened up again, and seemed ready to resume conversation, but upon a different topic.

"What do you think of your appointment this afternoon, sir?"

"What appointment, Mr. Chedworth?"

"Why, to collect the funds for repairing the sheds."

"Well, to tell you the truth, frankly, Mr. Chedworth, I do not like it. I thought at the time that some one else would have been more suitable for such an office. I did not care to say so, because it might have thrown a damper upon the whole affair; and it might have been construed into an unwillingness on my part to take a practical interest in the work. It is not the work I object to, but the principle involved in it. I think a minister should have nothing to do with financial affairs, except to take his salary when it is due. The less he concerns himself

about money matters the better. It should never be necessary for him to do so. Least of all should he have occasion to collect money for any purpose. He may explain general principles bearing upon Christian liberality, and he may apply those principles, so far as Scripture warrants him in doing so, to the individual conscience. If there be a necessity for it he should not hesitate to urge the duty of giving with as much persistency and fearlessness as any other duty. He may even be justified, within certain reasonable limits, in urging his own personal claims, if they be unduly neglected."

"I am very pleased to hear you make such observations, sir, for I have the good fortune this time to agree with you in most of them. I endorse your opinion thoroughly about ministers having as little to do with finances as possible. I cannot help wishing you had been spared the doubtful honor of that appointment this afternoon. You may ask people for money, for this object, who in their hearts don't want to give, and yet they will not like to refuse you. They may give, but they will be liable to look upon it as a kind of benevolent concession made to you, personally; and you are thereby thrown into a false position at once. No, I wish some one else had been appointed, the Treasurer of the church for instance."

"I am quite of your opinion, Mr. Chedworth,

that such work is liable to place a minister in an invidious position; but, as I have been entrusted with the duty, I will endeavor to discharge it. Do you anticipate my finding any difficulty in raising the money?"

"No, sir, I think not; at least, I hope not. I will give you a fair subscription, but I would advise you to commence with Squire Rosewood; he is pretty liberal generally, and it is best to have the largest subscription to begin with. Others will be influenced, in a measure, by what he does. You may rely upon mine."

At this point of the discussion the carriage drew up in front of the Pastor's residence, and he, stepping out and shaking hands with Mr. Chedworth, bid him good evening.

CHAPTER VII.

The medium condition—A mental picture—Many things to be thankful for—A few stray clouds—A model man—The rich and the poor—A prevalent practice severely condemned—The distinguishing characteristic of Messiah's Advent—Nineteenth Century Christianity—The rich have the Gospel preached unto them.

It may be safely affirmed of man, in any given condition or circumstances, that he hath three stages. In the first he is pretty well satisfied with every thing and every body. This is the period of what may be called blissful ignorance. He has not yet eaten of "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." He supposes everything fair because, upon the first blush, it seems so; every man honest and good because, upon first acquaintance, he has no palpable reason to come to any other conclusion.

The second stage is a modification of the first. He is satisfied with many things yet, but observation and experience have taught him to be dissatisfied with others. Actual contact has revealed certain defects which were not at first recognised. All things, and all men, are not what they seem. This condition is the average mundane experience.

The third stage, which unhappily is sometimes reached, is the very antipodes of the first. A man becomes dissatisfied with almost every thing and every body. Nothing pleases or satisfies. Every thing that touches the lips is gall. All contact with humanity is irritating. Unfortunate condition this, and it is sure to end in something worse, if it continue. It is not always, purely or wholly, the result of personal fault. In many cases it may be so, and in most cases it is partly so, but the case is conceivable and actual where darkness and suffering, almost unbearable, supervene vicariously.

It may be proper to state that the Rev. Paul Vincent had passed the first stage, and arrived at the second; and there, judging from his feelings and surroundings, he is likely to remain some time. His condition is eminently desirable and enjoyable on the whole. He has many, very many, sources of pleasure and satisfaction, with only here and there a flickering shadow athwart his sunny path. Let us endeavor to present such a view as he mentally presented to himself at this time.

He has been two years a husband, and is now a father, and his young wife a mother, and two years the pastor of the Crossberry church. He is sitting thoughtfully in his arm chair, in his little study, surrounded by his books; the walls adorned with pictures, which are intimately connected with his individual history. His young wife is sitting opposite

him, and the two are complacently and affectionately looking upon little Amy, seated on the hearthrug between them, alternately nursing her doll and hugging her feeding bottle. He is making a mental picture of the sum of God's mercies to him and his; not leaving out the few stray clouds which form an appropriate background to the scene. First, personal and social. He has good health, and a mind to work, and increasing interest in his work. He has a good, loving wife; as true and genuine as woman can be. They loved each other in early years, and have had no other love, and never wished for any other. They suit each other well. He is strong-willed naturally; while she is, as naturally, of a yielding temperament. The oak and the ivy; one willing and able to give support, the other instinctively looking for it all the time; and both satisfied with their relative characteristics and position. Their natures are already doubly blended and interlocked in the little image scrambling on the floor, that has already commenced lisping those two magic words, which send a thrill through the parental heart.

He has a good home neatly and sufficiently furnished, and having every useful and necessary accommodation; a large garden, enclosing it on three sides, worked diligently with his own hands, and yielding an abundant supply of vegetables and fruit. He feels this to be no small advantage, as he is

fond of nature and nature's fruit. He spends one hour a day in such light healthful occupation as a garden affords;—trimming the grape vines; tying up the raspberry canes; training the branches of the cherry, plum, peach, and apricot trees; grubbing the cabbage plants; trimming the box edges, and keeping a clean, clear path fit for a queen to walk on.

He has a church to preach in, which, although it can lay no claim to architectural elegance, is rich in historical reminiscences, which will cast a halo of glory over the old edifice as long as it stands, and over the sacred spot "till time shall be no longer."

He has a kind, appreciative, liberal people. All classes honor and love him for what he is and for what he does. The intelligent appreciate his broad culture, the poor his heartfelt sympathy, and all recognize his strong individuality, and unflinching fidelity to truth.

They know he is what he seems to be, and have confidence in him. They are not unmindful of his wants. They made him a present of a good sum of money six weeks after his settlement, no doubt with the intention of rendering a delicate and valuable service, at a seasonable time. The receipts for the first year showed a handsome surplus over incidental expenses and the stipulated salary, which was promptly handed over to him by Samuel Chedworth, the Treasurer of the Church, with the sincere

hope that it might be larger next year. Little gifts are constantly coming in, which, in the course of the year, amount to something considerable; and they are doubly welcome and valuable as the expression of thoughtful kindness, and feeling hearts.

By the kindness of Squire Rosewood little Toppy and the gig are as much at his disposal as if they belonged to him. He has all the carriage accommodation he needs, without expense or trouble. "Take them whenever you want," said the Squire, "whether I am here or not. Bill is always somewhere about the place, and he will harness up for you, and attend to the unharnessing when you come back. Command him, sir, in this matter, as if he were your own servant. He is mine, and that is my will, and he knows it, and will attend to you on all occasions without a murmur."

Of social intercourse he has enough; not highly cultured, it is true, but kindly, affable, pleasant, polite, and always savoring, more or less, of the fragrance of a teeming and fruitful earth. Farmers will talk, if they talk at all, about what most concerns them, and what they thoroughly understand,—cattle, crops, markets, agricultural shows,—and he always likes to hear them. There is the Squire, who never goes into a show without bringing out several prizes. His side-board in the old dining-room, groans under the weight of large silver cups, with their appropriate inscription, notifying when they

were given, and for what. He takes just pride, especially, in showing a fine set of solid silver ware, which he gained for the best cultivated farm. That he looks upon as a trophy indeed. He tells you, with honest glee, how, when the judges came round, he set before them the best he had; and how they went away as well satisfied with their gastronomical entertainment, as with the well-kept farm, praising both in no stinted terms.

Then as to the deacons of the church, who have, necessarily, such a close relation to the Pastor; they are not only Christians, they are men, yea, gentlemen—a not unimportant matter in these days. While having minds of their own which they know how to use independently and effectually, they have an innate reverence for the sacred office, and for the man who fills it conscientiously, and up to the full measure of his capacity.

The prayer meetings, too; these are the Pastor's delight. The most constant attendants are the poor and needy. They find solace there in pouring out their full hearts to God. And such prayers! so sincere, so simple, so earnest; such a world of pathos and meaning in them. With tears trickling down his aged cheeks, an old saint, too decrepid to kneel, will stand, leaning upon his staff, and pray:—"O Lord do bless our dear Pastor. We are very thankful to Thee for him—do bless him. Give him strength,

Lord, at all times. When he is tried and troubled do Thou be his help and consolation. We know he is troubled sometimes, and we feel for him, and he feels for us, when we are troubled; but Thou canst help us all." The prayer would come to an abrupt termination, because the heart was too full for further utterance. Ah! such prayers are like rivers of water in a dry place, and like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. They, at once, enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and bring down a blessing.

So far the review is eminently satisfactory; the mental picture is bright and clear, without a touch of darkness or gloom. But, as the Pastor continues to muse, a cloud or two begin to steal across the sunny landscape, which thought and reflection have conjured up, and made actual for the time being. Oh! how thankful he is for his health, his wife, his child, his home, his garden, his old church, his kind, generous, warm-hearted people; his deacons; his poor people who feel for him so genuinely, and pray for him so heartily and constantly; and for many seals to a faithful, but imperfect ministry, but—But, what? What are these buts, these little clouds which modify, but cannot hide, the perfect sunshine and beauty of the scene?

First, it is a source of regret and real godly concern to him that so many good, warm-hearted,

intelligent people are out of the church. Men who could be so much more useful if they were in. Men whom the church really needs. They are outside supports when it would be much better for themselves, their families, and the church, if they were pillars in the temple. There is Squire Rosewood, for instance. His peer, for natural goodness, common-sense, and a charming enthraling influence on all around, is not to be found. It seems a necessity of his nature to be good and do good, according to his lights and opportunities. If any one could get to heaven by genuine kindliness of heart and good works he is the man. Oh, if that really noble nature could be regenerated and consecrated to the highest ends what a blessing it would be! If in him the spiritual bore any sort of proportion to the natural what a mighty power for good he might become! Christianity would have a noble setting in him—the picture would show well in such a frame; Christ-like character and true benevolence would shine forth with the splendor of the noonday sun; he would, indeed, shine before men, and they would see the good works, and glorify the Father in Heaven. If he were a deacon, how kind, charitable, loving, appreciative he would be; how always ready to help the poor and needy of the flock; how quick to defend the reputation of his pastor, should it be thoughtlessly or maliciously assail-

ed; how ready to lead the way in every good work; how effectively he could speak to others about the duty of giving a full share of their substance to God's cause, because of his own manifest benevolence and large philanthropy. In this matter he would be able to say with truthful simplicity and godly sincerity:—"Brethren, be ye followers of me as I am also of Christ." If he were the treasurer, the church would never be in debt, or never know it. His largeness of heart and the looseness of his purse-strings would supply every ordinary deficiency, and every extraordinary one would be met with that promptness and conscientiousness with which an honest man meets his obligations. He would train men to be honest in those things which are incident to their spiritual relationships. A mortgage upon the house of God he would look upon, not as an ornament, but as a disgusting and sinful appendage, of which good men ought always to be ashamed. An impossible, ideal, imaginative character, you say! Nothing of the kind. It is an actual one, and the Pastor feels that Squire Rosewood would be all this, and more, if he were a regenerated man, and within the pale of the church, and he mourns that he is not. Anyhow, it is a fact, incontestable and clear, that his natural characteristics and developments shine more resplendently than the spiritual attributes of many. He wonders why it is that

Omnipotent Grace doesn't convert such men, and compel them, by a sweet and sacred violence, to come in. Why? There's a stone wall there, and he must stop—he can neither look over it, nor under it, nor through it; he must wait for that, as for many other things that are equally insoluble to the mind of man.

The Pastor thinks, too, with much regret, of those class distinctions which are so rigidly drawn, and so imperiously maintained. He would not strike them down wholly, nor is he foolish enough to suppose that all men can be made equal; but he thinks there is a just medium, where truth and justice are found. Superiority, whether it be physical, mental, or moral, will assert itself, will, in a measure, become dominant, exact homage and reign. Inferiority, too, of whatever kind, will inevitably become manifest; it cannot be successfully hidden. The better and the stronger will hold rule and sway the sceptre—no power on earth can prevent. These things belong to the domain of unimpeachable facts and truths. The world full of Acts of Parliament would not equalise or keep equal the human race in any one particular. It is the working out of an inexorable law of life, with the making of which we had nothing to do, that there will be master and servant, learned and unlearned, wise and foolish, polished and uncultivated, to the end of the world.

He thinks, however, making all due allowance for these considerations, that there is force enough in the nature of things to create inevitable disparity, without adding to it by arbitrary rules and fixed conventionalities. Not in this world should a great gulf be *fixed* between them, who, by an inscrutable degree of the All-Wise, have been made to differ in social condition. Least of all does he like to see an open and constant repetition, in the house of God, of a practice which was noted and severely condemned eighteen hundred years ago. "If there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect unto him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place; and say unto the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him.....But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

One would think the almighty critics had stepped in, and oracularly pronounced this passage to be spurious, not supported by the best manuscripts, and therefore unworthy of a place in the sacred volume,

so little is it noted or heeded by the Christians of the nineteenth century. One cannot help wondering, sometimes, what God thinks of people who profess to have so much reverence for His word, and yet so perpetually, and with such horrible uniformity, violate it. Go into the Crossberry church, or any other, and you may look around at the assembled worshippers, and make a very correct estimate of the worldly standing and substance of each, by the location and general appearance of his pew. The poor are perched up in the galleries, or squatted down in close proximity to the entrance, where there is plenty of ventilation; or seated close to the pulpit, where the hearing is supposed to be good, and where they must humbly contemplate the floor all the time, or give their necks an unpleasant twist by looking up. The rich must have the happy medium, and the convenient location; not too near, not too far off; far enough away from gusty winds and chilly ventilation, and yet where it is warmest in winter, and coolest in summer. They must be, too, where they can be seen by the minister and the people. They must have spring seats, back rests, feet rests, arm rests, and soul rest is expected to be supplied to them from the pulpit. Why not? Don't they pay for it? Certainly. "You pay your money, and you take your choice." Isn't it fair, and square, and equitable, and just, and all that sort

of thing, from a business point of view? Decidedly so. Don't the men who pay the largest rent get the best stall in the market and the most convenient position on the Exchange? It is to be presumed, most unquestionably, that they do. Then why shouldn't a man have a good, large, convenient pew, in the best possible location, when he pays a good round sum for it? Just so: If he be a Christian, however, and if it be the house of God in which he sits, he should not be partial; he should not be guilty of sinful invidiousness; he should have some respect for the laws of that Being whom he professes to worship; he should remember that it is one of the distinguishing features of the Most High that He is not a respecter of persons; and he should have some recollection of that old familiar circumstance, when the Master came down to the Temple, and, seeing it had been made a place of merchandise, He upset the tables of the money changers, and scourged the moneyocracy out of His Father's House.

It was the evident wish of the Founder of Christianity that the preaching of the Gospel to the poor should be recognized as the most distinct and emphatic characteristic of His advent and reign. Tell John that "the poor have the gospel preached unto them," and he will know by that sign, above all others, that I am He that should come. When he hears that he will not be in doubt one moment, con-

cerning the identity of my Person, and the reality of my work. His whole life was in perfect consonance with this dominant characteristic. His prevailing sympathies were with the down-trodden, and the oppressed. He never tired of listening to their tales of woe, and He helped them to the full measure of their real needs, and His Divine capacity. He accounted it a greater honor "to bind up the broken-hearted and set the captive free," than to be endowed with the glory of a conqueror, or the lustre of a crown.

"The common people heard Him gladly." No wonder they did. He understood them perfectly. He did not patronize them; He loved them, and they knew it, and such knowledge thrilled their hearts. They were drawn, irresistibly, to One "who was meek and lowly in heart, and they found rest for their souls." Such a ministry was a new thing in the world, a moral revolution, and it received no countenance from the men who wore broad phylacteries, and sat in Moses' seat. It is eighteen hundred years since then, and the phylacteries are in fashion yet. That which was the chief glory of Messiah's mission has been reversed, for the distinguishing feature of the nineteenth century Christianity is that the rich have the Gospel preached unto them. They must be cared for by all means; they must have fine churches in choice localities, far away

from all dust and noise, and anything common or unclean; they must have refined preaching to meet the necessities of their broad culture; they must have operatic singing that shall suit exactly their refined sensibilities and waft them on angel wings; they must have in the pulpit one who is the very pink of fashion and the very embodiment of refinement. A Boanerges, a Paul, a Knox, a Luther would not do at all,—altogether too vulgar. They don't want to be frightened out of their wits by having explained to them in horrible and disgusting detail: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." They want the Gospel of refined peace. Sinai to them is an obsolete geographical expression, and an exploded moral fact; right enough under the old dispensation, when people had a simple choice between fire and brimstone, but not at all suited to the high culture of these latter days.

They are not unmindful of the poor either. They build a mission chapel in a locality where the poor are obliged to live, and pay a minister to preach to them for nothing. The connection is maintained by a quarterly supply of funds, and a yearly report. Thus the very essence of Christianity is ostensibly maintained; but in a way to harmonise perfectly with the prevailing characteristics of the present age. "How long, O Lord, how long?"

CHAPTER VIII.

Some things a fellow can't understand—An edifying and eloquent discourse—A grateful audience—Entertaining angels unawares—Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum, of Battlemount—The Nag's Head—Messrs. Buncombe, Duffy and Slocum eat roast beef, and exchange views.

PERHAPS one of the most difficult problems of human life is that of knowing when your circumstances and surroundings are as satisfactory as you have any just right to expect, and with which, therefore, you ought to be perfectly satisfied; at least, as perfectly satisfied as any imperfect mortal can be expected to reach perfection in that particular direction;—contentment and gratitude unconnected with any immediate desire of change. The medium condition is not only the best, philosophically considered, but it seems to be that which Providence has marked out for men generally, as the most conducive to earthly comfort and enjoyment. *That* is practicable, attainable, and maintainable to most men, if they would make it the goal of their ambition, instead of the first stage in a long and doubtful journey. Unfortunately they are not content with this. They

must all strive to reach the pinnacle of wealth and worldly fame, and for one who reaches the summit ten thousand roll back again, completely exhausted, into utter discomfiture and ruin. If a man, by the time he has reached his fortieth year, has learned to "fling away ambition," by which sin the angels fell, and by which he cannot hope to win, it is well. He may yet save himself from overwhelming disaster, and expect to live the rest of his days as some one wiser than he meant him to do.

The experiment of putting old heads upon young shoulders has been talked about a great deal, but it has never been tried. That it would not improve the bodily appearance is too obvious to need mentioning. And then, how a matured brain, with its immense consuming power, would work in connection with immature physical faculties, is a matter that physiologists could pronounce upon with some degree of probability, if not of certainty. A matter-of-fact man would say that such an arrangement would soon smash the machine, and the matter-of-fact man would not be far from the truth.

We are forced to take things as they are; their essential nature we cannot alter. Men must go through the school of experience, and pay a good round sum for their schooling, and perhaps contract an eternal indebtedness before they get out. While the judgment is still immature they must face

grave problems, and come to important decisions, which may stamp the character of the whole of their future life. If it be necessity that man shall be a reasoning animal, and a responsible being, why not make him a machine to move automatically, or endow him with unerring instinct until he is matured enough to meet, with some probability of success, the various problems and duties of life? Why should it be necessary for him, in the nature of things, to stumble so, and for so long, even with the very best intentions, before he learns to walk aright? Why should he, when he agonizes to see right and do right, be permitted to go wrong, or, at least, seem to do so? Such a case is conceivable and actual. Oh! tell me why? There is only one who could explain, and he, for some wise reason, no doubt, preserves a dignified silence.

These observations may not at first seem *apropos* in the present stage of this narrative. Wait a little and see. The Pastor of the Crossberry church is a young man. His book learning is ample, but his experience is limited. He has learnt some things in the higher and wider university, which embraces the world and the church, but he hasn't matriculated; he hasn't taken his degree, not even Bachelor of Arts, much less Master of Arts. In the broad culture of a rich and varied experience he is comparatively a neophyte. He is so little suspicious o

the cunning and craft of others, that he supposes men and things, on the whole, are what they seem, with a very few exceptions. True, he had his eyes opened a little, by contact with Mortimer Shelburne, but he has always looked upon him as by no means a fair average sample of sanctified humanity. *He* was consigned, long ago, to the limbo of notable exceptions. He has had nothing in his present pastorate to rouse any unpleasant suspicions of human nature, but everything to strengthen his confidence in men who profess to be good. He is spending an enjoyable and useful life among a people who love him, and appreciate him thoroughly. He is not wealthy, but he is comfortably provided for. He has no thoughts of changing his sphere, and no wish to do so. Although not void of ambition, that quality is by no means dominant in him. His circumstances and surroundings are as good as he thinks he has any just right to expect; and much better than some not so fortunately situated, but just as worthy. So far as present appearances go, he could be well content to spend his whole life in Crossberry. Such are his present position of feelings. "Man proposes, God disposes." He is much nearer a change than he is aware of. He is not planning it, has no thought of it, and does not desire it; but it is coming steadily and surely. All unconscious to him the Invisible Hand is beginning to unroll the map of a trying,

mysterious future. He is to be honored with a baptism of fire.

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Sunday morning, half-past ten. The Pastor is in his time-honored plupit. The devotional exercises through, he announces his text : " For now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face ; now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known." He begins by speaking of the innate tendency in human nature to pry into the future, and yet that every attempt to draw aside the invisible curtain is unavailing. The future we try to live in, not the present. We are always wondering what we shall be a few years hence. We are ever grasping at the shadowy unknown. This is the predominating characteristic of man from his earliest years. The boy at school is always looking forward to the time when he will be a young man ; when he will be able to throw off the restraint consequent upon immaturity, and assume the freer exercise of maturity. To be freed from the fetters of school-boy experience is, at present, the goal of his ambition. Only let him arrive at the time when he can say good-bye to school and lessons for ever, and he will be content. In a few years he attains that much-coveted position, but he finds he is not satisfied ; he is as far from that as ever. He looks forward from the proud eminence of youthful aspira-

tion to another far above him. Again, he lives in the future. That point upon which he has set his anxious eye he must gain, and then he will be happy; then he will settle down, and be content. He reaches that point, too; he becomes, what he is pleased to call, comfortably settled in life. He is the centre and ruler of a little happy world called home. Is he satisfied? No, his restless, ambitious spirit still pants for the future; still longs for that which is to come. Acquisition simply whets the appetite for acquiring and never satisfies it.

Thus man, unfortunately, goes on to the end of his days, ever undervaluing and neglecting present mercies, and pursuing a shadow—some fancied good that the future is supposed to hold in its grasp. Even when he grows old, is tottering upon the verge of the grave, and death is imminent, he still more anxiously asks: What is that future to which I am fast hastening? What will be my mode of existence in that world which is to come? There is no answer. All is dark, dark as midnight. Only then, when we see in the light of God's light, shall we know.

Whence this tendency to pry into the future? How is it we do not seek to act, and think, and see in the living present, and leave the future, wholly, and with the faith of little children, in His hands, who knows no future, but to whom the vast roll of

unending years is one everlasting present? Why do we not take to-day, appreciate it, understand it, and enjoy it? Why should we be unceasingly grasping at the unknown, the intangible, the impracticable, nay, the impossible, to the neglect of the possible and the real? Such a tendency is the proof, the mother, and the offspring of moral defectiveness. Perfect beings feel not thus—act not thus. They are perpetually and completely occupied with the everlasting present,—present duties and enjoyments.

The future of this life is mercifully hidden from us. It is a wise concession to our weakness. Life would be unbearable if we knew all in advance. It is meted out to us, in small portions, day by day, as we can bear the pain or enjoy the pleasure. As to the eternal future, that is necessarily unknown. Not that it cannot be revealed, but it could not be borne or understood by finite minds, if disclosed in all its unshorn radiance and glory. We can form no reliable conception of heavenly things from earthly analogies. The most ornate and splendid imagery fails utterly in conveying adequate or truthful impressions. What pen can describe, what tongue can tell the joys of the world to come? 'Tis true our feelings will be so intense, so delightful, that we shall "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." But who can describe that glory, who can tell that joy? They transcend our highest thoughts,

they outstrip the loftiest imagination. We can form no conception of those seraphic feelings which the first glimpse of the golden streets, the pearly gates, and the white-robed throng will excite within us! We cannot tell with what high and holy sensations we shall listen to the first note of Heaven's music, or behold, for the first time, the unveiled glory. No, we must wait, and wait patiently. We must await the loosing of the silver cord, and then our souls, freed from their defilement, and wafted to Heaven, will see the King in His beauty, and with untold rapture behold the glories of the future world. Then shall we know, then shall we see, not as through a glass darkly, but face to face.

This is a faint sketch—a sentence selected here and there—of the sermon preached, by the young Pastor, on that Sabbath morn. He seemed to be lifted, for the time being, far above himself. Like another, and his name's sake, the Apostle of the Gentiles, he scarcely knew whether he was in the flesh or out of it, so completely did his high and holy theme enthral his every faculty. The attention paid to the discourse was of the same intense and rapt description. All were transported for a short season to a higher plane of existence and feeling, far above the trifles and vanities of the world. It was good to be there. It was a season of solid instruction and spiritual refreshment long remem-

bered. The service closed with the benediction and the grand old hymn, in which all heartily joined:

"There is a heaven of perfect peace,
The eternal throne is there;
But what that tearless region is—
It doth not yet appear.
And there are angels strong and fair,
Who know not sin nor fear;
But what the robes of white they wear,
It doth not yet appear.
And there are ransomed spirits too,
Who once were pilgrims here;
But how the Saviour's face they view—
It doth not yet appear.
And there are sweet commingling thoughts,
And blest communion there;
But how they blend their heavenly notes—
It doth not yet appear.
And there is worship in the sky,
And songs of loftiest cheer;
But how they sweep their harps on high,
It doth not yet appear.
Then, O my soul, with patience wait,
The happy hour is near,
When thou shalt pass the pearly gate,
Where it will all appear!"

As the Pastor descended from the pulpit, he was surrounded by quite a group of his hearers, who wished to testify their appreciation of the discourse. Samuel Chedworth, Squire Rosewood, Deacon Graswell, Josiah Buncombe, Simon Jehu, and many others shook him warmly by the hand, and with full

hearts expressed the pleasure and profit the service had afforded them.

In addition to these, two gentlemen, strangers in Crossberry, who had been present at the service, stepped forward, and begged a formal introduction to the Pastor. This was immediately accorded, and they were announced as Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum of the city of Battlemount. They expressed the pleasure and profit with which they had listened to the sermon, and desired the favor of a private interview. This the Pastor very readily granted, but expressed a wish to have it postponed till the close of the evening service, when, the labors of the day being done, he would be able to give a more undivided attention to what they might have to communicate. This suggestion was readily adopted, and the promised interview fixed for half-past eight p.m. The Pastor, wishing to be mindful of his duty to entertain strangers, "whereby some have entertained angels unawares," invited Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum to repair with him to his house, and partake of such accommodation and hospitality as his humble home afforded. This, however, was declined, for the very sensible and considerate reason, that they would not intrude upon his privacy, but wait till the evening, when they would do themselves the pleasure of waiting upon him, to ascertain his views regarding the object of their visit. They had

secured accommodation at the Nag's Head, and thither they bent their steps with the intention of refreshing the inner man with such good cheer as Josiah Buncombe could set before them. That gentleman laid himself out to cater for his casual guests in such a manner as to add to the reputation of his house. He had observed them at church in the morning, and this fact stimulated his curiosity, and added considerably to the interest he took in them. He therefore gave strict orders to Mrs. Buncombe to set before the two gentlemen a dinner fit for a lord. He also quietly intimated to his spouse that he thought there was something stirring in the wind, in connection with these strangers, and he meant to keep a sharp look out.

"Well, Josiah, how you do talk. I don't see anything remarkable in these gentlemen being here, and I don't see anything particular in their attending church this morning. We have lots of folks come here, and go away again when they've done their business, and some attend church and some don't, if they happen to be here on Sunday."

"Well, you see Maria, I think I do see something particular about these strangers. They come in here late Saturday night, and they expect to leave by the first train on Monday morning; so they will require an early breakfast, don't forget that. So that you see, Maria, whatever their business may be, it

looks like Sunday business. And then I noticed how particularly they observed our young minister this morning. They stared at him awfully, and paid very particular attention to what he said. They handed bits of paper to one another with writing on, and sometimes they gave a sly wink at one another. Now, I tell you, wife, there's something up as sure as you and I live."

"Well, what do you think is up, Josiah? You do talk queer, to be sure."

"If I tell you what I think, Maria, don't go and tell your sister, or your mother: because, if you do, everybody in Crossberry will know in no time. I think these chaps, I mean these gentlemen, are after the minister. They're a kind a prospecting like, taking a view, seeing how things look, hearing all they can on the sly, and then they'll go back where they come from and tell everything, and goodness knows what may come of it. They've invited me to dine with them. I think I know what that means. Catch a weasel asleep. Catch Josiah Buncombe napping. Not much."

The bell rung for dinner, and Josiah joined Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum in the dining room. Mr. Duffy introduced Mr. Slocum, Mr. Slocum introduced Mr. Duffy, and Mr. Buncombe introduced himself. The trio sat down to roast beef and small talk. Mr. Duffy deemed it a necessary preliminary to inform

Mr. Buncombe that his friend Slocum was rather deaf, to which Mr. Buncombe responded by saying he would be able to accommodate him in that particular.

"What is the population of Crossberry?" asked Mr. Duffy of Mr. Buncombe.

"To the best of my recollection about five thousand, sir. I think it was that at the last census, so it may be more or less now by a few hundreds, either way."

"I and Mr. Slocum," said Mr. Duffy, "were very much interested in the appearance of the church this morning. A very old edifice, I should think. How old do you suppose, Mr. Buncombe?"

"Why, sir, that church is old; more than two hundred years I know. Why, sir, Bunyan preached there. We take great pride in that historical fact, sir; we think it's something worth reflecting on. Very old church, sir! very, very."

"Is that an authentic fact about Bunyan, Mr. Buncombe? Because if it be so it is a very interesting reminiscence."

"Yes, sir, it is authentic, at least as authentic as such things generally are. It rests on very good evidence. A very old man, who died a few years ago in Crossberry, recollected hearing his grandfather say that when he was quite a youngster he heard Bunyan preach on that spot, sir. He was about

these parts a good deal, both before they put him in jail and after they let him out. Wouldn't I like to have heard him. He must have been a rouser to make so much stir, and make people think about him so long after he was gone. He must have been a fine character and no mistake."

"Ahem! I noticed, Mr. Buncombe, a good many marble tablets on each side of the pulpit in the church. These, I suppose, have been put there at different times in affectionate remembrance of deceased pastors."

"Yes, sir, they have, and it speaks well for the church. There's been very little of the kicking out process here, sir. The people in Crossberry have too much respect for themselves and their pastors for that. They've come here, and lived here, and died here. They've been honored while living, and held in affectionate remembrance when dead. You should hear some of the old folks talk about the old pastors, sir. It would do your heart good and wet your eyes to hear them. They remember them, sir."

"Have most of the pastors in Crossberry lived, and labored here till they died?"

"Yes, sir, there may have been one or two exceptions in the course of two hundred years, but that has been the general rule. People had an old-fashioned notion, and a very proper one, I think,

that it was as necessary and natural for a pastor to remain with his church till he died, as for man and wife to remain together until death should separate them. But excuse me, gentlemen, if I ask a question or two now. You come from the city of Battlemount, I believe, and I presume you are connected with the church there. Have you any monumental tablets in memory of deceased pastors in your church?"

"Well, Mr. Buncombe, speaking for myself and Mr. Slocum, I cannot say that the walls of our church are thus adorned. No, not a single adornment of that kind can we boast of."

"Humph!" said Mr. Buncombe. "You've had a good many pastors, I presume. Strange, very, very strange; singular coincidence that you shouldn't have one tablet. I look upon those tablets as an ornament, sir."

"Well, Mr. Buncombe, we have had a good many pastors, but they haven't stayed long with us; our pastors' settlements have not averaged more than two years."

"Strange, very strange; how do you account for it, sir? Surely you don't adopt the kicking out process; neither do you, I hope, make the atmosphere so hot by artificial means, that the good man feels it necessary to move on account of the danger to his general health?"

The conversation was evidently taking a turn that did not comport with either the designs or the comfort of Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum, so the latter gentleman essayed to change the tone of remark by observing:—

"We don't precisely kick them out, Mr. Buncombe; but, when we have come to the conclusion that a change in the pastorate is desirable, we generally communicate with the pastor, confidentially, and affectionately advise him as to what is best to be done to meet the case. We come to a private understanding with him, and that generally settles the matter quietly. But, changing the subject for the present, Mr. Buncombe, with your leave, what do you think of the sermon this morning?"

"What do I think of the sermon, sir? Why, I think it was a splendid sermon, sir. I tell you, gentlemen, the Pastor of Crossberry knows how to preach, and no mistake. He's a 'stunner.'"

"Does he always preach as well as that? mildly suggested Mr. Duffy."

"Yes, sir, he always preaches like that. He never preaches a poor sermon; he's always up to the mark there. I never attended church before he came, but I took a great liking to him, and now I go regularly, and my 'Missus' as often as she can, and the children go to Sunday school. That good young man's influence has made a change for the better,

sir, and I'm thankful for it. I went to hear him first out of curiosity, and to oblige old Simon, and we both liked him, and have continued to attend church ever since. Old Simon likes him amazingly, and so do all the folks, rich and poor. He's got a conscience, sir, that he uses every day of his life, and in every act of his life. He doesn't put his religion on with his Sunday coat, and then take it off again, like some folks. He keeps it on all the time, and acts by it. He's as true as steel, sir. If he says he'll do anything you may make your mind easy about it's being done. His equal is not to be found for miles round. He wouldn't like to hear me say these things, because he's modest, and has a very humble opinion of himself. He only needs a little more brass in his cheeks, and then he'd shine, sir, in any position, with the best of them."

"Is his health generally good—that is, I mean on the whole?—asked Mr. Slocum, in a very mild and gentlemanly tone."

"Yes, I should think it is. He's tough enough, I tell you. Got a good voice, sir; sound lungs I should say. There's only one man in Crossberry can beat him there, and that's your humble servant. I wish to know, Mr. Slocum, whether you can hear me distinctly, because if you can't I can bring out my reserve force."

Mr. Slocum blandly assured Mr. Buncombe that,

although somewhat deaf, he could hear his slightest intonation very distinctly.

Upon the subsidence of this brief interruption to the ordinary flow of conversation, Mr. Duffy, who was evidently very desirous of sifting every possible particular regarding the Pastor of the Crossberry Zion, recommenced his interrogatories.

"How long has the Rev. Mr. Vincent been pastor here, Mr. Buncombe?"

"Not less than two, not more than three years; but nearer three, I think, than two."

"Are his general standing, character, and reputation good in the community at large?"

"What do you mean, sir? If you mean, can he stand as straight as a poker?—Yes, sir. If you mean, is his character as straight and unbending to all evil as that necessary article of house furniture?—Yes, sir. If you mean, do people, whose opinion is worth anything, think and speak well of him?—Yes sir. Didn't I tell you he was a 'stunner,' sir? Perhaps you don't understand that classical reference, sir. When I say a man is a 'stunner,' I mean he is about as good every way as he ought to be, and a great deal better than most men."

"Well, Mr. Buncombe, that is a little more than I meant, and yet a little less. There is many a character very fair to look upon, and, on the whole,

very substantial and good; but there is perhaps a little flaw, the fly in the pot of ointment, which spoils everything. I was wondering whether there wasn't something in the Rev. Mr. Vincent, some small thing, perhaps, in his own estimation, that might be a source of objection to others."

"My dear sir, if I do know what you are driving at, let me set your mind at rest once for all. If you take a full, square, steady look at the Pastor of Crossberry you will probably come to the conclusion that he's a man. If you put him under a microscope you will probably see that he isn't an angel. You won't find any wings, not even the stumps. We are not microscopically inclined in Crossberry, and we have an idea that few men would look well-proportioned or handsome under a microscope. We are content with our plain sense of seeing. There, probably, will be a microscopical examination of every one of us, some day; and, with all who undergo that successfully, it will be well."

These just and discriminating sentiments, delivered by Mr. Buncombe in his most emphatic tone, were no doubt intended by that gentleman to wind up the conversation, at least for the present. He had no wish to submit to any further questioning about "the elect of Crossberry," and he had no wish to say so, in so many words, as he might give

offence to his guests, whose good will, as a matter of business, it was his bounden duty to cultivate. He was in the act of rising from the table when Mr. Duffy, who had his own game to play, and meant to play it out fully, arrested him before the completion of that movement by observing:—

"What you say, Mr. Buncombe, may be correct in the main. We are none of us perfect. Perhaps no man would emerge from a microscopical examination without some marks being chalked up against him; but, you see, ministers occupy so conspicuous and so responsible a position, that it is very necessary they should be as near perfection as possible. Not only should they have unquestionable purity and complete consecration, but the outward life should, in all respects, be such as to "give no offence in anything that the Ministry be not blamed."

"I am not quite sure, Mr. Duffy, whether I understand you. You probably know more about these matters than can fairly be expected from me. I understand next to nothing of theological jargon and hair-splitting. I am a plain man. I do not profess to be a religious man, except so far as attending church may give me a title to that distinction. I have to judge of things by such plain sense as I happen to be possessed of. If you mean a minister should be consistent, I agree with you; but so should every man, whether he is a minister or not. If you

mean that he should be careful to have his example tend in the direction of good, and not evil, I think you are right; but so should every man be so concerned. If you think he should be right in everything, according to what everybody may think is right for him, I must beg leave to say that you are stipulating for an impossible and an undesirable attainment. If you mean that he is to be judged by a higher and stricter law than that by which you judge other people who stand on the same plane, and make the same profession, I think you are totally wrong. If you mean that he is never to appear as a man of like passions with other men, in any circumstances, and under any stress of provocation, I think you are very unreasonable. If you mean that one man, or a number of men, have a right to set up a standard of ideal rectitude and excellence, and judge all his acts by that, I think you are making a mistake. If you mean that there is to be one law for his church, and another law for him, I think you are wrong. It isn't sense, sir; I don't know whether it's scripture or not. I have found, sir, that men, present company of course excepted, are strongly inclined to condemn in others, and especially in ministers, what they secretly approve in themselves. If a man be inclined to indolence, you may trust him for detecting the same quality, and condemning it in no measured terms, in others. If a man be

worldly-minded, fond of money, and all that sort of thing, you will see with what righteous indignation he will denounce others who have the same failing. If a man be fond of power, and wants to rule everybody, with what alacrity and vigor he will take up the first stone, and cast it at his neighbor, whom he imagines to be possessed of the same disposition. If a man be suspected of a grave offence, get a jury empannelled who are secret abettors of the same crime, and you will be sure to have a verdict of guilty pronounced. The bad are intolerant; the good are charitable. The man who is good for nothing, whether in the world or in the church, is always grumbling, and finding fault; while he who is usefully employed has no time for, and no temptation to, such undignified occupation. I heard a sermon the other Sunday from the text: "He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her," and a good sensible sermon it was, sir. I think if that were acted upon there wouldn't be much stone throwing."

At the conclusion of these remarks Mr. Duffy was mum, and Mr. Slocum was ditto; so Mr. Buncombe seized the opportunity as a favorable one for retiring.

CHAPTER IX.

The Pastor of Crossberry is interviewed by Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum—Visit to Battlemount—"Bread cast upon the waters"—Old Jehu, and his forebodings—The Grand Occidental Railway—The Rev. Paul Vincent's first appearance in the Battlemount pulpit—First impressions—The Sabbath School—Pious tactics—Hezekiah Shankey sails under false colors—A rare treat—The Battlemount Music Hall, and the famous Prima Donna—"Home, sweet Home."

MR. DUFFY and Mr. Slocum spent the afternoon in taking a quiet stroll round Crossberry, examining the various objects of interest in the quaint old town, and, as opportunity presented itself, making such observations and enquiries, respecting the man whose character and standing they had come to find out on the sly, as they could. The result of their benevolent activities was such as to leave a favorable impression upon their minds regarding the Pastor. He was evidently, they thought, entrenched in the hearts and affections of the community at large. All thought well of him, and spoke well of him. They were further convinced he was a man of marked individuality, irreproachable life, and for

so young a man, rare amplitude of powers. They had already come to the conclusion that he was just the man needed for the larger and more important sphere in the city of Battlemount, if he could only be secured; and to the accomplishment of this desirable object they proposed to bend their influence and efforts. Were they not the angels, or messengers, of the Church in Battlemount, invested with due authority, and all needed discretionary power in this matter? Certainly. Their honest hearts swelled with deep emotion, when they reflected upon the fact that they had been thought worthy of so distinguished an honor, and so important a trust. They would endeavor to discharge the duty imposed on them judiciously and successfully. At the close of the evening service, which they attended, and with which they were again favorably impressed, they walked with the Pastor to his home, and obtained the promised interview. Embarrassment on both sides was avoided by the Pastor at once requesting his visitors, if they were so inclined, to state their wishes. Mr. Duffy responded for himself and his friend Slocum.

"We come, sir, as perhaps you are already aware, from the City of Battlemount. The church with which I and my friend Mr. Slocum are connected is in many respects an important one, but, unfortunately, the pastorate has been vacant for more than

twelve months. Many attempts have been made to fill the vacancy, but all so far have ended in failure; in consequence of which we are getting quite discouraged. We happened to hear of you through a member of our church, who, having some relations in Crossberry, was here on a visit, a few weeks ago. She heard you well spoken of, and mentioned the fact on her return. I must say for myself, and my friend here will, I have no doubt, endorse my sentiments, that what I have seen and heard to-day has given me a very favorable impression of your character and abilities. You seem to stand high in the estimation and affections of the people here. If you have no objection we shall be pleased to have you pay Battlemount a visit, and preach for us, say next Sunday, if you could make it convenient. I am sure our friends would be glad to see you, and accord you a hearty welcome."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Duffy, for your complimentary remarks regarding myself, and for your kind invitation to visit Battlemount. Your visit is unexpected, and a surprise to me. Whether it would be wise for me to visit Battlemount, even for one Sunday, under such conditions as you describe, and with my present views and feelings regarding my own church, it is somewhat difficult to determine. You are wanting a pastor; I am not wanting a church, having every reason to be satisfied

with the one I have. I should be very sorry if an occasional visit to Battlemount should give rise to any expectations that might not be realized. If my going to preach for you for one Sabbath would be a service which the friends there would regard as a benefit in its true light, and without reference to any ulterior object, I should be willing. But I should wish it to be distinctly understood that I have no desire to be a candidate for the vacant office. In fact, I shall esteem it my duty to decline going, if there be any danger of my visit being regarded in that light."

"Excuse me, sir, if I ask whether you are movable?"

"No, I am not movable, but when I say that, I don't mean you to infer that I am immovable. I am not movable in the ordinary acceptation of that word, that of desiring a change in my pastoral relations. I am not looking out for a change. I have no reason to desire one. I am not immovable in this sense. If God chose to show me that my work here was done, and that it was His will I should labor in another sphere in the future, I would not, I trust, be disobedient to the heavenly monition. I wish to subserve His will, here or elsewhere, as He shall chose or direct. But I must say that I see at present no indications of that kind. Every indication I can discern points to the duty of serving

God here, and contentment with my present lot. There is no discord among us. We preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. My people have no wish for a change, and I have none. No minister can have a kinder or more appreciative people than I have, and I think I am as much attached to them as they are to me. I wish to treat you courteously, gentlemen, but I wish also to be plain, so that there may be no unfounded expectations, and no hopes which may prove illusory."

"You have no objections to preach for us next Sunday, sir?"

"No, I have no objection, if my doing so will be a temporary advantage and service to the church; but it must be upon the distinct understanding that I am not a candidate for the vacant office."

With this explicit statement Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum professed themselves well satisfied, and, bidding the Pastor good-night, retired.

Perhaps no more discriminating observation was ever made concerning the character of the Rev. Paul Vincent than that one by Josiah Buncombe, in his conversation with Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum: —"If he says he'll do anything, you may make your mind easy about its being done." It is to be feared there are not a great number of whom this can be with justice or truth said. Some there are, it is true, who answer to the description, but many,

very many, fall far short of it. Conscience in small matters, as well as in great affairs, is of considerable importance to the general convenience and happiness of mankind. Untold misery is caused by faithlessness, not only in act, but in word. A man has no more right to cause others to hope and confide in him, and then abuse their confidence, than he has to break the whole of the commandments in the Decalogue. It is a moral delinquency of no small dimensions to disappoint the just expectations of others, when those expectations are fairly founded upon explicit statements and distinct promises. A man's word should be his bond in all the affairs of life. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." If that oracular, inspired sentiment means anything, it means that a man will be held to a strict account for his verbal, as well as his actual, faithlessness. Some people, and it is to be feared a great many, are very punctual in their unpunctuality, and very faithful in their faithlessness. They are so faithful that, out of ten things which they promise to do, you may calculate to a certainty that nine will be left undone. It is not always a want of heart; it is more frequently a want of thought, but that will not be accepted as a valid excuse before that tribunal from which there will be no appeal.

The Pastor of the Crossberry church was deeply

imbued with these sentiments, and he sought to regulate his life by them. He was ever wishful, as a matter of principle, not to promise what he felt he could not, or would not, perform. On this account he thought it his duty to be very explicit in defining his position and intentions to Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum. He gave them clearly to understand, that they were to entertain no ulterior design in connection with his visit to Battlemount. That he simply meant to render a timely service to a vacant church. It might seem presumptuous, on his part, to offer these explanations in advance; as they seemed to take for granted that his visit would produce a state of feeling in the Battlemount community, regarding himself, which the ultimate event might not justify. This he fully realized, but, of the two things, he preferred being thought a little presumptuous to being regarded as in any wise deceitful. He had a tender, conscientious regard for the feelings of others, although perfect strangers to him; and he would not voluntarily excite hopes that might not be realized. He had promised to preach in Battlemount one Sabbath, with a distinct proviso that nothing beyond that was to be expected from him, and this service he would faithfully and punctually render. Early in the week he commenced making the necessary preliminary arrangements. With some difficulty he secured a supply

for his own pulpit in his absence. He despatched a note to Mr. Slocum, notifying that gentleman of the day and hour he might expect him at Battlemount Station, as he had promised to meet him if so advised. The old valise, which had done good service as a necessary adjunct in past preaching expeditions, but which had been lying idle for some considerable time, was again brought out of its dusty hiding-place, and re-packed with a general assortment of useful articles, from a tooth brush to a good sermon in manuscript.

There was now a prospect of another ride with old Simon on the box seat of the old tumble-down coach to Crossberry Junction.

Saturday morning came, the day of departure, and eight o'clock a.m. found the Pastor in front of the Nag's Head, waiting for the old driver and his coach. That worthy individual soon appeared, cracking his whip, as usual; blinking his old eyes, but not smacking his lips. He had been induced to leave off that constant imbibing of something hot, which invariably induced the latter operation. He had become a better man than he was when he first made the acquaintance of the Crossberry Pastor. After the usual cry of "all right" he drove off, with his full complement of passengers inside, and the Pastor seated by his side. The old fellow's natural inclination to loquacity soon showed itself.

"Fine morning, sir. Long time since ye had a ride wi' me, sir."

"Yes, Mr. Jehu, it is nearly three years, now, since I had occasion to go with you to Crossberry Junction. Many things have happened in that time—many changes."

"Yes, sir, there's been one change as may be you don't know of. I be changed some, sir, thank God! I baint lonely now, sir, cause I hev Him near me as says I be wi' ye always."

"I am very glad to hear that, Mr. Jehu. I have noticed your regular attendance at the church with satisfaction, and that some of your habits have been modified, or dropped altogether; but I am specially delighted to hear there has been an inward change. That is indeed gratifying. How long have you been the subject of this change?"

"About six months, sir. I never said nothing to nobody about it; I just kept it to myself. I hev it, sir. I know there is a change, but I be scarcely able to understand it. Didn't ye preach the other Sunday, sir, about there being a peace we can't understand?"

"Yes, I believe I did. It must be two or three months ago."

"Wa'll that's it, sir. I be too old to understand much, but I feel, sir; I feel Jesus under me, and He's carrying me, like. It's the in'ard evidence I hev, and it's very comforting and sweet like. O! sir, it

was a good day for me when ye came to Crossberry. And Josiah, too; he's different. I don't think he's got the peace, but he's different, very different. Ye baint going to leave Crossberry, be ye, sir?"

"No, certainly not. I have no such intentions, at present anyhow. Has some one been saying that I am going to leave?"

"Wa'll no, not exactly that, sir; but ye be going to preach at Battlemount, they say, sir."

"Yes, I am going to preach in Battlemount to-morrow. I've engaged, to go and I am going; but I expect to be back in a day or two."

"I be glad to hear that, sir. Don't stay, come back soon, sir."

"Why, you seem quite concerned about my visit to Battlemount, Mr. Jehu; your manner betrays more anxiety than your words even, and they are tremulous enough. Come, old friend, out with it, and tell me all you mean. Perhaps I can set your mind at rest. If I can I shall be happy to d o so"

"Wa'll, sir, I do be a little afraid. I like ye, sir, very much, and so does Josiah, and all the folks do. There's no family 'consarn' now—that's done. They're all one family about you, sir."

"Well, proceed my friend, you haven't come to the end of your speech yet, I can see. Let me hear it all."

"Wa'll, sir, if I must, I want to say that may be

ye don't mean to stay in Battlemount long; but they may like ye, sir, as well as we do; and they might over-persuade ye like, and get ye to stay longer; and they might get to like ye so much as they would wish ye to stay altogether. Now, I've out with it, sir. That's what I be fearing."

"Well, I declare, Mr. Jehu, you are making me feel a little afraid too. Your spirit of over-solicitude is infectious. However, you will see. I think that I shall be back in Crossberry, where I like to be, in three days from this time. That will do, won't it?"

"Yes, sir. Glad to hear it, sir. God bless ye, sir, and keep ye!"

The old coach drew up at Crossberry Junction just as the train for Battlemount steamed into the station. There was not a moment to spare. The Pastor shook the old driver warmly, but hurriedly, by the hand, jumped down from the box seat somewhat unceremoniously, made a direct line for the ticket office, secured his ticket, and got into the train just as it was moving off. He had a twelve hours' ride before him, and, consequently, plenty of time for reflection. He expected to reach Battlemount at nine p.m., barring unforeseen accidents.

Snugly ensconced in the corner of the carriage, and with nothing particular to distract his attention, he sinks into a musing mood. This is his general

habit, and forms one of his predominating characteristics. It is a necessity of his nature to think. His brain is ever active, ever at work at something. It is a pleasure to him to think of the change in the old driver; that he doesn't feel lonely now, because he has attained the friendship of One who is ever near, and who "sticketh closer than a brother." That one fact, if there was no other, is sufficient compensation for all his toil in Crossberry. He has been the honored instrument, and God the efficient cause, of this moral transformation. He feels encouraged by this circumstance to sow beside all waters, not knowing which shall prosper, whether this or that. God is a sovereign, indeed! He thinks, with a slight touch of the melting mood, of the old man's affection for himself personally; and then he thinks of another, who, although so holy and so great, was not ashamed to call the poor and the outcast His brethren; He who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Strong and masculine as his mind is, he yet cannot wholly shake off the slight hovering conviction which haunts him, namely, that the old man's forebodings, in connection with this visit to Battlemount, may have a measure of soundness and reality in them. Who knows what lies in the womb of the future? Perhaps he is being led by a way that he knows not, and in the direction of

duties and trials of which he never dreams. And yet, why should he dream of trial, or conjure up fancied difficulties? His lot, thus far, favored by a gracious Providence, has been a happy one, and why should it not so continue? Yes, why? He can adduce no adequate reason, neither can any one; and yet how soon he may see a change—perhaps a complete reversal of the plan of his life,—without seeing the reason. Is this the end of all our boasted enlightenment in this nineteenth century, that we do not know what a single day may bring forth; that we cannot, with any certainty, forecast the future, even to the extent of that small fraction of time, a minute? It is even so. It is an indisputable, palpable, everyday fact, and it is anything but gratifying to our pride to recognize it. What do we know? Nothing absolutely, and certainly nothing perfectly. All present knowledge, grand and extensive as it is said to be when compared with the acquirements of past ages, is only an approximation. Think of it in the light of a culture, which from its very nature, must be eternally expansive, and it sinks into nothingness visibly. Men are in the habit, as a gratifying mental exercise, of comparing the prodigiousness of the present with the comparative diminutiveness of the past. The contrast, in many respects, forms a picture that is pleasant to look upon. It is gratifying to the feelings, and

feeds the natural vanity. It may be suggested, however, that a more healthful exercise of this contrasting faculty would be to compare, as far as we are able, the comparative diminutiveness of the present with the grand and the eternally expanding possibilities of the future. We should probably get a less gratifying but a more correct estimate of the present by looking forward than by looking backward. There is wondrous philosophic instinct, as well as devout poetic feeling, in the rapt exclamation of the Apostle: "O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

The journey to Battlemount was accomplished in due course. There was an entire absence of those interesting episodes which had characterized and somewhat lightened the tedium of past journeys of a similar nature, and for similar objects. Everything had been as quiet and decorous as the greatest recluse could desire. At half past nine p.m., half an hour behind time, the train arrived at the terminus. True to his promise Mr. Slocum was there to meet Mr. Vincent, and he pounced upon him immediately he alighted. Mr. Vincent looked round, expecting to find an imposing looking station in so important a centre as Battlemount, but he was miserably disappointed. Instead of that he saw, as well as he

could see by such dim light as was afforded, what looked like an immense cattle shed, with part of the two sides and one end knocked out. It seemed as if some enthusiastic neophyte of an architect had been at work, with the view of seeing how many bricks he could use, without enclosing any definite space; or, as if he had strained his utmost energies to rear a structure, which should be as unsuited as possible for the specified purpose, combining repulsiveness and inconvenience perfectly. Arriving at night it would not be difficult for a stranger, by a few stray steps, to get well nigh hopelessly lost, and he would not be likely to extricate himself, until the morning sun should deign to show him his exact geographical location. Fortunately, for the Crossberry Pastor, Mr. Slocum was there to pilot him through the dark labyrinths of that third-rate cattle shed, technically called a depot.

"Is this the grand terminus of the Grand Occidental Railway, Mr. Slocum?" asked Mr. Vincent, in a tone of undisguised surprise.

"Yes, I believe it is; it is not quite all you expected, I presume?"

"No, not quite. I confess I fail to see anything answering to the epithet grand. I would like to suggest to the directors of the Occidental, that they have been somewhat unfortunate in the selection of a name."

"I fear it would not avail much if you did. It is too poor a concern to be grand in reality, and they want to preserve the grandeur in name."

"Well, I suppose, Mr. Slocum, that must be their idea. Pity, though, they don't pay a little more attention to the fitness of things. I wonder the respectable inhabitants of this city don't protest against such wretched accommodation."

"They do, but, so far, all protestations have been of no avail."

"I suppose the official ear gets used to complaints and they fail to produce any effect?"

"That is about the state of the case, sir, I believe."

"But is there absolutely nothing grand about the concern, Mr. Slocum?" asked Mr. Vincent, with a little insinuation in his tone.

"I don't know of anything, except the salaries of a few leading officials. They are grand enough, I believe."

"Well, I think that being the case the inhabitants of Battlemount might, with propriety, suggest a change in the name. Why not call it, 'The Grand Official Railway,' or, what might be still better, 'Large Salaries and Small Dividends Railway Co., Limited and Unlimited?'"

The two gentlemen, walking arm-in-arm, as if they had known each other for twenty years, emerged from the station; and, as it was dark as pitch,

and raining as if a second deluge threatened the earth, Mr. Slocum called a cab in which they drove off, and arrived at that gentleman's residence in about ten minutes.

It is a slight inaccuracy to say 'his residence,' for Mr. Slocum was a young man, and unmarried, and he had very respectable board, and all necessary social convenience and attendance, in a very respectable family—for which no doubt he paid a very respectable sum weekly, or monthly. Here, however, as the honored guest of Mr. Slocum, Mr. Vincent was to be domiciled during his temporary stay in Battlemount. He took a little supper, which he much needed after his long journey, and, after some social chat, retired to rest. Fortunately he slept well, a thing which seldom happens under a strange roof, and in a strange bed, and rose on the morrow, feeling fresh and lively—ready to do battle, in a spiritual way, with the powers of darkness in the Battlemount community, from the Battlemount pulpit. Mr. Slocum accompanied him to church, as a matter of course, and, as he entered the vestry, Mr. Duffy came forward, smiling, to receive him, and to express the pleasure he felt at seeing him in the portals of their honored sanctuary. Mr. Duffy also did himself the pleasure of introducing him to several other honored brethren of the Battlemount Church, who were present, and evidently desirous

of being introduced,—Mr. Hezekiah Shankey, Mr. Duncan Smiler, Dr. Gammon, and Mr. John Cheesman. These gentlemen, individually, expressed the pleasure it afforded them of seeing the Rev. Mr. Vincent amongst them, and hoped his visit might prove pleasurable to himself, and spiritually profitable to the community.

The tones of a medium-sized organ began to peal forth, which was a vocal reminder that it was time to commence the service. Ascending a back, gloomy, winding stairway, where it was absolutely necessary to walk by faith and not by sight, the platform was reached. Casting his eye round to catch a glimpse of the dimensions of the edifice and the number of the congregation he felt a sudden chill seize him—that is, he felt anything but warm, anything but that homely sensation he was accustomed to feel when looking upon his congregation in Crossberry. He saw that he was in an ecclesiastical edifice that was meant to be grand and imposing. The architect had manifestly striven to carry out the Gothic idea as much as possible, and he had succeeded to the extent of producing a correct, but, withal, a monotonous effect. From a casual, hurried glance, he supposed the seating capacity was about eight hundred, and the worshippers present about one hundred. It was this, principally, that made him feel a little chilly, because he had been accus-

tomed to speak in a well-filled church, and to about five hundred eager listeners, every Sabbath. However, he roused himself, and resolved to do his duty as faithfully and effectively as the state of his feelings and the nature of his surroundings would admit of. The event proved that his efforts gave more satisfaction to his auditors than to himself. However, he had lived long enough to know that this experience was not uncommon, and so was content to be fairly satisfied with such imperfect service as he had tried to render.

In compliance with the urgent request of Mr. Shankey he visited the Sunday-school during its afternoon session, and gave an address to the scholars and teachers. He succeeded, happily, in enchaining the attention of the little ones with a few plain, useful truths, such as they could appreciate and understand. He was impressed pretty much the same with the school as he was with the congregation in the morning. The numbers were few, and there seemed no manifestations of earnest purpose or vigorous life. He was wise enough, however, to make no remarks, answering to his feelings and impressions, for he knew that none object so strongly to being told they are lifeless as those who answer most fully to that description.

At the close of the school, Duncan Smiler drew him aside for a few moments, with the view of having a little confidential conversation.

This amiable gentleman smiled most winningly and blandly upon him, and said: "I was very much interested in your sermon this morning, Mr. Vincent. Very good and profitable sermon it was. Very applicable to our present position as a church. Why, my dear sir, if you had known our exact circumstances, you could not have preached to us more appropriately, or more acceptably."

"I am very glad to hear you say so, Mr. Smiler. It is satisfactory to know that the bow drawn at a venture has hit the mark. If we preach the truth, it will generally make its way and be found applicable."

"How do you like Battlemount, sir?"

"Well, I am scarcely in a position to say. I was never here before. This is my first visit, and I have had but little opportunity of making any observations."

"You must look about the city to-morrow, and see how you like it. We think it is beautiful for situation, and although not 'the joy of the whole earth,' it is the joy of the inhabitants. They think much of it, sir, and think it is something worth being proud of. I trust *you* may like it so much as to wish to settle here. We are in urgent need of a pastor. Things have run down very much since our late beloved pastor left us, and we wish to settle again as soon as possible."

"I fear, Mr. Smiler, I shall not be able to see much of the beauties of Battlemount, architectural or otherwise, as my present intention is to return to Crossberry by an early train to-morrow. As to the pastorate of this church, I trust most sincerely you may succeed in settling a suitable minister; but I must warn you kindly, but firmly, that it will not be wise to cherish any expectations in relation to myself. I have every reason to be content with my present church, and have no adequate reason for desiring a change; neither do I desire one."

Whether Mr. Smiler was pleased or displeased by this plain open avowal it is difficult to say. It is but fair to observe, however, that he smiled very blandly as usual, but without venturing any further remark upon the subject.

At the close of the evening service, which, it must be candidly confessed, was but slimly attended, as in the morning, Mr. Vincent was again besieged by a number of prominent members of the church,—Mr. Shankey, Mr. Smiler, Mr. Slocum, Mr. Duffy and Mr. Cheesman. After expressing their high appreciation of the services of the day, Mr. Shankey ventured the query:

"Could you make it convenient, Mr. Vincent, to supply the pulpit again next Sunday?"

"No, I am sorry to say I could not. When I say I could not, I do not mean that it is impossible for me

to render such a service, if the circumstances were such as to make it advisable. I do not wish, neither do I think it prudent, to be away from my own pulpit next Sabbath."

"Could you come and preach for us again, say a few weeks hence?" mildly suggested Mr. Duffy.

"I think it would not be advisable to do so, and I must therefore decline, and for this reason: If I were to come and preach here again a few Sundays hence, such a proceeding might occasion unpleasant surmises with my own people. They might think I was wishing to effect a change, and I should be sorry to give them that impression."

"Could you not stay a day or two, and preach at our regular Wednesday evening service?" asked Mr. Cheesman.

"No, I must decline that too. I have a special engagement in connection with my own church on that night, and I feel I ought not to neglect it."

"You surely must stay to-morrow over," said Mr. Slocum, "as I have reserved for you what I hope you will regard as a rare pleasure, the nature of which I will explain presently."

"And," said Mr. Shankey, I will, if you will allow me, call for you to-morrow morning at nine o'clock, and take you for a pleasant drive round the city, so that you may have an opportunity of judging what Battlemount is."

Mr. Vincent, whatever his wishes or intentions might be, could not decline these unsolicited favors without seeming churlish, and so he consented to remain over Monday, and leave for Crossberry on Tuesday morning.

These six gentlemen then emerged from the church and separated, Mr. Cheesman volunteering to walk along with Mr. Vincent to Mr. Slocum's lodgings, on the plea that his own home lay in the same direction. Heso on began to expatiate, with considerable volubility and earnestness, upon the grand possibilities of Battlemount as a sphere of labor; the present destitute and well nigh hopeless condition of the church, on account of being so long without a pastor; what they were prepared to do for the right man, if they could get him; and ending up with an emphatic assurance that he believed, and many others believed, that the right man was by his side, if only he would begin to take the matter into consideration as at least one of the possibilities of the future. To all of which Mr. Vincent thought it prudent to make no positive reply. He could not help thinking at that moment of the old driver's forebodings and prognostications. By some mysterious process the old man's instinctive affection had enabled him to divine the truth a little way ahead. Here he was, in spite of himself, surrounded by those very pertinacious pleadings and circumstances which

Simon Jehu had predicted; and what might further transpire, as the result thereof, who could tell.

True to his word, Hezekiah Shankey called for Mr. Vincent on the morrow, for the ostensible purpose of giving him a perambulating view of Battlemount, and a pleasant drive in his one-horse buggy. We say, the ostensible purpose advisedly, and without malice aforethought, for the real one was soon sufficiently manifest for the most obtuse mental vision to see. Mr. Shankey was what is called a cute man, and he took great pride in being thought such by others as well as himself. To be "smart" was the climax of his ambition. On this occasion it was soon evident to Mr. Vincent that Hezekiah Shankey was sailing under false colors. He was pretending to afford him a pleasure by taking him for a drive, while his real object was, evidently, that of getting to know as much as possible of his views and feelings regarding some questions which were deemed important. The Crossberry Pastor, fortunately, had nothing to conceal, was naturally frank and open, and, therefore, not likely to suffer any loss from the close scrutiny of his self-constituted critic. While Mr. Shankey was all the time nervously twitching the reins, biting his finger-nails and jerking out questions, Mr. Vincent was enabled to pay sufficient attention, and give such plain answers as did not wholly divert his attention from surrounding

objects. He saw enough to convince him that Battlemount was, in many respects, a fine city, and, as Duncan Smiler had said, "beautiful for situation."

The rarest and most exquisite pleasure was, however, reserved for the evening—that of going to hear the fair Scandinavian Prima Donna. That pleasure was contrived by the ingenious brain, and paid for out of the liberal purse, of Mr. Slocum. There was a brilliant and fashionable assembly in the Music Hall that night, which was the first and last appearance of that famous personage in Battlemount. There was a rare muster of various talent, but all "paled their ineffectual fires" before the star of the evening. All had paid their money, which was by no means inconsiderable, to hear the world-famed songstress warble her sweetest notes. She appeared, clad with the most exquisite taste, radiant with smiles, and decked, not immoderately or ostentatiously, with diamonds that flickered and flashed their perennial fires. Her first appearance was greeted with a perfect ovation, and, after acknowledging the compliment in a graceful manner, and smiling very winningly and gratefully upon the audience, she gave a sweet and heart-thrilling rendering of "Angels ever bright and fair." That song, in such a setting, became to the Crossberry Pastor ever afterwards an undying and fragrant remembrance.

Never before had he heard such a specimen of what the human voice, combined with a cultivated taste, can accomplish. It was the perfection of vocal harmony and sweetness. It lifted him into such a state of high spiritual feeling and poetic ravishment as he had never before experienced. What, he thought, will be my sensations, when for the first time I hear ten thousand times ten thousand more gifted and far sweeter sing the song of the Lamb before the Everlasting Throne. The encore brought out an exquisite rendering of "Home, Sweet Home." Home had never felt so sweet and precious to him as then, while under the delicious enthrallment of those plain homely sentiments, vivified by the tones of that matchless voice. That night in the Battlemount Music Hall was to the Rev. Paul Vincent a sweet and undying memory. It was "a thing of beauty," and fit to be "a joy forever." One heart, at least, was perpetually grateful to the fair Scandinavian.

"Mr. Slocum," said Mr. Vincent, as he and that gentleman were leaving the Hall that night, "please accept my eternal gratitude for the thoughtfulness and liberality which have afforded me so rich and exceptional a pleasure this evening."

The next morning found Mr. Vincent in the grand terminus of the Grand Occidental Railway, waiting for the train to convey him to Crossberry Junction. In the evening he had the pleasure of finding himself in his own sweet home.

CHAPTER X.

Battlemount geographically considered—A peep behind the scenes—The wise men of the East hold an important consultation—A forlorn hope—Messrs. Shankey, Smiler and Cheesman express their sentiments—A deputation appointed—Some things pertaining to the past history of the Battlemount Church.

THE precise geographical location of the city of Battlemount may be broadly but indefinitely indicated by the statement, that it formed the Eastern Terminus of the Grand Occidental Railway. This railway (every individual shareholder in which knew something experimentally of "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick") winded its serpentine course, from west to east, a distance of many hundred miles. The section of country contiguous to and surrounding its Eastern Terminus was denominated Eastern as distinguished from the Western. Battlemount was an Eastern city, its inhabitants were Eastern men, its churches Eastern churches, its associations, conventions, convocations, whether social, political, or ecclesiastical, were Eastern. It was a convenient epithet for describing things in general, and was universally adopted, and well

understood. As wisdom came from the East eighteen hundred years ago to worship at the shrine of Perfect Goodness, it was not altogether unnatural or surprising that the inhabitants of Battlemount should deem themselves specially endowed with that attribute, which was the distinguishing characteristic of the Magi. That wisdom was somehow indigenous to the East was a comforting reflection, and that they, in consequence, were wise, was a proposition received by them with a beautiful, unquestioning, and unwavering faith. Hezekiah Shankey was regarded by many as one of the wisest of the wise. He had somehow, and by some means, acquired among his brethren the reputation of being more than ordinarily shrewd, intelligent, sagacious, long-headed. In personal appearance and mental and moral characteristics, he was the exact fac-simile of Mortimer Shelburne of Shepherdston. He might have passed as the twin brother of that gentleman, so much was he like him. He was exceedingly fond of power, coupled with an opinion of himself that bore the stamp of being undoubted and favorable.

No sooner was the Crossberry Pastor departed than this sagacious individual called together a few of his more immediate confrères, to consult with him regarding matters of pressing and paramount importance relating to the church in general, and the

settlement of a pastor in particular. Among those who responded to the call were Duncan Smiler, Dr. Gammon, Rollo Duffy, Alexander Slocum and John Cheesman. In Hezekiah Shankey's big parlor, at Hezekiah Shankey's special and particular request, did these gentlemen meet.

Mr. Shankey, who, be it observed, was naturally of a sanguine temperament, was nevertheless on this occasion somewhat despondent. He introduced the business by observing, that there were some things weighing considerably upon his mind. He felt saddened by the reflection that the church was in such a low condition financially, numerically, spiritually. Perhaps, if they could succeed in settling a suitable pastor speedily, they might get a reaction, and taste of the sweets of revival and prosperity once more. He had very serious doubts, however, and was by no means sanguine. They had tried a good many men during the past twelve months, but all negotiations looking toward a settlement had thus far proved unavailing. For his part he had almost ceased to hope. Perhaps God was displeased with them, and had forsaken them. As to the Rev. Mr. Vincent, he liked him very much, and he might do for the position, and might eventually succeed, if he could be induced to come to Battlemount, and settle as pastor: but they knew that they had no particular encou-

agement in that direction. He was evidently not desiring, or seeking a new settlement. He felt also that he was a man of marked individuality, and would not be trifled with; and should they succeed in securing him, they would, possbily, have to be somewhat more guarded and generous in their treatment. He had, however, no expectations that they could secure him, but still as it seemed to be the last chance, a sort of forlorn hope, he had no objections to unite with others in trying what could be done.

Mr. Cheesman was a little more hopeful in his tone of remark. He even had the temerity to quietly chide his brother Shankey for his despondent attitude. Said he, in his blunt, bluff way,—"I don't see, brethren, why we should be so much discouraged and cast down. In fact, I think I see a reason why we should be somewhat the reverse of that. True, as a church we have been somewhat depleted of late by certain defections, and discouraged by many failures; but we must try to stimulate our waning spirits and take courage. What we want is a good pastor settled over us as soon as possible, and, in my humble judgment, the Rev. Mr. Vincent is just the man we need. I am aware he has given us little or no encouragement, but let us take little notice of that, and try all we can to get him, by hook or by crook. Go for him strong. Offer every

possible inducement. Use all available means and influences. Offer him a big salary, and trust to the chapter of accidents for raising it. True, we have failed in many previous cases, but we may succeed in this. We must succeed. We must make up our minds to do so. We will take no denial. Let us preserve a confident attitude, and go forward and win. What depresses brother Shankey, stimulates me. I feel, like him, that it is about our last chance, a kind of forlorn hope, and therefore we should resolve to make the venture successful. If we succeed in securing the Rev. Mr. Vincent as our pastor, I predict a glorious future for our church; the walls of Zion will be rebuilt; the waste places will be inhabited; the desert will blossom as the rose; and we may yet become a creditable christian community, and a great power in Battlemount; and cease to be, what we have been in the past, a by-word and a reproach."

Duncan Smiler, smiling very blandly and patronizingly, as was his wont, thus delivered himself:—

"I heartily and fully reciprocate the sentiments already expressed by my honored brethren, Mr. Shankey and Mr. Cheesman. Our church has, indeed, sunk into a very low condition. We need a pastor to build us up again. It is very necessary we should get the right man, and I, with others, sincerely believe the Rev. Mr. Vincent to be that

man. But can we get him? Is there the shadow of a probability of our being so fortunate? Is he likely to accept a call, if we induce the church to extend him one? Like brother Shankey, I am far from being sanguine about this. So far as I know, or have the means of knowing, we have no encouragement from our reverend brother in that direction. In fact he has discouraged us. I took the liberty to sound him upon the matter, very cautiously but very decidedly, and he gave me clearly to understand that he was far from wishing a change in his pastoral relations. He was very courteous, but very firm in his tone. He seems a very honest man; likely to say precisely what he means and feels; and my deliberate conviction is that he has no wish for a change, and no occasion for it. But then, what are we to do? What is to become of our church? We are getting weaker and fewer every day; and it would seem that nothing but the settlement of a good pastor would stem the downward tendency, cause us to hope, and revive us again. It does seem unfortunate that, having tried so many who might have come if we had deemed them suitable, we should receive so little encouragement from one who seems in every respect eminently suited to the position. Nevertheless, let us cheer up, brethren, bid adieu to despondency, and try what we can do. We

may, and as brother Cheesman says, we must succeed. It is a forlorn hope, and fortune may favor us if only we are brave. In order to give our deliberations a practical turn I would suggest, nay if necessary I would move, that our two trusted brethren, Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum, wait upon the Rev. Mr. Vincent in person, and use their best influence to induce him to take the matter into consideration of accepting a call to the pastorate of this church."

This practical proposition was endorsed and supported by Dr. Gammon, Mr. Shankey and Mr. Cheesman; and Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum not unwillingly undertook the execution of the onerous task imposed upon them by their brethren.

The only speech that calls for any observation is the one made by Mr. Cheesman. He was one of those rough and ready sort of men who not unfrequently blurt out important truth unintentionally and unsuspectingly. There was much significance in the latter part of his remark, as pertaining to the past history of the Battlemount church. Unfortunately, its record, from the very beginning, had been such as to make it a by-word and a reproach. For years, it had been the scene of division and intestine strife; and these constantly recurring ebullitions of brotherly love had kept the church small and uninfluential. It might have been a very strong church if unity had been the rule of its life; but the reverse of this was

the fact, and hence weakness, reproach and shame formed its lot. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel," had been literally, and with tremendous judicial force, fulfilled in its experience. Its whole history did not extend over many years, but its pastors had been many. It was a significant and admonitory fact, to any who happened to know the dread secret, that the average pastorate had not exceeded two years. The records of the church showed clearly enough that the habit of getting rid of pastors less ceremoniously than they got them had been reduced to a system.

One beloved pastor had been subjected to what is technically called the starving out process. Those who wished him gone, for some reason or for no reason at all, reduced their subscriptions or stopped them altogether; and he had the satisfaction of seeing his means of subsistence grow beautifully less day by day. With the fortitude of a philosopher and the heroism of a Christian, he met this constant shrinkage in his income by a corresponding shrinkage in his homely diet. "We must make the porridge a little thinner," was a favorite expression of his, when informed that the quarterage was less than he had a right to expect.

Another beloved pastor had the grim satisfaction of having the door locked in his face, with a blunt intimation to go elsewhere, and get his arrears of

salary as best he could, and trust in Providence in the meantime. Such a mode of augmentation, being of the brute kind, was of course, simply unanswerable. He submitted to physical necessity and moved off; and his faithful adherents gathered around him in an upper room, listened to his ministrations, and supported him as best they could.

All this and more was, however, as unknown to the Crossberry Pastor as to the babe unborn; and it evidently formed no part of the plan of the wise men to inform him of the disagreeable facts. Whether ignorance was bliss, will be seen more clearly as the narrative advances.

CHAPTER XI.

The Battlemount church theoretically and practically considered—"Angels hovering round"—The Crossberry Pastor again interviewed by Messrs. Duffy and Slocum—Some things of general application—The call to Battlemount—"In a straight betwixt two"—A trying ordeal—Light dawns—A painful surprise—Resignation—The call to Battlemount accepted—Squire Rosewood cannot say: "Thy will be done."

THE Battlemount church, like other churches of the same faith and order, was technically and theoretically a spiritual democracy; that is, all legislative and executive functions were supposed to be exercised by the whole body of the members. A show of this was generally made on all fitting occasions, but it was a show, not a reality. Actually, the many were ignored and the few, who were deemed wise, ruled. It is necessary to bear these facts in mind in order to understand the complete self-complacency and self-conscious authority which characterized the proceedings of Mr. Shankey and his confrères in the last chapter. It never once occurred to them that, possibly, some who had not been consulted might not wholly endorse their proceedings.

It was a contingency upon which they were not in the habit of reckoning; so engrossed and satisfied were they with their own self-constituted authority. They represented the pith, marrow, money, brains and energy of the church; and, therefore, it was only right, they thought, that, while conceding to others a nominal right to have a voice in the management of affairs, they, in fact, should lead and hold sway. They had no doubt that if they could get the Crossberry Pastor to promise to accept a call, they could, by the exercise of their great moral influence, weld the church into such a state of acquiescence as to insure the giving of one, and that unanimously. They had always managed the matter that way before, and there could be no question about its being so managed again. It will, therefore, be seen by a process of reasoning perfectly transparent to all docile minds that when Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum were commissioned by their confrères to confer with the Rev. Mr. Vincent, in regard to accepting a call, it was just the same, practically, as if they had been so commissioned by the whole church.

Armed with such undoubted and paramount authority, Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum flew on the wings of the morning, and on the wings of a locomotive, along the track of "The Grand Occidental," and in due course alighted at Crossberry Junction. The

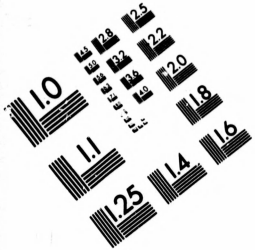
old tumble-down coach and Simon Jehu took them, at a much slower pace, to Crossberry. They occupied seats inside the coach, and thus escaped the eagle eyes and loquacious enquiries of the old driver. They meant to discharge their mission quietly, but pertinaciously. Alighting from the coach at the Nag's Head, a few minutes' brisk walking brought them to the Pastor's residence, which lay at the western extremity of the town. They agreed, between themselves, that Mr. Duffy should do the talking, while Mr. Slocum remained silent. A most unmistakable pull at the bell brought the servant to the door.

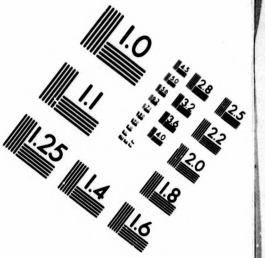
"Was the Rev. Mr. Vincent at home?"

"Yes. Please walk in."

The Pastor, at that moment, emerged from his study, and with some surprise, yet with great cordiality, received them. Mr. Duffy, who prided himself upon his business capacity and his judicial training, at once proceeded to explain the object of their visit.

"It affords me considerable pleasure, my dear sir, to inform you that I and my friend and brother, Mr. Slocum, have been so far honored with the confidence of the church in Battlemount, that we have been requested to wait upon you, personally, with the view of using what powers of persuasion we have, to induce you to take into consideration the practicability of accepting a call. It is the opinion





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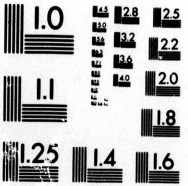
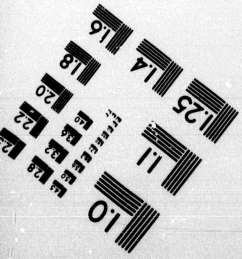
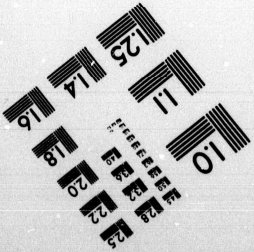






of many, upon whose judgment we are accustomed to rely, that you are exactly suited to the vacant position; and we are certainly empowered to say that a call will be immediately given if you will give us any encouragement in that direction. As you have refused to come before the church as a candidate, in the regular way, this method of procedure is the only one left to us, and our necessity must be our excuse for intruding ourselves and the subject upon you, at this time."

"Your visit, gentlemen," said the Pastor, "and the object of it, alike take me by surprise. I must say that my visit to Battlemount, although a pleasure to me in many respects,—and especially was I indebted to the liberality of Mr. Slocum for a very rare gratification,—has not begotten in me a desire for a change in my pastoral relations. I have a loving, appreciative, praying, liberal people here, whom I do not wish to leave. I have been greatly blessed. I am as happy and useful as any ordinary minister can expect to be, and I am, what is not always the case, fully contented with my present lot. I do not undervalue your good opinion, nor the flattering estimate placed upon my slender abilities by those whom you represent; but I cannot see how I can, with my present views and feelings, give you any encouragement in the matter upon which you and your brethren have set your hearts. Did I see any immediate, or even

prospective cause for a change, the case might soon assume a different phase, and a more hopeful one for you. But this I fail to see. To give definite encouragement, under such circumstances, would be trifling with you, and this I would scorn to do, as being below the dignity of a man and a minister."

At the conclusion of these observations Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum eyed each other curiously and somewhat doubtfully. There was a passing cloud, evidently. It passed, however, almost instantly, and re-assurance supervened. As plainly as eye could speak to eye, Mr. Slocum conjured his friend Duffy to go for the pastor again strong, and with newer and more cogent arguments. So Mr. Duffy resumed:—

"What you say, my dear sir, I have no doubt is strictly and impartially true in every particular. You are too transparently honest to misrepresent your own feelings, or those of others. You are contented with your present lot, and your people are deeply attached to you. There is no desire or cause for change on either side. This is a gratifying state of things, very gratifying. We cannot well reason from your present relations to a change, but let us look at our side of the question, and see what arguments it may furnish to influence and mould your decision. Battlemount has more than ten

times the population of Crossberry, consequently it offers a much wider sphere for the exercise of your abilities, which, allow me to say, are of no mean order. It is, too, a centre of considerable influence, in relation to other churches of our denomination. Upon its vigor and welfare depend, in no small measure, the life and usefulness of other related and affiliated bodies. Thus, denominationally, we occupy a conspicuous, important, and responsible position. The man who is destined to be honored of God, in building up the Battlemount church, will not only effect great good in his immediate sphere, but he will be vastly useful to the churches in the region round about. Our growth will be their strength. This is, I submit, an important consideration. And then, although it is somewhat humiliating to refer to this aspect of the case, we have so far been uniformly unsuccessful in settling a pastor, and this has been highly detrimental to our growth and prosperity. Happily you came, saw, and conquered, at once. We would gladly welcome you. In you we should all be able to unite. You would be received with open arms as the sent of God. Your coming would be the signal for the resuscitation of an important christian community to renewed life and enlarged usefulness. Let me suggest to you, my dear sir, whether such circumstances may not be a call of God to you, to personal sacrifice, and increasing honor and usefulness."

"I confess, Mr. Duffy, that you have made out a strong case. You have marshalled your arguments with considerable dexterity and effect. I admit their force in a measure, but I am not fully satisfied. I do not see the matter wholly as you see it. If I did, my way would be much clearer. I cannot say your arguments are inconclusive, inapplicable, or fallacious. I sympathize with you most heartily. I wish some suitable man could be found to fill, worthily and successfully, so important a position. I wish vacant churches would turn their attention to pastors who are without a charge, or sincerely desirous, for proper and sufficient reasons, for a change, instead of looking to ministers who are comfortably and satisfactorily settled. This is a great and growing evil. Too often the settlement of one church simply means the unsettlement of another equally important, and thus no real progress is made. You rob Peter to pay Paul, and then Peter robs somebody else to pay himself; and thus the thing goes on endlessly and confusedly. This is neither politic nor right. The better plan would be for the vacant churches to look, first, to the vacant pastors to supply their needs. Our democratic principles, right enough in themselves, have been developed to the point of absurdity, inconvenience, and impracticableness. Our independency has run to seed. There would be no

harm in cutting it back a little. It would be a positive good to dwarf it somewhat. Some check is required. Some strong hand should be stretched out to stop its weed-like growth. It is bringing itself into contempt, by the wonderful exuberance of its leaves and the paucity of its fruit."

Mr. Duffy wisely abstained from following the Pastor in these generalities, however excellent they might be; his design being to keep him, if possible, at the main point; and so he asked, with a perceptible touch of concern in his tone:

"Would you, sir, accept a call to Battlemount, if such call were unanimously extended to you?"

"I am far from being able to say that I would."

"Would you give such a call a fair, deliberate, and candid consideration?"

"As a gentleman, a Christian, and a christian minister, I should certainly be bound in duty so to do."

"Can you give us any intimation that a call might be favorably considered by you?"

"No, I cannot give you such an intimation, because I am far from being favorably disposed towards it at present; or rather, which will be the more accurate statement of the two,—I am far from being favorable to relinquishing my present position. I do not wish to leave Crossberry."

"We purpose, my dear sir, giving a considerable salary."

"That may be, I do not doubt it."

"A salary fully equal to the position a minister, in the city of Battlemount, will be called to occupy."

"Yes, I have no doubts about your kind intentions, or your liberality."

"Such a sphere would afford you larger possibilities of usefulness, and it might add something in the way of social distinction."

"I care little about social distinction. Usefulness I trust I shall ever value at its full worth."

"Could you not give us one word that might cause us to hope, and be good news to our brethren who sent us on this delicate and difficult mission?"

"Above all things, gentlemen, I must keep within the limits of honesty and truth, even at the risk of seeming unkind. I wish you well, I wish the church you represent well, I wish your great and pressing want could be supplied, and that soon. I wish sincerely it could be supplied without disturbing my present relations. If I could be two men, you should have the second man, but that cannot be. I do not wish to restrict your movements, or put a bar upon the action of the church. Do what you think is right, and trust in God. Whatever you do, or do not, you may be assured of honest and, as far as possible, considerate treatment from me. Promises I will not make; fairness

and true kindness you shall have. Act according to your best judgment, and leave me perfectly free to act as God's wisdom may guide me, in any contingency that may arise. Gentlemen, with the kindliest sentiments toward you, more than this I cannot, must not, will not say."

These emphatic sentiments, uttered kindly but firmly, signalized the close of the interview. Mr. Duffy and Mr. Slocum concluded they had accomplished all they could, though not all they desired. They retired, thanking the Pastor for his urbanity and honesty, and concluded by expressing a hope that he might be induced, by a higher power, to consider, favorably, an overture that might be made to him in the course of a week, or ten days. These last words sounded somewhat ominously in the Pastor's ears, as he listened to the retreating footsteps of his interrogators along his well-kept gravel walk. Notwithstanding so many protestations on his part of a wish not to be disturbed in his present relations and sphere, they seemed bent upon putting him to the final test, that of extending a call. In ten days the document came, from which resulted, in the mysterious future, very important consequences.

BATTLEMOUNT, Sep. 13, 18—.

REV. PAUL VINCENT.

DEAR SIR,

It is my pleasure, as well as my duty, to inform you that, in accordance with a notice duly given, a large and influential

meeting of the Church in Battlemount was held last evening. At the said meeting it was resolved unanimously, and most enthusiastically, that you should be invited to the pastorate of the church; and that the salary should be at the rate of ——— per annum.

We sincerely hope, and ardently trust, that you may see it your duty to accept of this invitation, and that we may soon see you among us to commence a long and successful pastorate.

Believe me,
Yours in our common Lord,

J. H. Gammon, M.D.,
Church Clerk.

The inner workings of the mind, the deep experiences of life, and the profound feelings of the soul, are difficult at all times, adequately, to describe. When any important crisis is reached, these are so multiplied in complication and intensity that description is impossible. A man feels, and feels strangely and deeply, but it is utterly futile to attempt to convey to others a just idea of the depth and complexity of his emotions. They are too deep for utterance, but not too deep for personal experience. Only He who knows all can understand and sympathize.

Into such a mood of thought and feeling was the Crossberry Pastor thrown by the receipt of the call from Battlemount. What was the meaning of all this? Was God speaking to him, and bidding him arise and depart? Was He leading him in a way he

knew not? Was He disturbing him, or permitting him to be disturbed, in a sphere where he had so much happiness and usefulness; and where he could contentedly spend a long succession of years, if permitted to do so? What was to be done? What was his clear, unmistakable duty? He wished to do right. He wished to subserve God's purposes, even at great personal sacrifice. He wished to move in the direction which God might indicate, even although it might be against his present predilections and feelings. One thing, at least, was clear, he must consider the overture which had been made, dispassionately, prayerfully, faithfully. This, at least, was right. This, and nothing more, had he promised. This he was bound in all honor to do. This he would do. He had discouraged the movement when in an incipient state as much as he ought to do, but now it had thus culminated, he must meet it fairly, and act faithfully.

Is the question to be decided by feeling? If so, it would soon, and unhesitatingly, be decided in the negative; but he feels that duty, and not feeling, should be the umpire in the case. Not my will, but thine be done, is his never-ceasing cry. Only show me thy way, and I will walk therein, is the sincerest and intensest aspiration of his heart. He feels that to do God's will is the highest and noblest end of being. He thinks, and wrestles, and prays. He looks

at the question in its many sides and issues; canvasses, with fearless head and heart logic, all the arguments and considerations pro and con. Many and cogent reasons incline him to disregard the call, and remain in his present sphere. He is comfortable, peaceful, happy, useful. His people love him, and he loves them. There is no root of bitterness; no vibration of discord; all is harmony and peace. He is well and sufficiently maintained. What more does he need, or ought he to desire more? More he does not desire. He has contentment and godliness, and these, according to an infallible authority, are great gain. On the other hand Battlemount is, unquestionably, a larger sphere of labor; in many respects a more important one, and, at the present time, a most needy one. He has not sought it, it has sought him, harmoniously and persistently. Is God thus calling him to personal sacrifice for His dear sake, and more extended usefulness in His service? He may be. "Show me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path." He may be consulting his own feelings and personal interests to a sinful extent; he may be mistaking the leadings of Providence, and he may be heedless of the voice of God, if he do not accept this call. He has a tender conscience, and wishes to do right. Unhappily, struggle and agonize as he may, he cannot attain the full assurance either of insight or of

faith, and yet it is necessary to decide. By and by the waves of doubt and difficulty, in a measure, subside, and a still small voice speaks to him, and says, Go. Go in darkness, if need be, and trust in me. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." His full heart responds: "Thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my Salvation." He has taken counsel of God, he need take counsel of no other. He has heard his Father's voice in the darkness, and he will follow where He leads. Only to one earthly being does he confide his decision, and that is the partner of all his joys and sorrows. She murmurs not, but is content to go where the Great Father may lead him.

The Sabbath morn comes round, and the Pastor ascends his pulpit. All eyes are reverently and expectantly fixed upon him. There is a chastened, glowing expression upon his countenance, like that which Moses had when he descended from the Mount, for he too has been face to face with the Lord, not on Mount Sinai, but before the Mercy Seat. He prays, as he never prayed before, for the people of his charge, and commends them, lovingly and fervently, to the Great Shepherd of the sheep. He preaches with an unction and power, enthralling in its burning intensity of love and tenderness, from the words of Jesus, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."

At the close, he announces that he has a communication to make, which he cannot trust himself to speak, but must read :—

BRETHREN, SISTERS AND FRIENDS,

I take this public opportunity of performing what is to me an exceedingly painful duty. Would that the pain which will necessarily flow from the communication I have to make was confined to myself. Unhappily, it will affect many true and tender hearts, as it has already affected mine. I would spare you if I could, but I feel I might be mistaking the leadings of Divine Providence if I did. The Church in Battlemount has extended me a cordial invitation to become its pastor, and has promised to accord me a most liberal support if I accept the invitation. This invitation, after looking at it carefully, I do not feel I can disregard, and shall probably accept it in the course of a few days. As a necessary preliminary to this, it becomes my painful duty to relinquish my present pastorate, which I now formally and publicly do, and I propose closing my labors here the last Sabbath in this present month. And now, my friends, with a full heart I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before His throne.

Consternation was stamped upon every countenance at the conclusion of the reading of this docu-

ment. As one man said afterwards: "I felt as if a brick had fallen upon my head and stunned me." To that succeeded a partial realization of a great prospective bereavement, and few eyes there were but what rolled out a silent tear. A real and bitter sorrow had fallen unexpectedly and suddenly upon them.

The Pastor himself was visibly affected. With a broken and hurried utterance, he pronounced the benediction and sat down.

Squire Rosewood was the first to grasp his hand as he descended the pulpit stairs, and that large, true heart was full to overflowing, as in trembling accents he enquired:

"Dear Pastor, what is the meaning of this? Do you really mean to leave us? Is it your will? Is it God's will?"

"Mr. Rosewood, it is even so. Absolutely it is not my will, but I think it is God's will, and so far as I know it to be His, it is mine. His will be done."

"Well, sir, if it be God's will, it may be wrong in me to feel and say it, but I am afraid I cannot say: 'Thy will be done."

"Don't say that, my dear friend. Wait a little and be patient. You will feel better by and by."

Why dwell upon the parting scene, with all its heart-stirring, pathetic details. The call was in due

course accepted, the dear home was broken up, old associations were relinquished, the last sermon in the quaint old edifice was preached, and the Pastor departed for his new home, and his new sphere, laden with the sorrowful benedictions of a true-hearted, loving people.

Let us follow him, and see what God will do with him and by him there.

CHAPTER XII.

The Rev. Paul Vincent and his family arrive in Battlemount —Duncan Smiler as a well-intentioned host—The duties of hospitality—The first night—Forebodings—"A dream which was not all a dream"—The Inaugural sermon—High expectations.

ENOUGH has been said already about Battlemount to satisfy ordinary curiosity; and it is no part of the object of the present narrative to satisfy the extraordinary and the morbid. As Duncan Smiler had said, and as many others thought, "it was beautiful for situation;" and had its civic management at all corresponded with, or fairly approximated to that, it might have been one of the pleasantest and healthiest cities in the world. Unhappily, this was not the case. It had acquired an unenviable notoriety for unhealthiness of an easily preventible type. Faction, too, reigned supreme. Civic mismanagement and popular strife, of the worst and lowest types, made it a by-word and a reproach. Light and darkness constantly strove to put each other out of countenance and out of existence. The lion would not lie down peaceably with the lamb, except upon the one indispensable and only condi-

tion, that the latter should be inside the former. The lamb, very properly, objected to this one-sided basis of peace, and hence chronic dissatisfaction and anarchy reigned supreme.

These general characteristics of the entire community must be borne in mind by the reader, as they will help him, in some measure, to understand the subsequent attitude and conduct of that part of it over which the Rev. Paul Vincent was called to preside. What the tree was, that particular branch of it, unfortunately, proved to be. But we must not anticipate events. Two or tree items of passing interest must be thrown together here, in order to preserve the proper chronological continuity of our little history. The Pastor, in his letter of acceptance, remarked, amongst other weighty considerations, the following: "Very much anxious thought and prayer have brought me to my decision, which is, that I cordially accept the invitation which you have so cordially and unanimously given. It is at the sacrifice of much personal feeling, and at the call of what seems to me an important duty, that I have done this. I have sought to do right; this has been my prevailing desire, and now I confidently leave the issue in His hands who doeth all things well." Dr. Gammon acknowledged the receipt of the communication, and replied, in his official capacity, on behalf of the Church:—"Your letter

was read to the friends last night. I need scarcely say its contents were received with lively satisfaction. The brethren did not fail to remember you in their prayers."

Duncan Smiler voluntarily made a communication on his own behalf, showing much kindly thought and consideration: "It was with much pleasure that we learned you had accepted the pastorate of our church. I am happy to offer you the hospitalities of my home until you can make arrangements for your accommodation otherwise." All this was seasonable, kind, and gratifying to the Pastor. It helped to assuage somewhat that tender feeling of regret which was still gnawing at his heart as he thought of his dear people left, for the time being, without a Shepherd. He felt he had indications that God was leading him where, indeed, he might have harder work and greater responsibilities and difficulties, but where he would meet with such affection, forbearance and kindness as had hitherto been his happy lot. All this was natural, proper and right. And yet, "man proposes, God disposes." "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." A man's heart as distinguished from a man's mind,—this deviseth his way. The heart is the seat of the affections, and, unfortunately, they are proverbially blind. They are unsafe guides. God knows this, and He merci-

fully interposes and directs our steps. So that in another sense than that which the Apostle intended, the thing we would, we do not, and the thing we would not, we are morally necessitated to do. The operation of this law,—the necessary and inevitable subordination of the human to the Divine,—will go far to explain some things which are seemingly contradictory in human conduct.

The Pastor and his family reached Battlemount in safety. Mr. Cheesman and Mr. Slocum were at the grand terminus of "The Grand Occidental Railway" to meet them, and from thence conducted them to the residence of Duncan Smiler. This gentleman and his family received the expected guests with apparent cordiality, but unhappily in such a way as to convey the impression that they were conferring a benefit. That they, deliberately, meant to convey such an impression, no one but a perfect churl would affirm, but that such an impression was produced the faithful historian feels bound to place upon record.

This criticism is not meant unkindly, and it is not made by one wholly incapable of observation. It is intended to point a moral, and convey a useful lesson to the docile and the teachable. The fault alluded to is not an uncommon one, and the opposite of it is one of the rarest of virtues.

As a host, or hostess, you discharge your duty to

your invited guest so far as you succeed in conveying the impression that you are receiving, rather than conferring, a benefit. Only upon such conditions can proffered kindness comport with personal dignity, and be the source of real social enjoyment. Otherwise, your well-spread table is laden with tasteless viands, and your bed of down is a bed of thorns.

A churlish philosopher has said, that one man cannot receive benefit from another without one or both suffering moral loss by the transaction. This is doubtless an extreme view, and so far as it is extreme, it is unsound. The defect is not in the act, but in the *actors;* and as such it is remediable.

The greatest of philosophers said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." If the giving and receiving of benefits were performed in that spirit, there would be small blame, and no loss.

That first night in Battlemount was long remembered by the Pastor. Those near and dear to him had retired to rest, and he sat, alone, musing. It was a November night, and he felt chilly, but it was more than the chilliness of the atmosphere. Did coming events cast their shadows before them? Was the Divine hand sketching, upon his distant horizon, a faint outline of those many things He would call him to suffer for His name's sake? The truth lies midway of two opposite statements. He did and

he did not anticipate evil. There was nothing in the appearance of things thus far that would lead him to anticipate anything but good; and yet, in spite of himself, and spite of appearances, he felt lonely, and cold, and comfortless. The home of Duncan Smiler did not feel so cosy and warm as did that of Roscoe Rosewood, of Crossberry Park. They were two different men,—essentially different,—the former was nearly all head; the latter was nearly all heart. They might be equal in meaning well, and in intentional kindness, but the result was totally different, and tremendously disproportionate.

The Pastor at last, fatigued with a long journey, and with a dull under-current of agitated feeling, sank to sleep, but not to rest. The seething brain would not rest, and he dreamed, not of Crossberry, nor of Battlemount, nor of Duncan Smiler, nor of Roscoe Rosewood, but of one like unto the Son of Man. The crown of thorns was on His head,—fit emblem of sovereignty founded upon suffering,—and the pallid brow throbbed with a strange blending of inexpressible pain and infinite tenderness. Out of those eyes, too, looked, in striking conjunction, the God and the man. There, also, were the prints of the nails and the spear in the hands, and feet, and side. The tender wailings of an old prophet were inscribed in characters as transparent as the moon, and as bright as the sun, upon his breast. They were once

prophetic, but they had now become historical: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.....The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison, and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was

numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

The shining, bleeding one touched him, and said: "Follow me." The bright vision vanished, and he awoke. It was a dream, and yet not all a dream. That touch thrilled him. Real, or unreal, it seemed real to him. It quickened his pulse and flushed his cheek. He opened his eyes and looked around. The morning light was streaming in at the window. He was wise enough not to give immediate voice to his thoughts, and contented himself with the sage reflection that, possibly, "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy." "Our little life is rounded with a sleep." Yes, and perhaps with something else more mysterious and insoluble than that. "We are such stuff as dreams are made of." May be we come very near the border land sometimes, and things seemingly visionary and intangible may be intensely real if only we had the fuller perception to discern the facts and their related phenomena.

The first sermon is a trying ordeal and a difficult achievement. So the Pastor felt as he ascended the pulpit to preach his "inaugural" in Battlemount. Expectations ran very high. Opinions of the most positive and high-flown character were freely indulged in and as freely expressed. The coming

man was represented as almost a paragon of perfection, and a very seraph for eloquence. Eminent men had spoken highly of his gifts and graces, and his past record contained not a flaw nor a blot. His learning, though not sufficient to fit him for a Professor's chair, was nevertheless deemed far above the average. His presence was not weak, neither was his speech contemptible. His reasoning and persuasive powers were supposed to be of the first order. He was old enough to have a fair amount of experience, and yet young enough to be in the full flushing vigor of a stalwart manhood. What might not be expected from such a combination of qualities? His keen wit and unflagging observation enabled him to detect many of these things. He could not help seeing that he was the subject of an exaggerated estimate and of foolish and extravagant expectations. The discovery did not please him, but he had the good sense to keep his thoughts and feelings to himself. Secretly, he resolved to nail the true colors to the mast and abide by the standard. He would strike the key-note of his ministry with no uncertain sound, and, therefore, he announced as his text: "For to me to love is Christ and to die is gain." Let these words, said he, be our motto, the culmination of our ambition, and the glory and strength of our life. We can have nothing nobler, nor better. There is no higher plane of existence possible to man

upon the earth. Christian is the highest style of man. Christian life, which is life in Christ and for Christ, is the holiest, the most blessed, the most fruitful, the most enjoyable. It harmonizes with man's highest nature and destiny. This life is a *reality;* not a sentiment, not a social convenience or adjunct, not simply a creed, but a life in Him who is the highest embodiment of life, and who liveth for evermore. There is much that man seeks that is far below him, and thus he is liable to sink lower than his proper level. There is something above and beyond fame, or wealth, or social distinction, it is that ennobling rectification of being which comes from a living conjunction with the Divine. "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

This life is also a *growth*, as all life is. It cannot remain stationary. It is a necessity of its nature to advance, to develop, to fructify and grow. There is "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

This life is an *eternal growth*, hence death is gain. Death, to the soul out of Christ, is loss, not gain; total, irremediable, eternal loss. But to him whose "life is hid with Christ in God," death is but

an incident, and scarcely an interruption; a small pebble in the bed of the mighty river; the life is not stayed in its course, but it flows on unceasingly and endlessly, mixing and losing itself, ultimately, in that vast sea of Divine benignity that is fathomless, and without a shore.

This, and more, did that earnest man pour out of a full heart. He laid hold of his subject with the grasp of the might of God and the tenderness of Jesus; and by such heaven-wrought leverage sought to raise his hearers above the weakness of human wisdom and the frivolities of human life to a realization of the great privileges and possibilities of a life in Christ. With what effect, time cannot show, and eternity, alone, will reveal.

CHAPTER XIII.

In which the reader is introduced to some people of consequence—A cup of tea and plenty of small talk—Pen and ink sketches of Hezekiah Shankey, Duncan Smiler, John Cheesman, Rollo Duffy, Dr. Gammon, The Rev. Jeremiah Gamble, Alexander Slocum and Joel Gudgeon —Unreported conversation.

We will ask the reader to take for granted, without subjecting him to the labor of wading through the dry details of a tedious description, that the Rev. Paul Vincent is settled down in his new sphere; that all the orthodox preliminaries connected with such an event are already things of the past; that he has excused himself from any further trespass upon the kind hospitality of Duncan Smiler; that he has secured a house in the western part of the city, and furnished it according to his taste, convenience, and means; that he is located, comfortably, in his new home, and has taken the measure of his new sphere; that his active, vigorous mind has already devised a simple but comprehensive plan for work, and that things are moving steadily and successfully along.

Should the reader kindly compass the result above indicated, he may be rewarded by an immediate acquaintance with a few people of some note and consequence in the Battlemount community.

Hezekiah Shankey invited the Pastor and his wife to tea, at his roadside, suburban mansion, and he invited the aforesaid people of note to meet them, to wit: Mr. and Mrs. Smiler, Dr. and Mrs. Gammon, Mr. and Mrs. Cheesman, Mr. and Mrs. Duffy, Rev. Jeremiah Gamble and Mrs. Gamble, Mr. and Mrs. Gudgeon, and Mr. Slocum. While these interesting people are forming themselves into a "Mutual Admiration Society," dealing in small talk, and consuming tea, toast and marmalade, we may as well fix the apparatus, and take "a view."

There is Mr. Shankey sitting at the head of the table, exactly opposite his very agreeable and pleasant wife. He is the host on this occasion, and for that, if for no other reason, he merits an early notice. He is of medium height, thin, pale and bald. He has a somewhat high forehead, thin lips, grey, restless eyes. He has a look of emaciation, doubtless arising from a sluggish liver, and a disordered digestion. He nervously bites his finger nails to the quick, and is a perfect embodiment of bones and nerves. Physical form, he has none, except such as may be predicated of a bean-pole. Whatever may be the length of his tailor's bill, or the excellence of

his tailor, his clothes cannot be said to fit; they hang on him. His mental and moral characteristics are exceptional and singular. A deep thinker he is not, neither can he appreciate deep thinking, but he has a reputation for shrewdness. He is very emotional. He can weep copiously and easily, but he seldom laughs; and when he does attempt the latter, it rises not above the dignity of a grin. If you reach him, it must be through his heart, not his head. The pathetic is his delight. He has an undoubted opinion of himself, as why should he not? He has a good home, a pleasant wife, quite a number of olive branches round his table, and a good paying business. He is A 1 in the Battlemount Church, holding several offices of dignity and usefulness, and he is a liberal contributor to the cause. It is his proud boast, that he never fails in anything he undertakes. Succeed he must and will in all things. He believes there are few things impossible to him who wills to do, and sticks to it. Nil Desperandum is his motto. Unhappily, this motto is applicable more to his inflexible power of resentment, when roused, than anything else.

DUNCAN SMILER is, as might be expected from past intimations, a different stamp of man; essentially, and totally so. He has scarcely anything in common with his brother Shankey, except that of having a tolerably fair opinion of himself. As this

is a common failing in human nature, it need occasion no surprise that it is found in good men sometimes. Smiler is his name, and smiler is his nature. If he meets his best friend, or his worst enemy, he smiles. If he met his Satanic Majesty, suddenly and unexpectedly, as he turned the corner of the street, he would instinctively smile, and say, in the blandest manner: "Good morning, sir; I hope I see you well." He smiles all the time, and very complacently, while he is listening to a sermon he very much likes; and a very good point, when he happens to see it, makes him radiant as the sun. He smiles when he sings, but he is specially benignant when he rises in meeting to address a few words of exhortation to his brethren. He is of medium height, and somewhat more than medium age. He is not a good business man, but he is, nevertheless, a sort of genius in his way; possessing the inventive and mechanical faculties, considerably. What most people, who know him, consider his weak points, he considers his strong ones. He has the complexion of a Celt and the passions of a Roman in Rome's proudest days; but his powers of self-control are great, and he keeps his most turbulent feelings in leash admirably. Now and then the dam will give way, and the boiling, resistless flood is fearful to behold, and bears everything before it. This, however, seldom happens. It is a

noble and interesting sight to see the furies and the will contend for the mastery in him. He will clench his teeth, bite his tongue, knit his brow, and fairly gasp for breath, rather than betray a word of passion. He has undoubted confidence in the correctness of his own views, holds them tenaciously, and evolves them persistently. Knock him down (metaphorically speaking), and think him dead, and before you are aware of it he is up again, smiling as ever, looking a pleasant defiance, and inviting you to try your powers once more. Taken, all in all, he is a good man; comes of a fair stock; is tolerably well to do; is surrounded by a pleasant and intelligent family; and has a good business that would not have flourished if our first mother had let the apple alone. Unfortunately, it is his nature to clutch too tightly and hold too tenaciously the "sordid dust," and he may, possibly, live to realize the practical truth of the latter part of the inspired proverb: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." He is a prominent member of the Battlemount Church, and an official. He has been long connected with it, in fact all his life,—and he bears the scars of many a conflict.

JOHN CHEESMAN is one of the young rising men in that spiritual community. He is of medium

height, and swarthy complexion. A mass of hair, as black and glossy as a raven, adorns a head fairly well shaped and set. His eyes are dark, and flash fire like live coals. He is a diamond, but a very rough one, and one that no amount of social friction can polish. His grain is essentially and irremediably coarse, and it runs through the entire structure of his being. It would be necessary to polish him out of existence before you could get a smooth surface. He was bred and born in the country, and city life and ways don't fit him, but simply hang on him, like brother Shankey's clothes. He is good-tempered; possesses fair intellectual power, or rather the power of appreciating intellect in others; and is a little inclined to the melting mood. He prides himself upon his independence of character and strength of judgment, but, like many others, he is weak where he thinks he is strong. A superior mind, or a stronger will than his own, easily leads him, but he is charmingly unconscious of it. He thinks he is leading when he is only being led. He is a good, but not a steadfast friend; not a very vindictive enemy, but liable to be very inconsistent, and unthinkingly unscrupulous. He has good business capacity and great perseverance; and there is every prospect of his becoming well to do in the world. The substantials of this mundane sphere are ever in his thoughts; in them he lives, and

moves, and has his being. He is very gushing; somewhat amatory in his disposition; and he loves his little wife very dearly, and his children too. His liberality is considerable, according to his means, and he takes real pleasure in doing good to others, as opportunity offers. Whatever his vagaries and weaknesses may be, he will probably not cease to be a good steward of the manifold grace of God. There is a future for him, and he may attain considerable excellence and goodness, but he is too much carried about by every passing wind ever to become great.

ROLLO DUFFY is a thick-set gentleman; stumpy, coarse, and crabbed by nature. He is fearfully phlegmatic, and always seems to be asleep. Like the sloth, he can scarcely be said to live, he exists. He is largely a negative, but somewhat disagreeable at that, as you find after you have rubbed off the surface skin, which is rather thick. He has, seemingly, no more sensitiveness than a rhinoceros, whose skin is impervious to a musket ball. He is not overstocked with sense. He knows little, but he has the sweet consciousness that he knows a good deal. How he and Mr. Slocum came to be selected by "the wise men of the East" for the delicate mission of interviewing the Rev. Mr. Vincent is a matter which must be hopelessly consigned to the limbo of insoluble motives and facts; unless we suppose the selection was made for the same reason

that indulgent parents give candy to their children, when they are peevish and cross. Fortunately, Mr. Duffy has a wife of good parts, considerable intelligence, and good connections, which fact makes up somewhat for his shortcomings. In early life, he tried both the law and the gospel, and succeeded in neither. Nevertheless he stumbles along somehow, and makes a living, and not a bad one either. He considers himself quite an oracle, but, unfortunately, few consult the oracle. His whole being is made up of bare possibilities which never can, without the intervention of a miracle, become actualities. Perhaps pure, white-robed charity might suggest that there is in him, deep down in his sluggish nature, a mine of undiscovered, unthought of, unwrought precious ore; but so overlaid with a hard unmeaning exterior, that it will never be brought to the surface to enrich and bless the world. Perhaps he is a flower blushing not unseen, but still wasting its sweetness on the desert air. Perhaps? There are some men, and not a few in this unfortunate world, who are never understood, never appreciated, as they think they should be. How sweet it is to be charitable, especially when the sphere for the exercise of that queen of virtues is so contracted. In you, friend Duffy, the resurrection will have plenty of scope, and may effect a marvellous transformation. Cheer up. Never despair.

Look to the future, and the future world. You may have a chance there.

Dr. GAMMON is a rising physician, of increasing reputation and practice, in the city of Battlemount. He is a member of the church, as his good old father was before him, and occupies an official position. His complexion is sallow and his form slim; weighing no more than about a hundred and twenty pounds, avoirdupois. He is modest to a fault and very gentle. His disposition is naturally docile and benevolent; and there is nothing he would more instantly recoil from than the thought of inflicting injury upon anybody or anything. The author of the "Olney Hymns," if now living, would doubtless place him upon his list of friends, for did not that moody but excellent Poet declare, that he would not place upon his list of friends the man who would needlessly set foot upon a worm. Dr. Gammon would be Cowper's *beau ideal* of a man, for he certainly would not perpetrate such a wickedness. His knowledge of the theory of his profession is unquestionably thorough and sound, and should his practice ever become as extensive, he will be endowed with rare opportunities of usefulness to his suffering fellows, and may become what he is not now, rich. There are no angularities in his character; he is perfectly smooth all round. You might knock yourself against him for ever, and you would be in no

danger of hurting yourself, for, like a good feather bed, he always yields. His one prevailing weakness is that of having a strong penchant for office; not that he obtrudes himself, or pushes his claims, but he is well pleased with the little bit of red ribbon when it falls into his lap. His retiring and modest disposition will prevent his getting his full due in this world, and he must be content to look for the balance in the next.

THE REV. JEREMIAH GAMBLE, who is destined to play an important part in the subsequent events of this history, is a retired clergyman. He is about sixty years of age, but still strong, hale and hearty. For his years, and the amount of toil and trial he has undergone, he is exceptionally healthy and robust. It would be difficult to find his peer. He is tall, stout, and solidly built; has a ruddy complexion; is but slightly bent; and has a firm, decisive step. His eyes are bright, but touched with a nervous twinkle; the forehead is large and well-developed, showing fair intelligence; the head is well shaped, and well set upon a solid foundation of neck and shoulders. In spite of many indications to the contrary, there is one unmistakable sign of age, "the almond tree has flourished"; but it is to him a crown of glory, because found in the way of righteousness. He has brought up a family, and educated them well, upon means which have been

far from affluent; and yet he is not without the wherewithal to make him comparatively independent in his declining years. His culture is broad, but not deep; his knowledge is varied, but not profound; his thoughts and speech are sagacious, but not always interesting. There was probably considerable fire in him in his younger days, of which there is scarcely a trace now, except on extraordinary occasions. If not a profound, he is a consistent thinker, and is a fair logician. He holds the verities of his craft with a firm grip, and, in points of dispute, is liable to prove a formidable antagonist. To him, convictions are not small change, which the affluent and the thoughtless may scatter to the gaping crowd, but solid gold, fit to be prized and kept, and whose worth is intrinsic and real. His love is strong, and his resentment transitory and mild. He is a staunch friend, and an honest man; and we have been told so often that the latter is "the noblest work of God" that we ought by this time to believe it. He is a part of that "salt of the earth" of which the Great Teacher spoke; and which is made up of men who know how to hold the truth, and, if need be, suffer for it, in the spirit of Christ. Men, to whom the world owes so much, and thinks it is indebted so little. Men, "of whom the world is not worthy."

ALEXANDER SLOCUM, whose pardon we beg a

thousand times for not giving him a more than fragmentary notice hitherto, is a young man, of about thirty-five years of age, and unmarried. Single though he be, he has a strong penchant for dabbling in matrimonial projects personal and relative. It is difficult to determine whether it be wholly his fault that he is still wandering in the mazes of single blessedness. He thinks it is; not that he is in any wise faulty himself, but he has hitherto failed to find that rare combination of female excellence and loveliness which is his *beau ideal*, and which alone would answer to his nice discrimination and fastidious taste. He has been looking through the world these many years, aided by the dim light of his own lantern-like intelligence, to find a perfect woman. Hitherto, his search has been fruitless, nor is it likely ever to be crowned with success. He is of Scotch extraction, and the two main characteristics of his race are in him preternaturally developed, slowness and caution. Although very wary, it must not be supposed that he has wholly escaped Cupid's darts. Now and then has he been temporarily struck, but while he has been critically analysing his sensations, and looking up wistfully at the luscious fruit, wondering whether it wouldn't some day, when fully ripe, fall into his lap, some less scrupulous hand has been stretched out to grasp the fruit ere it fell. He doesn't seem

to realize that, in these matters especially, fortune favors the adventurous and the brave. Still he yawns and wearily and wistfully waits, hoping that some day a fit mate for so much excellence as is found in himself may peradventure be met with. He is somewhat of a dandy in his way; dresses well and with good taste, and has plenty of means to buy the feathers. He has his good points, and is neither a miser nor a niggard. He is naturally benevolent and open-handed. Alexander Slocum, take a friend's advice in time. Drop your wings and come down to a plain stare at the solid realities of life. The sight may do you much good. Break the social dam, and let the current of your being flow. A Mrs. Slocum and half a dozen little Slocums round your home table would refine your sensibilities, improve your temper, sweeten your life, ease your conscience, crown your manhood, and make you more than a unit in society. It may be safely and most solemnly affirmed that matrimony would improve you amazingly. In a few years your friends would scarcely know you. There are charms in the double state you little dream of. The sweet tones of a loving help-meet and the prattle of children are better than the music of the spheres. What if you had occasionally to get up at night to make something warm for the wailing little one. Such occupation would be a wholesome diversion

for you, and would tend to break the dull monotony of your life. And when you come to die, how much better to have the ministry of love attend you, and gently close your eyes in death.

JOEL GUDGEON, who sits between his estimable wife and Mr. Slocum at Mr. Shankey's hospitable board, is positively the last of these notabilities that we shall notice at present. It would be radically unfair not to let his image and superscription descend to an admiring posterity. Physically, he is an overgrown, good-looking Tom Thumb, short, stout, and almost as round as a ball. He is wily, politic, and good tempered. Usually he shows a very benign and peaceful aspect, and appears a fair embodiment of humility. When he gets roused, as he does sometimes, he puts on an air of consequence which doesn't at all harmonize with his diminutive stature. It makes him look supremely ridiculous. He struts and crows like a bantam rooster. He was married to the present Mrs. Gudgeon about fifteen years ago, on a fine June morning, and he is never tired of declaring that it was the luckiest bargain he ever made, or ever hopes to make. He is already blessed with a numerous progeny, all of whom bear unmistakable signs of their paternity His wife and he are alike economically inclined, and in that matter suit each other exactly. In business he has fair capacity, and is a rising man.

He is Scotch, and has the Scotchman's proverbial knack of taking good care of the "siller." Not that he is miserly, or lacking in benevolence, but he is very careful. He is a good friend, so long as the friendship doesn't assume a cash basis, and he is not an ungenerous or malignant foe. His relations as a member of a christian community are sound, and his standing is good. He is a member of the church, and a not inconsiderable contributor to the funds. The world and the church would be none the worse if they had more of his stamp.

Is it necessary to advance more upon these personal points? Perhaps not. It may be wise to forbear, or we might soon get into the domain of uncomplimentary facts. Perhaps some may think we have got there already, and have been there all the time. Alas! for human nature as it is. Shall we give a faithful record of the conversation of these interesting people for the last couple of hours? To this, a slight demur may be wisely made. Unfortunately, the conversation of religious people is not always classical; not always theological; and not always such as the recording angel will note with pleasure. *They* might stand aghast at it if they saw it dressed in plain black and white. Let us draw the curtain upon this, and pass to more active scenes, which may, perchance, convey some useful instruction, point a moral, and adorn our tale.

CHAPTER XIV.

Moving quickly—Two years labor and its results—Prosperity dawned, realized, and enjoyed—A cloud appears, the size of a man's hand—A sudden change—A painful surprise—An important conversation—Mr. Shankey puts his foot down, and means to keep it there.

At this juncture it is absolutely necessary to make the reader a full and unreserved present of a piece of information which may be pleasant or otherwise according to his peculiar mood. It is this. We must either put on our seven-league boots, and walk for a short time very fast, getting over events quickly; or, boy-like, we must take a hop, a skip, and a jump, clearing the space of two years at a single bound. There will be a measure of abruptness about either, but the alternative is unavoidable, and we must make our choice, and that quickly. Suppose we adopt the former course, giving a short *resumé* of the events which stretch over the aforesaid period, and then pass on.

The Pastor was not slow to perceive that in coming to Battlemount he had undertaken a gigantic task, and one that would tax all his powers of work,

of patience, and of endurance. It must be confessed he had a momentary sinking of the heart as he surveyed the prospect, but it was only transitory, and soon passed away, "like the morning cloud and the early dew." He braced himself to the task, and resolved to attempt great things, and expect great things. It was with no small concern, however, that he saw that the expectations of the people were wholly fixed upon himself; that the great work that was to be done was expected to be done mainly, if not exclusively, by him, unaided and alone. They seemed to be quite oblivious of the plain fundamental truth that the strength of a church lies not, altogether, in its pastor, but in the strength of each individual member, and in the direction of a solid accumulated force to the accomplishment of spiritual results. His first efforts must be wisely directed to the uprooting of a fatal error, and the implanting, in its stead, of an important truth. This must be done by biblical instruction, by the faithful proclamation of heaven-born spiritual truths, by patient seed-sowing, by showing the way and walking in it. All this did the Pastor attempt and do, in the might of God, and the glowing tender spirit of Christ.

It was slow work, as all good work is, but the gentle truth won its way, and the luminous example became infectious, and made its power felt. The people soon discovered that they had an earnest God-

fearing man to deal with; one who valued truth and fealty to God more than aught else; and one whose thoughts and modes of expression were alike transparent. It was his ambition to say, at all times, what fidelity to truth demanded, and in a way that the dullest could not fail to comprehend. His individuality and originality were soon recognised. That he did not move in the ordinary commonplace track of thought and expression was manifest to the most obtuse of his hearers. Now and then they were, for the moment, startled out of their ordinary composure by the presentation of a common idea in a very direct if not a novel manner; as, for instance, the following: "My hearers, and my brethren and sisters in Jesus Christ,—There is much work to be done here as you can see. The gates of this Zion are not thronged. This temple of God is not full of earnest worshippers. You wish it to be so; so do I. We are all agreed as to our wishes; we may not be wholly agreed as to the plan of their fulfilment. You may be thinking too much of, and expecting too much from the feeble instrument whom God has sent among you. You may be practically expecting a miracle. Disabuse your minds at once, and come down to plain ideas and plain sense. Many think, perhaps you do not, but many think that the province of a minister is to fill the church, and make the organization pay. To use the mildest terms,

such a conception is a mistake; albeit, a very common one. It is more than a mistake, it is a fatal delusion. It is even more than a delusion; it is a snare, and one pregnant with great and evil results. *A minister's duty is to fill the pulpit; it is the people's duty to fill the church.* A well-filled pulpit and a well-filled church form one of the grandest sights that human eyes can behold. In God's name, and by the help of God's grace, I will strive to accomplish the former; I lay the latter upon your conscience as a most solemn and lasting obligation. See ye to it."

This is plain truth, plainly spoken. There surely could be no excuse for mistaking its import. It is sagacious, candid and clear. And yet, perchance, it may be mistaken by some who have a natural aptitude for taking things the wrong way. They may quietly assume that the Pastor meant to propound the horrible doctrine that he had no duties outside the pulpit; that when he had prepared and preached two sermons a week, and attended one prayer meeting, all his obligations to God and man were discharged. Be not too facile in jumping to a conclusion. Be not too swift to complain and to condemn. The Pastor meant no such thing, said no such thing; nothing was further from his thoughts than to convey such an impression. But he did mean to lift his people into that region where there is a holy

rivalry in doing good, and a noble reciprocity of soul in the best of all the works which can tax the energies or enthral the faculties of man. And he did mean that amid all the multifarious duties of a minister—all of which should be, as far as possible, faithfully discharged—the one that merits the completest consecration of his noblest powers is that of an intelligent and faithful proclamation of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. He did mean that above and superior to all else he would strive to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

He succeeded. He who is careful to note the falling of a sparrow, or the smallest endeavor put forth in His name and for His glory, gave the blessing. At one time it seemed the height of temerity to predict that the dry bones would ever assume life, consistency, and beauty again. Two years of hard persistent labor and faithful teaching, with the blessing of God thereupon, wrought a marvellous transformation in the community. Duties unthought of before were recognized and faithfully discharged. Willing worshippers thronged the temple gates, and heard with gladness the reconciling word. Many received the truth and publicly professed it. The true harmony which springs from holy toil became daily more manifest. Personal consecration became a sweet reality, a high privilege, and a sacred

passion. The day of reproach had passed away, and the sweets of revival and prosperity long looked for had come. The angels rejoiced over many a prodigal returning to his father's house. The sons of the morning again sang for joy. Pastor and people rejoiced together, and they had abundant reason to do so. After long waiting and working they had at length exchanged the hope deferred which maketh the heart sick for the fulfilment of desire, which when it cometh is a tree of life. The thirsty land had become a pool, and the small streams rivers of water.

Alas! even this state of things must not pass unchallenged. This work must go through the fire. This gold must have its alloy. These sweets must have their bitter. This rose must have its thorn, and in the plucking thereof prick some tender hand. Humiliation must accompany exaltation, or the latter might become unduly developed. The devil is permitted to put his foot down there with the intent of stamping out the good.

It is a true saying: "The *prosperity* of fools shall destroy them:" so it often proves. In some minds it occasions a gnawing satiety instead of a sublime satisfaction. They in the very act of swallowing the sweetest draught turn it by base ingratitude into the bitterest gall.

It was Hezekiah Shankey's deep misfortune to

be of this class. Taking the Pastor by the hand at the close of a prayer meeting, he requested the privilege of a few moments private conversation. The request was readily granted. The room was soon clear, and the Pastor and Mr. Shankey were left alone. Conversation did not commence all at once. There was a long pause; the Pastor sitting, while Mr. Shankey, evidently ill at ease, was walking about, knitting his pale brow and biting his finger nails. The silence was becoming painful, so the Pastor essayed to break it by observing that what he had to say he might speak out in the fullest confidence. This trite observation had the desired effect, and Deacon Shankey found his tongue.

"My dear pastor, I have been a member of this church many years. Of that no doubt you are aware."

"Yes, so I believe, brother Shankey."

"I know its history thoroughly, its ups and downs, its joys and its sorrows."

"I have no reason to doubt that your knowledge of the church is considerable, and that you take great interest in its welfare."

"That I do, sir. No one more than I, although I do say it myself. This church is the apple of my eye, so to speak. I have watched its growth and prosperity for the past two years with great pleasure. You have under God done good service,

very good service, sir; but —it grieves me to say it—I think the time has come for a change in the pastorate. You have done well, but I think your work is done now. You will excuse me, I am sure, being so bold as to advise you to resign. If a pastor doesn't resign when he is advised in a friendly way to do so it makes unpleasantness, and I don't like unpleasantness in a church."

If a thunderbolt had fallen at the Pastor's feet he could not have been more surprised. If the accumulated woe of ages had been compacted into one solid avalanche, and hurled at him in resistless might and fury, he could not have felt more sorrowful than he did at that moment. It is not a figure of speech to say he was petrified; he was literally so. His heart almost ceased to beat. He rallied and replied in the mildest terms he could command.

"You surprise me, brother Shankey, very much. You pain me exceedingly. I find it difficult to realize that you mean what you say."

"I certainly mean what I say. If I have given you pain I am sorry for it, but you should not be surprised. We have been accustomed to do things in this way in this church ever since the church was formed. Our pastors, as a rule, have not stayed long with us. They have not averaged more than two years. Your pastorate, already, has reached the average. I may say also, and it is only right I should

say it, that in point of usefulness it has been above the average."

"I accept the compliment, contained in the latter part of your remarks, so far as it is founded upon truth, no further. I am surprised to hear, for the first time, that the average pastorate has been so short. But allow me to ask in all kindness: Suppose I should have other views of my duty than those you propound, what then?"

"Well, I suppose the result would be trouble, and I don't like trouble in a church. It would perhaps end in your resigning and going away in time, somewhat in disgrace, and with not so good a name as you came. We have had several instances of the kind in the history of our church; in fact a good many."

"Mr. Shankey you surprise me again. This time it is your candor. I assume that what you say is true, but it is far from complimentary to the church, or to those who have guided its affairs. Am I really to understand that the changing of pastors has been reduced to a system; and that, by means which we will not now enquire into, the changes have been effected very methodically, and with a tolerable amount of regularity?"

"Well, I guess it has been about so, if I understand the drift of your remarks. We have been pretty regular in these matters, and in the main pretty

successful. Some, as I tell you, have shown a little fight, and didn't at first take their orders quietly; but, in the end, they have had to submit, and carry away with them ruined health and a damaged reputation. I think they lacked sense, it wasn't wise. They hurt themselves and us too."

"Have you, Mr. Shankey, a substantial reason, or any reason at all, for advising me to resign? If so, let me hear it. I am open to common sense and conviction."

"Well, no particular reason that I know of, except that I think a change is desirable."

"Have you any personal objection?"

"Nothing particular."

"Can you give me the names of any who are dissatisfied?"

"No, and then I would not wish to do that, anyhow. It would make a disturbance."

"Then in the name of common sense, to say nothing of Christianity, do you wish me to act, in so momentous a matter, simply upon your *ipse dixit?* Are you wholly oblivious of the obvious truth that I am personally responsible to a higher power for what I do? Don't you know if I take a wrong step it will avail me nothing, either at the bar of human opinion or at the bar of God, to say Mr. Shankey advised me. Surely you can see the reasonableness of this view of the case."

Mr. Shankey was silent, and in the meantime his finger nails were suffering dreadfully. The Pastor was the first to break the silence and thus resume:

"Do you know, Mr. Shankey, that our church is a spiritual democracy?"

"Yes, I guess it is, theoretically."

"Then the voice of the church is authoritative and paramount?"

"Yes, I guess it is, theoretically."

"But it is practically as well as theoretically, is it not?"

Mr. Shankey shook his head and tugged away, with his teeth, at his finger nails.

"The church has a constitution, made and adopted many years ago, vesting the management of affairs in the church as a body: Has it not, Mr. Shankey?"

"Yes, I believe so, although I haven't seen it lately."

"Has the church at any time passed a resolution transferring its legitimate authority to any man, or any dozen men; thus giving them the power to act for it and do its business?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"Then, my friend, are you not assuming a very grave responsibility in advising me to resign? If the members got to hear of it might they not disapprove and be disposed even to condemn?"

"They might, but I could bear it, as I have before. Their condemnation would not be very severe, at least, I am not afraid of it. Their ire wouldn't last long. They would soon cool down and accept the circumstances."

"Are you very much accustomed to these things, Mr. Shankey?"

"Yes, rather. I've been through many a storm in my time. This is nothing to speak of. And I may say, for your information, that I always succeed in anything I undertake. I make it a point of honor, of christian honor I mean, never to fail. If I set my mind on anything I keep pegging at it until I succeed. Nil desperandum is my motto."

"You are a living enigma to me, Mr. Shankey."

"Maybe I am. Maybe you'll understand me better by and by. When I put my foot down I keep it down. My foot is down now, and down it shall remain, unless I see a very good reason for taking it up, which is not very likely."

"Will you, Mr. Shankey, please so far accommodate my dull perceptions, and my limited intelligence, as to condescend to explain precisely what you mean by putting your foot down, and its application to present circumstances?"

"Well, I have no particular objection to explain so far as I am able. I mean by putting my foot down that I have advised you to resign, and having

done so I shall not be likely to go back on myself. I don't believe in going back on myself. My plan is to advance."

"But God may show you that the position you have so suddenly and so unaccountably assumed is baseless, unreasonable, inconsistent, and wrong."

"Maybe He will, and maybe He will not. You don't doubt my sincerity, Sir? I am sincere. I have the welfare of this Zion at heart. I think I am doing God service."

"So others have before you, Mr. Shankey. They have been equally sincere, and equally mistaken. There is a celebrated case in point which you know well. The apostle of the Gentiles thought he was doing God service when he was pouring out his wrath and fury upon the saints of God; everywhere hailing men and women to prison. God opened his eyes; he may open yours."

Mr. Shankey couldn't stand scriptural argument or illustrations. They made him dumb. He was silent for a few moments, and then resumed:

"I would strongly advise you to resign, sir; and I would suggest that you close your labors in about three months from now. Do it quietly. Don't say anything about it to anybody. I will see that some laudatory resolutions are passed, and a purse of money shall be got together for your benefit."

"Mr. Shankey, you could not blame me if I were

angry with you—very angry. I will not be angry. This much, however, I will say. I could not take your advice, and act upon it, without seriously and grossly affronting my own common sense, doing wrong to the confidence and love of others, and proving recreant to my most sacred and cherished convictions. One thing I will consent to freely. You may call the church together,—but it must be on your own responsibility,—and lay this matter before all the members, and if they are of your mind I will resign at once. From them I received my call to labor; from them only could I, consistently, take my call to cease labor."

"O, my dear sir, I would not for the world call a meeting. It would only make a disturbance, and that wouldn't be agreeable. It is better, in my judgment, to do these things quietly and peaceably."

"But, Mr. Shankey, you surely don't wish to hoodwink the people, and deprive them of their just rights and privileges. They have a right to know; and such important matters should not be passed over without their privity and consent. They call a pastor; they support a pastor; and only by their entire approval should the connection cease."

"Well, you may be right in principle. You are a splendid theorist I must confess; but I fear you have too high an opinion of our church members generally. You haven't known them as long as I

have. Take a few wise heads out, and you have nothing but mere riffraff left."

"What do you mean, Mr. Shankey?"

"I mean just what I say."

"I am sorry you have so poor an opinion of the majority of your fellow members."

"My opinion is good enough."

"Really, Mr. Shankey, as pastor of this church, I must beg leave to cast back such an imputation upon the people as that which your words imply. It is neither generous, fair nor honest. It is not right. Your own calm judgment must, on the morrow, disapprove it."

"So be it. We shall see."

"You will surely retract such an ungenerous imputation. It is unworthy of you, both as a man and a Christian."

"I never retract. It isn't my style. I always go ahead. Onward's the word for me."

"Have you any further communication to make, Mr. Shankey?"

"Again, sir, I advise you to resign. You will have a heap of trouble if you don't."

"Let me tell you, Mr. Shankey, as you have pushed me to such a declaration, that there are only two authorities I can recognise in this matter; the first is the voice of God, the second is the will of the church, legitimately and constitutionally expressed.

What is more, and I say it in all kindness, my self-respect compelling me to it, I do not solicit any further augmentation of such advice as is meant to assume the character and dimensions of a command."

"You are very plain, sir, and so will I be. I have embarked in this business, and I shall go on with it. I have, for many years, been the ruling spirit here, and I mean to remain so. I have great influence in the church if I choose to exercise it. I give you fair warning that I will spend twelve months trying to get you out. If I succeed, well. If I fail, I will go out myself."

"I am grieved exceedingly to hear you thus speak. Good night, Mr. Shankey, and may God give you a better mind, a more feeling heart, and a juster appreciation of the rights of others. The position you have assumed is a most extraordinary one, and allow me to suggest that it may be the part of wisdom to recede from it in time. Good night, Mr. Shankey."

"Good night, sir."

CHAPTER XV.

Clouds hovering round—A heavy heart—A restless night—Dreamland again—A holy resolve—Legislative and executive defectiveness—Mr. Shankey sets to work with a will—The thin end of the financial wedge—The Sabbath School—Mr. Shankey makes a bold push—He seems to succeed—An important communication.

THAT night the Pastor wended his way home with a heavy heart. How heavy, He alone can tell by whom "the very hairs of our head are all numbered." The first cloud, though no larger than a man's hand, was already flickering its baleful shadow athwart his hitherto untroubled path. Though neither superstitious nor wanting in courage, he felt he had just cause for apprehension and unrest. A wilful determined man can do much evil in a christian community; and such Hezekiah Shankey, from his tone of remark, seemed to be. The Pastor was not slow to perceive that for such a man to assume such an attitude in relation to himself—however unwarrantable, unnecessary and capricious it might be—was placing him in a cruel dilemma, on one or other of the horns of which his soul was doomed to

be impaled. He saw already, in dim outline, that he had but a choice of evils; that either he must act upon the imperious dictum of one man, and ever afterwards despise himself for his paltriness of spirit and recreancy to principle; or, he must quietly ignore this self-constituted law-giver, and be prepared to take patiently, and in the spirit of Christ, all that might come from the pursuance of such a course. The veriest neophyte in church polity would declare that the latter was the only alternative that a self-respecting christian man could adopt.

Such a conclusion was reached, but not so speedily as might at first be supposed. It was easy to reject, with instant and decisive scorn, the former alternative, but not quite so easy to bring a mind, perturbed by an unusual experience, to see the wisdom of adopting the latter.

The first instinct of an active mind, when roused, is to meet opposition actively—fire with fire,—but calmer reflection generally shows that the passive attitude is the most effectual, and the one which accords best with the sentiments of the New Testament and the spirit of Christ. "Recompense to no man evil for evil" is both politic and christian. Indeed, it will be found upon close examination that all those sentiments of the New Testament, which are intended for the regulation of human conduct, are based not only upon Divine principles,

but also upon a deep and intimate acquaintance with human nature, and upon common-sense. Acting upon them, in the various contingencies of life, is not only the sure way to God's favor, but it is also the straight road to real success in dealing with men. There is true philosophy in them. In embodying them in our lives we not only please God but we conserve our present interests. It is thus that "godliness is profitable into all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

It is somewhat of a pity that this aspect of our holy religion is not more commonly dwelt upon and more fully appreciated. We too often lose ourselves in vague, and, for the most part, unprofitable speculations concerning that future, of which we have this positive assurance, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive." The present, though not of supreme, is of great interest; and Christianity has a ceaseless and important bearing upon its development and progress. God meant us to enjoy the present; to embody our Christianity in the present; to glorify Him in the present. Whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God. These observations may appear to the superficial observer somewhat wide of the mark, but a closer scrutiny will show that they are not really so. They have an

intimate connection with, and an important bearing upon, what is to follow.

It would be vain to deny that the unexpected attitude, so suddenly and causelessly assumed by Hezekiah Shankey, had a painful influence upon the Pastor. It saddened and grieved him greatly, and not all at once was he able to rise above it. That night his otherwise cool brain burned like fire, and neither Christian philosophy nor stern resolution could materially affect, for the time being, the cranial temperature. Sleep, for once, refused to perform its kindly office of weighing down the eyelids, and putting the seething brain into calm repose. This state of mental perturbation was caused, not so much by apprehension of possible evil, as by the excessive and startling novelty of an unexpected and painful experience. Amid all the contingent evils of his life this he had never anticipated. It had not once occurred to him, as in the remotest degree possible, that any man, much less a professedly good man, could be so oblivious of past facts and present obligations, as to assume such a thoughtless and remorseless attitude. What was to be done? Bow to personal domination, and prove recreant to Divine impulses and commands? Never! What then? Upon that the burning brain revolved, until, dazed and tired by its own efforts, it sank into partial and welcome repose. He was in dreamland

once more. Roscoe Rosewood, Hezekiah Shankey, the old driver and his prognostications, Mr Duffy, Mr. Slocum, Crossberry and Battlemount were all jumbled together in his heated fancy, and formed one grand mental phantasmagoria. How near the great God was to the restless sleeper who can tell! How near the suffering Jesus! How near the unshorn radiance and glory! The lips moved, and, all unconscious, sent forth a feeble cry, as broken and plaintive as the wail of an infant: Guide me, lead me. "Thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." Let me not go wrong. "Shew me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path." "Not my will, but thine be done." The phantasmagoria gradually passed away; the figures retired into the shades of comparative indistinctness, and another form came into view, one whose countenance was radiant as the sun, and fair as the moon. It was the same sweet vision of two years ago over again. The Son of man was there; the promise was again fulfilled: "I will come again." It was the same sweet voice; the same tender touch; the same look of inexpressible benignancy; the same bleeding brow; the same prints of the nails, and of the spear; the same "despised and rejected of men;" the same all-potent, commanding utterance, "Follow me."

The troubled night passed, and the Pastor awoke, refreshed in spirit, though not in body. God's finger was upon him. God's voice was in his ear. God's peace was in his soul. What was to be done? Simply, calmly, and only this: "Endure as seeing him who is invisible." "Trust in the Lord, and do good."

Whether the passive attitude, under the circumstances, was a wise one, some may be disposed to doubt, but that it was Christ-like admits, one would fain think, of no doubt; and Christian men, at least, will think that what is Christ-like has in it ultimate wisdom. As the result of what he believed to be Divine impulsion, the Pastor resolved to abide where God had placed him and blessed him; and do and bear valiantly and uncomplainingly. Much would doubtless have to borne, but did not "Christ suffer for us, leaving us an example that we should walk in his steps." And was it not that majestic suffering passivity that ultimately triumphed? Ah! there is a wonderful talismanic power in suffering wrong, nobly and quietly. It contains an eloquence and a potency which may, perchance, reach the most obdurate of mortals—it is Christ-like.

Perhaps it may be contended, with some show of reason, that Hezekiah Shankey should not have been permitted to assume such an attitude of deliberate and intentional hostility to the Pastor, without

being called to account for it before the tribunal of the Church, and made the subject of collective remonstrance, or of discipline. He was certainly guilty of the intention of creating a schism in the body, with malice aforethought. He deliberately intended to operate against him whom his office bound him, in all honor, to support. Why not hold him to a strict account for so glaring and grave an offence? Why not say to him: "as a member of the body you cannot and must not so purpose and so act; and if you persist we must exclude you from our fellowship"— Why not? Such a course would be scriptural, and in perfect accord with the law of Christ. Then why not enforce the law? Because, unfortunately, in many cases, it is highly impracticable, and in some instances absolutely impossible. Why? Because of the sad imperfection of the human machinery which has to put the Divine law into force. This is the one great prevailing weakness in an excellent, and, as we believe, scriptural system. It is fraught with much evil, but it is unavoidable so long as it remains a part of the whole. It is a serious leakage, and it lets the water out continually. The legislative functions of a church are not always well exercised, but the executive are well nigh a dead letter. It is next to impossible to get two or three hundred or more of sanctified human beings, of all grades of intelligence and varied surroundings and connections,

to see, as with one eye, the law of Christ in its application to any particular case, and then, as one man, to apply that law fairly and faithfully. There are many openings for unsoundness, hesitancy, and indecision to step in and mar the result, or destroy it totally.

There were not many calm judicial minds in the Battlemount church, and therefore nothing could be successfully attempted, or successfully accomplished, in that direction. It was inevitable, as well as prudent, to let the turbulent spirit alone, in the hope that the slumbering embers of personal faction, fanned by no outward breeze, might die out, and remain forever extinguished. Unfortunately, this modest hope was not realized. Of all things that Hezekiah detested—and they were many—that of being let alone excited his abhorrence the most. To pass him or his opinions over in silence was indeed a heinous offence that must in some way be expiated. He thought, indeed, there was something seriously wrong, if the movement of his little finger did not cause a stir. But when he spoke, and spoke deliberately and decisively, as he had done to the Pastor, his foot was down, and down it must remain. Sooner or later, by hook or by crook, he would have his way. Why not? What could the church do without him? He had cradled it, and nursed it for many years. Out of the light of his favor it could

scarcely be expected to maintain an existence, much less a vigorous life. He was both its sun and its shield, consequently it must some day, not far distant, adopt his views. It was only a question of time, and he could wait and work. Nil desperandum.

Unfortunately, his first efforts were somewhat ill-timed and clumsy, and were met with a perfect storm of indignation from his brethren. All were down on him at once, and he felt the full force of the wrathful hurricane which he had so unskilfully provoked. Not now was the time, and not thus. He meekly bowed his head, and let the storm pass over. He learnt a useful lesson. He saw that the citadel was not to be taken by a coup-de-main. It must be done by sapping and mining. That was an important discovery, for working underground suited his peculiar talents admirably. He saw that an open assault might end in personal and, perhaps, complete discomfiture. Silently must he work, and, when the mine is ready, spring it in a moment. Let us follow this sagacious individual, and see how he works with a given object in view all the time.

He first calls on Mr. Smallwire, treasurer of the church, and, with ostentatious reluctance, intimates that, as times are so hard, he really must reduce his subscription fifty per cent. He also insinuates that, as business is so depressed generally, losses so large,

and gains so small, it would be well perhaps not to press the prompt and full payment of the pew rents. People must find it hard to pay these times, however willing they may be. Mr. Smallwire stares at Deacon Shankey for a few moments, wondering what has come over him, and then silently acquiesces, supposing that so sagacious a man has good reasons for tendering such advice. It never once occurred to Mr. Smallwire that Deacon Shankey didn't know everything, and something else besides. He quietly accepts the intimation, makes his arrangements accordingly, and the financial barometer begins to fall. Thus Mr. Shankey very adroitly inserts the thin end of the financial wedge, and he can trust to his mild insinuations, and the infectiousness of his personal example, to drive it home.

He is also Superintendent of the Sabbath School, and he at once sees what a fine chance his position gives him to quietly snub the Pastor, and gradually lower him in the esteem of the working element of the church. He does not tell him that a cessation of his usual visits will be personally agreeable, but he gives him to understand as much by look and deed. The Pastor's keen sensibilities are not slow to discern the trick, and mourn the possible consequences. Again he feels that he is forced upon the horns of a dilemma. He has the alternative of remonstrant, open complaint, or of uncomplaining silence. In

either case he will be misunderstood, and his moral influence more or less abridged. He chooses the latter, knowing that his Great Master did "not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." He is too much of a man to complain, and too much of a Christian to resent. He calmly possesses his soul in patience, believing that the wrong cannot ultimately succeed, and that the right must ultimately triumph. He reads also in an old book, which he loves, these words: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

Mr. Shankey, somewhat emboldened by the success of his efforts in church finance and in the Sabbath School, next proceeds, very warily, to sow the seeds of distrust and dissatisfaction in the minds of his fellow deacons. He dare not approach them as a body; he did that once and failed. He must take them singly, and shake their confidence in the Pastor, one by one. It will take a little longer time, but he will succeed ultimately; at least, so he thinks. Nil Desperandum comes to his aid again. Upon mature reflection he arrives at the conclusion that Rollo Duffy, of all his fellow-deacons, will be most assailable, and, therefore, he resolves to try him

first. Deacon Duffy is, unfortunately, crabbed by nature, and is never so happy as when he has a grievance, fancied or real. Mr. Shankey calls upon Mr. Duffy, and, after cautiously introducing the subject, is pleased beyond measure to find that his dear brother has already a small score against the the Pastor. Deacon Duffy tells Deacon Shankey, in the strictest confidence of course, that the Pastor is no doubt a very excellent man, and a good preacher; but he preached a sermon once he didn't like, and since then, he must confess, he has felt a little cool towards him. He would not propose a change, as such an effort would lay an unwelcome tax upon his energies, but he would not say nay if his brother Shankey felt it his duty to make an effort in that direction, discreetly and quietly. If permitted to say a word upon the matter, in its present incipient state, he would humbly suggest that the said effort should not go beyond a diaconate recommendation to the Pastor to resign. Mr. Shankey was delighted with his brother Duffy, and in the transport of a new found joy took him to his fraternal embrace, vowing an undying attachment to him. With which unusual demonstration Mr. Duffy felt complimented and flattered, vowing his eternal attachment in return. Truly a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.

Mr. Shankey, still more emboldened by this

additional success, next proceeds to lay his plans for entrapping and bringing into his coils Mr. Cheesman. John Cheesman is a young man, and a young deacon. He has been but a short time in office, and Mr. Shankey thinks he may not have forgotten to whose influence he owes his ecclesiastical promotion. He can also, if need be, by a sly look or word, remind him of certain other obligations of recent date; obligations of a very solid and substantial character. Mr. Cheesman, be it observed, is a very ardent admirer of the Pastor; thinks much of him, and has abundant reason to do so; is greatly indebted to him for mental development and spiritual growth; and thinks, without a shade of doubt, that he has done well, and is doing well in Battlemount. He has, in the Pastor, the simple love and trust of a child, and the confidence of a brother. Mr. Shankey knows all this, and yet he has full confidence that he can win him to his side, and he means to do so. Upon the first mention of the subject Mr. Cheesman strongly and even wrathfully objects. He could not think of lending his influence to the unsettling of so good and so useful a man. The bare mention of Mr Shankey's design is a real sorrow to him. He would rather cut off his right hand, or pluck out his right eye, than have anything to do with the business. He would scorn to help in the pursuance

of so ungrateful and so suicidal a policy. That Mr. Cheesman felt and meant all he said there can be no doubt; but by and by he feels the controlling, thwarting influence of a stronger will than his own. He finds out, what to the intense disgust and sorrow of the whole race was discovered six thousand years ago, that "the serpent is more subtle than any beast of the field." The constant dropping of water will wear away a stone, and so Mr. Cheesman's admiration evaporates, his constancy wanes, his good resolutions and earnest love are scattered to the winds; he succumbs, and falls. Mr. Shankey receives the welcome assurance that he will not actively oppose his plans.

The good deacon scratches his bald pate with evident, unmingled satisfaction. He cannot help surveying his gains, and indulging in a little arithmetical calculation. Very slowly he repeats the words, so ominous to one who is all unconscious, but so welcome to him; Shankey, one; Duffy, two; Cheesman, three. Hurrah! that's good. Now here goes for the fourth—Deacon Gammon. He approaches Dr. Gammon, very cautiously, of course, as he well knows how. If he can get him, and he feels sure he can, he will have a majority of the diaconate, and the remainder of his benevolent plans will be comparatively easy of execution. A favorable opportunity soon presents itself. An aged member

of the church dies; the funeral day is fixed. The Pastor is there, in that abode of sorrow, where often he has been; and where he has often helped to dispel the gloom by his presence, his prayers, his counsel, and his means. Mr. Shankey is there for the first and last time, and his horse and buggy stand at the door. Dr. Gammon is there. The funeral service over, Mr. Shankey speaks to Dr. Gammon, giving him a more than usually warm shake of the hand, and inviting him to take a seat with him in his buggy for a quiet ride to the cemetery and back. They will move very slowly, of course, and there will be plenty of time to talk, and none to interfere. The ride is a long one, and the talk too, and very quiet and orderly. It could not be otherwise with Deacon Gammon. He never opposed anybody, and wouldn't for the world crush a moth. He didn't want to oppose the Pastor, neither did he feel disposed to oppose Deacon Shankey. He did like to be a deacon, and he liked the benevolent office of distributing the charity of the church to the poor. And if, as Deacon Shankey most solemnly assured him, the majority of the deacons were going against the Pastor, why, however reluctantly, he must go with them. It is the prerogative and destiny of a few brave spirits to breast the current; the many flow on with it whithersoever it shall go. To the latter class Dr. Gammon, by nature and inclination, belonged.

Hezekiah Shankey is well nigh intoxicated with his success. Now he has three deacons, and he himself makes four. He even conceives the bold idea of sweeping the whole board, and carrying, not a majority only, but the whole of the deacons with him. Why should he not? He will try. Every step taken makes each succeeding one more easy. There is a grim shade of satisfaction upon his pale brow as he lays the flattering unction to his soul, and says: "Hezekiah, you have done well; go ahead, you will win, sure. Never despair!" Stimulated by his own notes of cheer Hezekiah goes ahead. He is not the man to slacken his efforts with certain victory in view. He must, and will win. Did he not say so, and must he not fulfil his own prophecy? Certainly. He thinks he has scripture on his side, too; for he has a dim recollection of a passage which says something about a man not being worth much who looks back after having put his hand to the plough. With a more confident attitude now, he calls upon Deacon Smiler, and explains his views. That gentleman receives him courteously, listens to him with a very dignified demeanor, and then honors him with a gracious smile. That is about as far as Duncan Smiler usually goes when he doesn't want to say anything. Deacon Shankey, grown bold by success, resolves to get at him, and make him show his hand if possible. He tells him, in a quiet con-

fident tone, that the matter is weighing much on his mind; that he has thought much about it; that he has made it a matter of earnest prayer; and that Deacons Duffy, Cheesman and Gammon think as he does, and that they are all very anxious not to move in the matter without his commanding influence and indispensable concurrence. Who could resist such insinuating, charming, complimentary eloquence? Not Duncan Smiler. He did not want a change in the pastorate, but then how flattering it was to be informed that his brethren would not move without him. After such a display of deference and confidence it might look churlish in him any longer to refuse his assent to the plans of his fellow deacons. Still he must insist that he would not go beyond a diaconate recommendation. To this stipulation Mr. Shankey willingly assented.

Only one deacon now remains, and if he can be won the board is swept, the triumph is complete. Deacon Christie is approached, but he rejects the proposal of Mr. Shankey with a perfect hurricane of indignation and scorn. He will not give his countenance to such a scheme. If all forsake the Pastor he will stand by him, firm as adamant. He loves him; he has grown in grace under his faithful ministrations; and his children have been brought into the fold of Christ by his instrumentality. How much he and his have been blessed he

cannot compute, and he will not prove unthankful or unfaithful to the servant of God.

A gust of real manliness and true godly sincerity Mr. Shankey could not stand; he was swept before it like the chaff off the summer threshing floor. For a moment he was cowed, and remained silent. He was satisfied nothing would move brother Christie, and he must work his darling scheme without his approval. So be it! There are five against one, and these are considerable odds, and likely to succeed. The train is now laid, and he can apply the match. He asks his brother deacons to meet him, for an hour's conference, in his big parlor. They respond. We will not weary the reader with a record of all that passed. The result may be briefly stated—the Pastor received the following missive, by a special messenger, the following morning:

July 18, 18—

Rev. Paul Vincent,

Dear Brother,

At a meeting of the deacons of the church, held last evening, the following resolution was passed: That we, the deacons of the church, with one exception, think it desirable you should resign your pastoral position; and we hereby take the liberty of recommending you to do so. And we would also suggest that the said resignation should take effect on or before the first of October next.

Yours respectfully,

Hezekiah Shankey,
Rollo Duffy,
John Cheesman,
J. H. Gammon, M.D.
Duncan Smiler.

CHAPTER XVI.

Mr. Shankey continues his operations—Another important communication—Official unwisdom—Mr. Shankey springs a mine—A touching scene—An appropriate sermon—"Part in peace"—Duncan Smiler's note—Official policy reviewed—No confidence.

THE Pastor was intensely grieved, but not wholly surprised, to receive the communication which closes the last chapter. In fact, if the veritable truth must be confessed, he rather expected it. Mr. Shankey's movements although meant to be secret were not really so. Murder, and all evil, will out. That which is done in secret is sure, sooner or later, to be proclaimed upon the house-top. The mole may work secretly, and in darkness, but the little hills thrown up on the surface show its location and activity. It was even so with Hezekiah Shankey. He worked secretly, but the results could not be wholly obscured. Little inequalities and discordances appeared upon the surface of the church life, which unmistakably testified to the indefatigable industry of the silent worker.

It is difficult, nay impossible, to gauge with cer-

tainty the motives of men; difficult to do it with even a small approximate success; impossible to do it perfectly. And yet there is a constant effort to sink below the surface of human action to find out, if possible, what is there. There is enough of the child in us to wish to know what is largely forbidden to be known. Without claiming the power to divine human motive we may venture to affirm that Mr. Shankey had no tangible or sufficient reason for the course he was pursuing; at least, not such a reason as would be necessary to satisfy a strong, well-balanced mind. Impulsiveness was his prevailing weakness, his besetting sin; and, in an evil hour, he had committed himself to this disagreeable self-imposed task, and he felt his personal honor demanded he should go on with it, whatever the result might be to himself or to others.

Unfortunately, he was not made of such noble stuff as enables a man to retreat promptly and with dignity from a false position, and he did not see that, possibly, his rash vow might be more honored in the breach than in the observance. He failed to see the full and ultimate consequences of his course, or even he, wilful as he was, might have drawn back. He persuaded himself that, when he had induced the majority of his brother deacons to act with him, he would achieve an instant and complete victory. He made one simple but fatal mis-

take. He left out of his calculation the principal factor in the case, the Lord Jesus Christ, He "who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." He forgot that he himself might be another Balaam going to curse Israel, at the instigation of an imperious lust of power, and that the Spirit of the Lord might dispute every inch of his progress. Like that luckless prophet he became utterly infatuated, and went forth with a lie in his right hand.

Passing from him to the other deacons who joined him in the recommendation, it may be safely affirmed that had they seen, or in the remotest degree suspected, the ultimate consequences of that incipient official act, not ten thousand Hezekiah Shankeys would have been able to persuade them to it. At least, it is only charitable and right to suppose this, and we had better err, if we do err, on the side of charity.

In sorrow, as has been already stated, the Pastor received the communication, in silence he quietly folded it up and placed it where such treasures were usually kept, and imitating, as best he could, the noble self-repression of his great Exemplar, "he answered not a word."

Did he reach this self-abnegating conclusion speedily? By no means. Hours, days, weeks of

thought and prayer brought him to it. He was not wholly divested of natural feeling. He was neither spiritless nor tame. The natural man within him could and would have disputed, stormed, retaliated, but the new man strove for the mastery, and, after a fierce struggle, won. It then seemed best to him, most christian, most noble, not to dispute, not to acquiesce, not to answer, but to bear. He heard a voice which said: "Be still, and know that I am God." He remembered one who was "oppressed and afflicted, led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers was dumb, so he opened not his mouth." And that one said: "Follow me."

Not by the Pastor was the antagonistic act of the diaconate published abroad. Dame Rumor floated it, however, and it excited profound sorrow and indignation in the community; sorrow for the Pastor who would not tell his grief, or appear as if he suffered, and indignation at the men who presumed thus to ignore the wishes of the body, and usurp the functions of the church. At once would they have been hurled from office, seeing they had so manifestly and wilfully misconstrued their prerogatives and their duties, but the silent influence of the Pastor prevailed, and order and quiet were once more restored. For a time there was a lull in the storm. It seemed as if the majesty and sweetness of silent forbearance

had prevailed, but, unfortunately, appearances were illusory. Not thus, and not so easily, will an unholy purpose be baffled, or overthrown.

Three months subsequent to the date of the diaconate recommendation, the Pastor entered the vestry of his church, on a Sabbath morning. He noticed, as something unusual, that no one was present, and, as far as he could see, no one within call. Even Dr. Gammon was not there, a very unusual omission on his part. Casting his eye on the table he saw a letter, and found, upon examination, that it was addressed to himself. It was the work of an instant to take it up, break it open, and read the contents; they were as follows:

BATTLEMOUNT, Oct. 26, 18—.

REV. PAUL VINCENT,

DEAR BROTHER,

You will please read the following notice at both morning and evening service:—A church meeting will be held on Friday evening next at 8 o'clock. The deacons request a full attendance of members, as matters of unusual interest will be presented.

HEZEKIAH SHANKEY.
DUNCAN SMILER.
J. H. GAMMON, M.D.
JOHN CHEESMAN.
ROLLO DUFFY.

This was, indeed, springing a mine with unscrupulous and almost barbarous vengeance. Whose

handy-work it was the observant eye of the Pastor saw at a glance. It was Hezekiah Shankey's.

That the same hand wrote the notice and the first signature was too plain to be mistaken. There seemed, in fact, to be no attempt at concealment. Perhaps it was kindly and benevolently intended that the Pastor should see who had written the words: "You will please," etc., instead of, "will you please." What a difference a slight transposition makes! What should have been a polite request was put in such a shape as to assume the appearance of a polite command. In that form, Hezekiah thought it might rouse the Pastor from his passive attitude, and sting him into active resistance. He fancied that, if his thinly-veiled command produced that effect, an important point would be gained. Not thus, however, was he permitted to succeed. Once more the grace of God signally triumphed, and the simple majesty of silent forbearance confounded the plotter. "In vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird."

It was a cruel, trying moment. An important decision was to be reached in a very short space of time; a decision upon the wisdom or unwisdom of which much might depend. Should he give out a notice, the underlying import of which he was utterly unacquainted with? What was the business of unusual interest which was to be brought before

the meeting? He might surmise, but he did not know. He was totally ignorant of the hidden purpose, and no one was present to answer a question, or throw any light upon the subject. What was to be done? He must decide, decide at once, decide alone, and in the dark. The organ was pealing forth its inspiring notes, and, without further delay, he must ascend the pulpit, and commence the service. With the heartfelt ejaculation, "God help me to decide aright," he rose in his place, and, pale with suppressed emotion that could not wholly be concealed, he said: "Let us pray."

Fortunately for him, in his perturbed condition, it was not necessary in the opening prayer to use extemporaneous utterance. His invariable practice was to repeat that simple, but sublime and comprehensive outpouring of the soul, in which the Lord first taught His disciples to pray: "Our Father which art in heaven," etc. The short sententious nature of that matchless composition harmonized well with his broken utterances, and partly obscured what he could not wholly conceal. Never before did he pronounce the words so deliberately, so feelingly, so emphatically. When he came to the clauses: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," and "deliver us from all evil," his chastened spirit and faltering tones lent an enchantment to the words which gave them

a present meaning and power, and sent a thrill through the whole mass of kneeling worshippers. They instinctively divined that he who thus prayed was tenderly touched, and that he was possessed with a new and present sorrow. He gave out a hymn, the opening one. He read the Scriptures, and unintentionally hit upon the third psalm, where David so pathetically mourns the far-reaching treachery of Absalom. "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me, many there be which rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul there is no help for him in God. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory and the lifter up of my head." He prayed again, and by this time the balm of truth had somewhat staunched and healed the fresh bleeding wound. The voice was less faltering, and the bowed spirit more confident and erect. Then came the collection and the notices. The ordinary announcements for the week were soon disposed of, and then, after a significant pause, he said: "My friends, and my brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. You may perceive that I am not wholly unembarrassed. I am in a strait betwixt two. I am unfortunately called to decide what is right to do in a given circumstance, without having the time for consideration which the gravity and importance of the question demands. When I entered the vestry this morning I found on

the table a note addressed to me. Who placed it there I know not, and there was no one present to explain. It contains a notice of a church meeting for Friday evening next, with a request, signed by five deacons of this church, that I will give out the said notice morning and evening. It is stated that business of unusual interest is to be brought before you, and a full attendance of members is requested. Whether it is right or prudent to make this announcement I have no time to decide. It may, or it may not be. I do not know what the business is. No one has deigned to give me any previous intimation of the meeting or the nature of the matters of unusual interest which are to be brought forward. I must make, or refuse to make, this announcement—this is the difficult alternative, and I must decide at once. I decide to make the announcement, and, by this explanation, attach the responsibility where it belongs. It is as follows: "A church meeting will be held on Friday evening next, at eight o'clock. The deacons request a full attendance of members, as matters of unusual interest will be presented." Preceding this is the following intimation: "You will please read the following notice, at both morning and evening service:"—Signed, Hezekiah Shankey, Duncan Smiler, J. H. Gammon, M.D., John Cheesman, Rollo Duffy. I leave the matter in your hands.

Deal with it prudently, and in such a way as may seem right and good. If any evil come of it, which may God in His mercy prevent, you will know where to attach the responsibility. I fear the result will too closely harmonize with the intention, and that the actual event will show the former to be, what an unbiassed judgment will pronounce the latter, not good.

The aforesaid gentlemen looked anything but heavenly during the delivery of these calm, judicial sentiments. They had evidently not reckoned upon such personal publicity. The remainder of the congregation, however, showed unmistakably that they were wound up to a pitch of intense and painful excitement. To them, as well as to the Pastor, it was a complete surprise. More than one heart throbbed with deep emotion and a new-found sorrow. More than one eye in that assembly distilled the silent tear; and as that outward token of an inward grief stole its way down many a flushed and burning cheek, it was not unnoted by the Pastor's sympathetic soul, and perchance not unnoted by Him who when upon the earth had occasions of weeping.

The sermon which followed was suited to the occasion. It was on that saying of Jesus to His sorrowing disciples: "These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace." The

text could not have been selected, and the sermon on it prepared, in view of the event, as the Pastor was as ignorant of what was to transpire as the babe unborn; but He, without whose knowledge a sparrow falleth not to the ground, knew, and so directed His servant. A few of the sentiments uttered may suitably, and perhaps not unprofitably, find a place here. Out of a full heart, and with a chasened eloquence which genuine feeling alone can inspire, the Pastor spoke thus: Faith and peace are as closely allied as cause and effect; the one existeth not without the other. Real, pure, deep, abiding peace is a rarity, even amongst Christians; and that mainly because real, strong, abiding faith is also rare. Do not misunderstand me. I do not say that faith is rare, but strong faith is. I do not say that peace is rare, for every child of God has it, but deep, abiding peace is. Only as we abide in Jesus can we have peace, the peace which is incomprehensible and inexpressible. Faith is the most important part of the Christian's armor. Clad with it you may repel every dart of the enemy. The balls, coming from whatever part of the invading host, striking against that, fall flattened and harmless at your feet. Its protective power is immense. There is a wide-spread conspiracy whose object is to rob us of our faith. The enemy of souls knows full well its sustaining and protecting power, and if he

can, by any means, get it away from us, he lays us low at his feet helpless and undone. When you feel the shield of faith tottering in your feeble grasp fall upon your knees, and ask God to help you to keep your hold upon it. You are lost without it. With it you are valiant, strong, invincible. Faith in Christ and peace in Christ are indissolubly connected. They would not, however, be so if he were only a man. It is because He is the God-man that *they* are thus united. Faith in any man, however wise or powerful, cannot tranquilize the mind. It is because Christ is not only the Saviour but also the Ruler of the world that faith in Him gives peace to the troubled soul. He told His sorrowing disciples that many things were coming that they would find hard to bear. They would be persecuted, put out of the synagogues, and some might even kill them who would think, in doing so, that they were doing God service. The most sorrowful fact of all was that they were soon to be deprived of His bodily presence. He would submit to death, and His enemies would achieve an apparent victory. This would occasion them sorrow, but their sorrow would soon be turned into joy. Jesus would die, but the Lord would rise, and live, and reign for evermore. Not in this unstable world, with its ever-shifting scenes and painful surprises, is peace to be found; but in Him who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Truly it was good to be there; and all felt that there was a more than usual manifestation of the Divine presence and power. Many a wound was healed, many a sigh was hushed, many a tear was dried, many a soul felt the majesty of truth, and the presence of a living Christ, as the whole congregation rose and sung:

"Part in peace, Christ's life was peace,
Let us live our life in Him;
Part in peace, Christ's death was peace,
Let us die our death in Him.
Part in peace, Christ promise gave
Of a life beyond the grave,
Where all mortal partings cease;
Holy brethren part in peace!"

* * * * * * *

It is Friday evening, and eight o'clock. The members of the Battlemount church are met in the large basement school-room. The call of the deacons has been responded to with considerable promptitude and by considerable numbers. All but a very few are, evidently, on the alert. One thing is certain, there is to be a stir of some kind, and they want to see and hear what it is. The room is not packed, but it is tolerably well filled. There are but few vacant seats. All the prominent members are present, and large numbers of the rank and file, the "riff raff" as Deacon Shankey condescended to call them. The Rev. Jeremiah Gamble, through the

pressure of other engagements, is not often present at church meetings, but he has made a special effort to be present on so important an occasion. He is easily recognisable by his erect figure, his silvery locks, his unusually ruddy face, for so old a man, his sharp piercing eye and his calm venerable look; he is a cedar in Lebanon. Duncan Smiler is there, smiling as blandly as ever. There is Hezekiah, too, alternately scratching his bald pate and nervously biting his finger nails. The latter will suffer dreadfully before the evening is past. Unlike his brother Smiler he has not taken a front seat. He is seated behind, among the "riff raff." Perhaps such a location suits his modest and retiring nature. Rollo Duffy is rolled up in a seat in a corner of the room, and his intelligent wife sits beside him to keep him awake, which, happily, she succeeds in doing by now and then giving him a tremendous dig in the ribs. The Pastor occupies the chair, and opens the meeting with devotional exercises. These over, he proceeds to explain the object of the meeting, and says:

"My friends, when I announced this meeting on Sunday last I was as ignorant as the majority of you now are of the object for which we were called together. Since then my darkness has been enlightened. One of the conveners, evidently compassionating my inevitable ignorance, very kindly sent me a note, by special messenger, clearly ex-

plaining what those matters of unusual interest are that were intended to be brought before you. This is my only means of information, and perhaps I cannot do better than read the letter, and let it speak for itself. It is as follows:

DEAR BROTHER VINCENT,

Lest you should still further have occasion to plead ignorance of the important business which some of the deacons wish to lay before the church on Friday night, it might be well for me to communicate, so far as I know, the nature of that business. Some time ago I and four of my brethren sent you a joint note, advising you to resign your pastoral charge. Up to the present time this recommendation, as you are perfectly aware, has been without effect. We feel that our dignity and influence are thereby compromised. Our action, which we meant to be private, and desired to produce its appropriate effect without making a stir, has somehow leaked out, and many unfavorable comments have been passed upon it. We therefore desire to lay before the members of the church this action for their approval or disapproval. Should they disapprove, we shall then have the opportunity of resigning, and afford them an opportunity of appointing others who may more truly reflect their views.

I am, yours truly,

DUNCAN SMILER.

"This then, my friends, is the business before you to-night. It is for you to take it up, and consider it fairly and dispassionately. Dismiss all prejudice from your minds, and look at the matter calmly and judicially. The facts are admitted. About them there can be no dispute. Such a letter was sent and

received. It did not produce the effect intended. These brethren feel, and I think rightly, that, possibly, they do not reflect your views. They ask you to pronounce judgment upon what they thought it prudent to do—to approve or disapprove. It is a disagreeable task, but you have no alternative. I have not desired it, neither have you, but they have. Where the right or the wrong, the folly or the wisdom lies is for you to determine, and you alone. I leave the matter with you, and may God's good spirit guide you to a right conclusion!"

Mr. Smiler at once took the floor, and said: "My friends, I confess I am the writer of that letter which the Pastor has just read. It fairly expresses my sentiments, and the sentiments of those who have acted with me. I was not the originator of that recommendation, which was sent to the Pastor some time ago, but I gave my adhesion to it. I thought, at the time, it would be instantly acted upon, and there the matter would end. Unfortunately, such has not been the case. I frankly confess I am not personally opposed to the Pastor. No one can fail to admire his uncomplaining patience, his simple faith, his undoubted fidelity, his spotless life, and his more than average ability as a preacher of the Gospel. But I think he should have acted upon that recommendation, and at once resigned. Many of our pastors have resigned when they have been

so advised, and in cases where they have not, the result has generally been disastrous to themselves. If you approve our action I have every confidence the Pastor will resign, as he will take that as the voice of the Church indirectly but legitimately expressed. If you disapprove our action we must *and will resign;* and you must appoint others to fill the offices we have occupied so long, so honorably, and up to the present time, may I venture to add, so acceptably. I do not wish to intimidate you or influence your judgment unfairly, but I would beg to add that it may not be very easy to find suitable men to fill our places, if we, by your adverse judgment, are called upon to vacate them. Let me also mildly intimate that I and my brother deacons are, without doubt, the largest contributors to the funds of the church and the support of the ministry. Brother Smallwire, the treasurer, will be able to verify my statement."

Upon which Brother Smallwire, somewhat abashed by this personal reference, scrambled upon his slim perpendiculars, and was understood to say, in effect, that what Deacon Smiler had said about the subscriptions was true, and he couldn't see how the church could be run without the continued aid and full co-operation of the large subscribers.

Brother Gumming rose, and in a few well-chosen words intimated that the assembled brethren would

doubtless be glad to hear what Deacon Shankey had to say upon the subject. Whereupon, Hezekiah looked daggers, trembled visibly with suppressed emotion, scratched his head, bit his finger nails, and refused to take the floor.

There was a momentary pause. No one seemed disposed to speak. Then the Rev. Jeremiah Gamble slowly elevated his venerable form, and, standing perfectly erect, said: "My very dear friends,—I am pained exceedingly, and surprised beyond measure, at the audacity and ignorance of men whom I have been accustomed to respect, and who have had such abundant opportunities of knowing and doing better. Is it possible that our deacons did not know, in sending that recommendation to the Pastor to resign, and expecting him to act upon it without ascertaining our views, or consulting our wishes, that they were overstepping their appropriate duties, and usurping our functions? Is it possible, I ask, that there could be so much ignorance and folly, where we had a right to expect both knowledge and wisdom? I confess that the like of this I have never seen in all my experience, which is by no means inconsiderable. For my part I feel I cannot too much admire the noble self-repression and bearing of our beloved Pastor in quietly ignoring so unconstitutional an act. He doubtless meant that silence should teach those capable of being taught a lesson

which no amount of disputation could impart. The whole conduct of the affair, so far as he is concerned, evinces a maturity of judgment and christian feeling which could scarcely be expected from his years. I am exceedingly sorry that our deacons have brought themselves into this difficulty, but it is by their own purpose and act. We are placed in a dilemma, and a painful one. If we approve, we aid and abet what is plainly unconstitutional, and thereby aim a serious blow at the vital principle upon which the church is founded. If we disapprove, we have to dispense with men upon whose judgment and services we have been accustomed to rely. This is the dilemma. These are the two evils. Wisdom would say, choose the least. At all hazards and at all costs principle must be maintained, and therefore we cannot approve, but must, however reluctantly, condemn. It is not safe to shrink from duty though it involve considerable sacrifices. Dare to do right; dare to be true."

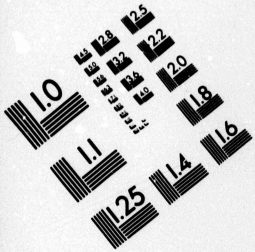
There was a long pause at the close of Brother Gamble's speech. All felt it to be clear, convincing, and unanswerable. Even the deacons for the time being seemed to realize that they had not been very wise.

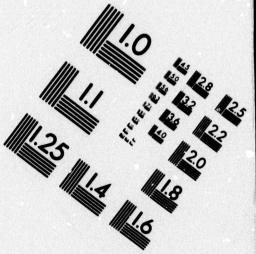
Brother Murphy moved, and Brother Gumming seconded the following motion: "That we, as a church here assembled, and in the exercise of our

just rights and privileges, do hereby disapprove of the action of the deacons regarding the Pastor."

The scrutineers appointed by the Meeting counted the ballots, and gave in their report, which was that the motion was carried and the vote adopted.

Thus concluded a meeting memorable in the annals of the Battlemount Church. The common sense of the community vindicated an important principle, and redressed, so far as human intervention could redress, a deep wrong.





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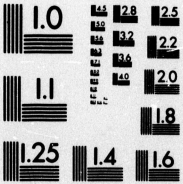
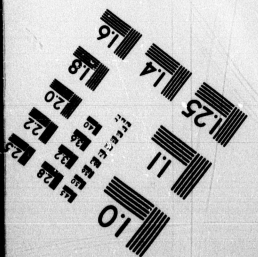
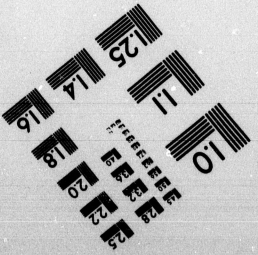






CHAPTER XVI

The manhood of Christ—Deep waters—Self-repression—Official infidelity and folly—"Let this cup pass from me"—Dear old Crossberry—Douglas Sinclair—A fight for dear life—Dr. Gammon rejected—Deacon Christie re-elected—Joel Gudgeon becomes Deacon Gudgeon—"Braying a fool in a mortar."

THE Saviour of men never uttered a more heart-breaking appeal than that when, on the occasion of a general defection among his disciples, he plaintively said to the twelve: "Will ye also go away." It was not the God that was speaking, but the great lonely human soul that was in Him. Of necessity He felt lonely at all times, because He was the only perfect being in human form then walking the earth. Fellowship in the fullest and strictest sense there could not be, for He had no equal among human-kind. He was "alone, and yet not alone, because the Father was with Him." Yet He was so really and intensely human that he could instantly, and even deeply, feel the waning of human friendship. When he perceived that a certain number "of His disciples went back and walked

no more with Him," He became concerned about that inner and more immediate circle called "the twelve," as if for an instant He entertained the fear that they, too, might forsake Him. So truly "was He in all points tried like as we are."

It was with feelings nearly akin to those of the Saviour that the Pastor of the Battlemount Church surveyed his position and surroundings on the day following the events recorded in the last chapter. There was this difference, however: the circumstances were transposed. The large outer circle of those who had learned to love him was in the main intact. It was in the inner circle he had to mourn over defection. He had something of the feeling of David, too, when he said: "Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Especially did he feel thus towards Deacon Cheesman, whose strength and loyalty of attachment he had never doubted, and whom he had loved as a brother, and trusted as a very dear friend. How much the Pastor felt, and how deeply, will not be fully known until the inscriptions upon the fleshy tablet of that feeling heart stand out in startling clearness, in that light by which all that is secret will be made manifest. It was with no small grief that he saw men, who from their position should have been patterns of wisdom, permitting them-

selves to be seduced into a course of proceeding which a calm judgment could not by any possibility approve. He did not remonstrate with them, because he saw how utterly useless it was to attempt any open interference with men who never, for a moment, seemed to doubt that they were perfectly wise, and well-nigh omnipotent. There was the danger, too, clearly discerned by the Pastor, of the mildest remonstrance leading to unpleasant disputation; and that in its turn leading to a widening of the breach between him and them, which one false step on their part had already made wide enough. He preferred, therefore, to trust to the power of silence and Christian forbearance. These could not aggravate, and they might, perchance, lessen the evil. He imposed upon himself a hard but a Christian task. It was anything but easy not to speak in wrath, and still more difficult not to speak at all, when there was so much to irritate and inflame the human passion that slay slumbering in the depths of his nature. It was there, ready to burst out at any moment, but he kept it down under all provocation, because it was both politic and Christ-like to do so. He sternly resolved that, whoever might, he would not add fuel to the fire; and that, however great the temptation to retaliate, he would not curse but bless.

He had another and a still higher motive for self-repression. In the midst of much unrest there was

a great work of grace going on. Many, very many, were being converted and brought into the fold of Christ. It was a painful time, but a fruitful one; and perhaps the pain was in some mysterious manner productive of the fruit. Anyhow, he would not, dare not hinder. At such a time, and surrounded by such ever-increasing spiritual results, he had the seal of the Divine approval upon his work, and he would not lay down the trowel by which he was instrumentally building up the church of God, to wield the sword of unfruitful disputation and party strife. Only when we remember that "God's ways are not as our ways and His thoughts are not as our thoughts," can we get an approximate understanding of how such a large and increasing work of grace could go on in the face of such manifold difficulties, and in an atmosphere so uncongenial to the great Author of conversion.

The self-repression constantly exercised by the Pastor, though eminently Christlike and productive of most happy results, personally and relatively, was attended by one serious disadvantage of a physical character. His nervous system showed symptoms of irritation, and nights of unresting weariness became his portion. His brain would not, could not rest. There was a flood, and the superincumbent weight of the moral purpose dammed up the natural outlet. It seems to be a law of our being

that talking of sorrow will, in some measure, alleviate it. Nature, smarting under feelings of outrage and injustice, if permitted to "let out," in word or act, seems to find a healing balm in the process. The Pastor, supported by Divine grace, would not "let out," would not complain under any stress of provocation, and, while the moral attitude was such as to command the admiration of friend and foe alike, the physical result to himself was somewhat disastrous. There was no diminution, but rather an accession, of mental power. With more than ordinary assiduity he bent himself to a faithful and effective presentation of Divine truth, to the increasing delight of all who came under the sound of his voice. There was no particular outward sign to show the wear and tear going on within, nevertheless it was sadly true that he was trimming his lamp with the melted marrow out of his own bones.

The Pastor was not unmindful of, or unthankful for, the result of the meeting. He had not anticipated it. In fact he could not, with any degree of certainty, surmise what the result might be, but he was gratified to find his attitude approved by a faithful and loving people. The action of the deacons was a complete surprise, and the notice for so important a meeting was short; but the people quickly discerned the gravity of the emergency, responded to the call, sprung to the front, and fought valiantly in defence of their just rights and privileges.

The whole course of the deacons, which ended so disastrously to themselves, had its commencement in an over-estimate of their importance and power. Official pride was at the bottom of it, and we know that pride goeth before a fall. They forgot that they were the servants, and thought they were the masters of the church. Then followed a series of false steps, unparalleled for unwisdom in diaconate life. It was unwise and unmanly for four men of sound mind to allow themselves to be seduced into a suicidal course by the sophistical reasoning, and insinuating address of Hezekiah Shankey. It was unwise, and even childish, for them to suppose that a single sentence, with their signatures attached, would arrest in a career of distinguished usefulness one who was absorbed with the controlling ideas of glory to God and good to men. It was the height of arrogance and imprudence to send such a communication to the Pastor, unknown to the church, and in the full expectation that it would be instantly acted upon. It was unwise to call such a meeting, and in such a way, so suddenly, and so unexpectedly and with such utter disregard to the feelings of both Pastor and people. It was unwise to present to the church the cruel and unnecessary alternative of endorsing their unconstitutional act, or of dispensing, henceforth, with their services altogether. The members of the church did not,

then at least, wish to be deprived of the services of men who had served them, in the main, faithfully; neither did they wish to dispense with the services of the Pastor. They wanted to preserve "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," but the cruel alternative was inexorably and rigorously insisted upon. The choice was inevitable, and it was made, made deliberately, but painfully, and with what result has been already told.

Now, thought the Pastor, as he calmly surveyed the position, the judgment of the body has been sought and obtained, the verdict has been pronounced by the rightful authority, wiser counsels may prevail, and the Angel of Peace may extend his brooding wings over us once more. It was a holy aspiration, but, unhappily, doomed not to be realized. More unwisdom was to issue from the same source from which so much had already come. Those who thought themselves humiliated by discomfiture resolved not to observe their plighted word; resolved not to do what they had most solemnly and publicly said they would; resolved to retain their official position; resolved to ignore, and even set at defiance, the wishes of the body; and resolved to use the vast influence which their now usurped positions afforded for a more relentless prosecution of an unholy crusade against the fair name and usefulness of the Pastor, and the peace and prosperity

of the church. Alas! for human nature as it is! Arise, O Lord, and plead Thine own cause.

The Pastor heard of these new intentions and plans in silence, in sorrow, and almost in dismay. He was not angry, but he deeply commiserated men who could thus openly break their own solemn word, and who could do it with the deliberate intention of affording an important vantage-ground for conspiring against the peace and well-being of their fellow-christians. He, at last, reluctantly came to the conclusion that they had given the final touch to the proof of how unfitted they were, notwithstanding their experience, for the positions they occupied, and which they resolved to maintain. What was to be done? Simply, do and bear. He could not see it to be his duty to leave a confiding and loving people, and desert the post where God had placed him, and blessed him with so many tokens of his favor, because a few unquiet and unwise spirits had deliberately made up their minds to make the bed on which he lay a bed of thorns. It was indeed a bed of thorns, as what else could it be under such circumstances? Often did he ask God on bended knees, and with aching heart and streaming eyes, to let this cup pass from him; or that he might have His permission to go away and leave the bitter draught untasted; but he had grace to add: "Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." The only

answer which came from Him who sat upon the throne was a look of infinite tenderness, and those precious words: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

Often in the silent watches of the night, when sleep would not woo his tired soul to rest, would he think of his beloved Crossberry, of the kind generous souls there, of his old church, of his old home. How gladly he would go back, if it were God's will. How gladly the dear people would welcome him back, if they knew all he suffered, and if the door was still open. It was shut. God's hand had shut it. His very dear friend and class-mate, Douglas Sinclair, had succeeded him at Crossberry; and was well, happy, and useful. He could not be otherwise with such a people. He did not write to them of his deep perplexity and wearing sorrow, but some rumors floated on the breeze reached them, and many a heart ached for him. Anon on the wings of a vivid fancy would he fly, and with a blessed distinctness realize himself, as of yore, quietly seated in the corner pew of the old church. All the world shut out, and he looking, wistfully and thoughtfully, at the monumental tablets on the

wall. He the living surrounded by the blessed dead once more. His breast would heave, and a sigh escape, and for a moment the wish would possess him that if it were God's will He might take him from all the evil; and that his body might rest, till the resurrection morn, in that quiet resting place. There, in the old Crossberry graveyard, would he of all places choose to lie down, and be forever at rest. It is linked with the past, and *his past*, and time will never efface the blessed memories which cluster around it. But not yet will the summons come; not yet is all God's purpose concerning him accomplished.

The unholy crusade, set on foot by Mr. Shankey and his coadjutors, deepened and broadened in malignity and intensity, day by day. The methods of action were unchanged, but the motive was somewhat different, for now they had realized their danger and were fighting for dear official life. Knowing that they continued to hold their offices in violation of their own solemn and voluntary engagement, they were anxious, by all means possible, to produce a speedy change in the feelings of the great mass of the people toward the Pastor. They thought if they could affect the loyalty of the people, turn the tide of feeling, and get the vote of the majority recorded against the Pastor, his official connection would terminate, and theirs might be saved. He was to

be the lamb offered as a sacrifice for their sins. Only thus could they expect forgiveness, and a continuance of official life.

One event occurred at this time which should have convinced them that their course was one of cumulative folly, and could only end in complete disaster. Deacon Gammon and Deacon Christie had served the term for which they were elected. They must be re-elected, or others chosen in their stead. The time of election came, and a large number of members were present, resolved to testify, in an indirect way, their disapproval of the diaconate policy. Deacon Christie, who stood firm as a rock, true in his allegiance to the people, and firm in his attachment to the Pastor, was re-elected by a large majority. Deacon Gammon, who, unfortunately for so good a man, had yielded to the seductive influence of Hezekiah Shankey, and formed one of the five committed to a policy of relentless opposition, was rejected. Joel Gudgeon, an honest man and a good Christian and one whose loyalty and wisdom had been proved, was elected by a large majority in his stead.

It must not be assumed from this that Dr. Gammon was personally unpopular. By no means. He was of too passive a nature to arouse much hostility, or make himself very objectionable; but he was one of the conspiring league which was aiming a most determined blow at the peace of the Pastor, and the

liberties of the church. It was necessary to manifest the continued disapprobation of the community of such attitude, and also necessary to give Deacon Christie a colleague of like views and sympathies, and the Pastor a true helper in his work. For these reasons Joel Gudgeon was made Deacon Gudgeon.

Now, thought the Pastor, as he again looked afar and surveyed the position, this lesson will surely be heeded, the unwise will take warning, better counsels will now prevail, and peace will be restored. Alas! how frequently our most modest expectations are doomed to disappointment. That book to whose instructions it is well that we all give heed, says: "Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar, among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." It was even so with these men who were old enough to be wise, and certainly old enough to learn wisdom by bitter experience. Notwithstanding all the "braying," their folly remained and increased. Notwithstanding that the Spirit of the Lord stood in the way, and repeatedly said to them, "thus far, but no further," they, with their eyes open, took the final leap, and rushed upon destruction.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The last act in an ecclesiastical drama—Motion and countermotion—John Cheesman and Duncan Smiler put the best foot first—The Rev. Jeremiah Gamble delivers a noble and eloquent defence—Victory—"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

AGAIN it is Friday evening, and eight o'clock. The members of the Battlemount church are met together, by special and official request. The basement school room is crowded to its utmost capacity. Scarcely a member of the church is absent, and every countenance is stamped with anxious expectancy. The Pastor is in the chair. He is looking somewhat pale, but the soul shines through the pallor, and lights up his expressive countenance. He gives out a hymn, reads the Scriptures, and engages in prayer. He prays earnestly that He who was with the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace may be with them to console and direct. He then rises and, with great calmness and deliberation, says: "My Brothers and my sisters in Jesus Christ. You are called together on this occasion to consider a proposition of which due notice has

been given by Brother Cheesman. It is to this effect: 'That, for the welfare and prosperity of this church, it is advisable and necessary that the Pastor should resign.' I will not trust myself to say much. I am too full for utterance. I will not give a history of this movement; how it was commenced, and how it has been carried on. You know it as well as I, in all its bearings and developments, and you must judge. You may think it unnecessary to be thus summoned together again so soon. So be it! It is not my work, nor is it my wish. One thing I will say: if you choose to give your deliberate affirmation to that proposition your wishes shall be gratified. At your call I came to labor, and under circumstances which imposed peculiar obligations upon you; at your call I will cease from labor, if such be your will. The matter is in your hands; deal with it prudently, as in the sight of Him who knoweth all things. I now call upon Brother Cheesman to move the resolution of which he gave notice."

Brother Cheesman rose, and thus delivered himself: "I must commence, my dear friends, by craving your indulgence. I am a young man, and not much accustomed to speak in public. I feel somewhat abashed at my position, and oppressed with the task, which I freely admit is self-imposed. I gave notice of that resolution. I am here to argue its reason-

ableness, and move its adoption in the best way I can. That I shall do my work imperfectly I am fully and deeply sensible. I have nothing particular to urge against the Pastor, except that he has refused to take the advice of the officers of the church. I am under great obligations to him, personally, and I confess I have derived more benefit from his faithful and able ministrations, than from any one it has ever been my privilege to listen to. I think he is strong-willed and self-willed, and it is difficult for any one to approach him. I think it is better to have a pastor that we feel we can say anything to; one that we can slap heartily on the back, and be hail-fellow-well-met with. We do not like to feel that there is a great distance between him and us, mentally and spiritually. I do not think the Pastor took hold of the great and glorious revival we have had so heartily and thoroughly as he might. It is true we have had a great work of grace, and many have been converted, and added to the church; but the work has been mainly in the Sabbath school, and Brother Shankey and the teachers may be justly credited with that. If the Pastor had made more of Brother Shankey, who is very sensitive in regard to his personal dignity, and consented to work the church along with him, all the rest of us would have been perfectly satisfied, and all the trouble might have been avoided. But we have got into a fix now—how, I

will not explain—and, in my judgment, the best way out of the difficulty is for the Pastor to resign. To show you that, though excellent, in many respects, he is very impracticable, I will state a fact which is perhaps not generally known. We offered him, not directly, but indirectly, a considerable sum of money if he would resign. Will you believe it, when I tell you, that he was foolish enough not to give the proposition a moment's consideration; and, may I say, insane enough to look upon the offer as a personal insult? Did you ever hear anything like that? I never did. I must say it is very extraordinary. We have it on a very high authority that 'money answereth all things,' and it might, I think, have answered in this case; but then, as you know, our Pastor is very peculiar in some things. He talks about the sacredness of convictions and duties, and the necessity of certain principles we profess being maintained. What does it all amount to? In my humble judgment, not much. The substance of the whole thing is this: We advised him to resign, and he didn't take our advice. We think he should have done so. It is true you disapproved our action, but you do not know what is necessary for the welfare of the church as well as we; and, my word for it, you must come round to our views ultimately. You cannot do without us. If we reduce our subscriptions, or stop them alto-

gether, the current expenses of the church cannot be met. Let me advise you most strongly, and yet very affectionately, to be wise in time, and vote for the motion which stands in my name, and which I now beg to move.

Duncan Smiler rose instanter, and, smiling very sweetly on all around, said: "I rise, sir, to second the motion which has been so ably moved by Brother Cheesman. I heartily concur in all the remarks he has made, especially the latter. Indeed, I have taken the trouble to make a minute calculation, and I find that about one-third of the income of the church comes from about a half-dozen subscribers whom I could name, but modesty forbids. Can you do without these subscribers? If you cannot you had better vote for Brother Cheesman's motion. I may be permitted to make plain to the dullest understanding, by a very simple illustration, the position in which we are placed. Some people are richer than others. In keeping house we have to regulate our expenses by our incomes. A man who has a large income may safely indulge in a liberal expenditure. He can afford many things that are of necessity denied to his less opulent neighbor. Servants are a necessity in a household. Some who are wealthy can afford to keep three,—a chambermaid, a housemaid, and a cook. Some who are not so well off can only afford to keep

two, and some who are comparatively poor, and yet want to live respectably, only one,—a servant of all work. This illustration may be applied to churches. Some very rich churches can afford to keep two pastors; one to visit, and the other to preach. Most churches are so poor they can only afford to keep one. We belong to the latter class. Now our Pastor, as we all know and freely admit, is a very good cook; that is, I mean a very good preacher. He satisfies us in that respect. No one knows better than he how to serve up a feast of fat things, out of the Divine word, for us to feed upon and be satisfied. But we want something more than a good cook; that is, I mean, something more than a good preacher. We want one who can attend to every duty to our complete satisfaction, because we are not rich, and can only afford to keep one servant in our household of faith. We want one who can nurse the babes in Christ, and, so to speak, dandle them on his knee, and take great interest in the work; as well as being able to give strong meat and vigilant attention to those who are men and women in Christ. This, in short, is what we want; a minister who has every conceivable qualification developed to the fullest possible extent. I freely admit, and think we must all admit, that our Pastor has done well, very well, in the time he has been with us. Perhaps few could have done better; but

we want a change now, and I, for one, say we must have it. If you do not vote for Brother Cheesman's motion you will have to dispense with our services, and perhaps with something else as valuable. You must make up your minds how you are going to support the Pastor before you vote to sustain him. I second Brother Cheesman's motion, and sincerely hope it may be carried unanimously."

Deacon Duffy managed by a series of gymnastic performances to wriggle himself out of his corner seat, and standing up with one hand thrust into his vest pocket, and the other performing sundry operations with his eyes, was understood to say something about the church being like two dogs who were contending for a bone which lay between them; and that the best thing to do was to take the bone away, and let the dogs be quiet. He contended that his parable was plain, and the lesson obvious.

Whereupon Brother Murphy suggested that it might not be very easy, or very safe to take the bone from the two dogs, and that the lesson to be derived from that view of the case was obvious too.

At this temporary interruption Deacon Duffy got very red in the face, and darting a look of supreme contempt upon his antagonist, said: "Brother Murphy, I am surprised that you should dare to let your voice be heard at all on this occasion. Let me remind you, of what you are fully aware, that you

encouraged us to proceed in this business, and that we had a right to calculate upon your support; and now, in the hour of our need, you are evidently turning against us. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Here the Pastor intervened, and suggested, in soothing but authoritative tones, that it was absolutely necessary to abstain from all personalities. What had previously passed, in conversation, between Deacon Duffy and Brother Murphy was not the point at issue. All side issues must be avoided.

Whereupon Deacon Duffy and Brother Murphy simultaneously subsided.

There was a pause, and then a call for Deacon Shankey. Hezekiah shook his head, indicating his unwillingness to respond. Other fingers than his were picking the chestnuts out of the fire, and he thought there was no necessity for him to unduly expose his valuable claws.

The Pastor was about to put Brother Cheesman's motion, when the Rev. Jeremiah Gamble slowly elevated his venerable form, and said:—

"Sir, and my very dear friends,—I rise for the purpose of moving an amendment to the motion which has been introduced by Brother Cheesman, and seconded by Brother Smiler. My amendment is this: 'That the Rev. Paul Vincent, our beloved and faithful minister, be sustained in his office as pastor of this

church.' I make this amendment with pleasure, not only because it is right, but because I think it will be endorsed by the great majority of those who are here present. I am far from thinking, with the mover and seconder of the resolution, that it would be for the welfare of the church that the Pastor should resign. The reverse of that, in my judgment, is the fact. The welfare of this or any other church can never be secured by the wishes of a few being gratified at the expense of the wishes of the many. The principles we profess, and most sacredly hold, should be developed and maintained, and maintained, if need be, at all hazards, and at all costs. Our form of government, as you know, is democratic. I would respectfully remind those who have spoken before me to-night that we are not an oligarchy but a democracy. We are all equal, and have but one superior, one head; and the legislative and executive functions inhere in us, and abide with us equally. 'One is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren.' We may differ in social status and mental endowment; but before the Lord who made us and redeemed us we are all poor sinners, ransomed by the same precious blood, standing on the same level of a common brotherhood; and let us not forget that, in this kingdom, which is an everlasting kingdom, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free. I am exceedingly

sorry that one of our number has, in the heat of conflict, allowed himself to speak so contemptuously and disrespectfully of his brethren, who are beneath him in worldly wealth and social position. He should not forget that they are members of the same body, subjects of the same kingdom, and expectant inheritors of the same glory.

"I must confess, after surveying calmly all the facts, that the case presented by those who wish a change in the pastorate is of the lamest description possible. And with deep sorrow and holy indignation do I aver that the means employed for compassing that end have not been such that Christian men ought to use. I will not indicate the nature of those means further than this, that, to my certain knowledge, there is scarcely a member of this church who has not been, at one time or another, alternately entreated and threatened with the view of shaking his loyalty to the Pastor. I myself, old as I am, have been cautiously approached, and sounded upon this subject, more than once. Not only so, but some who need not be named, have ransacked the Pastor's character, reputation and clerical history, to find out some stone to throw at him; but such efforts, I am pleased to find, have signally failed of their object and ended in fruitlessness and folly. Every public man dwells more or less 'in that fierce light which beats upon a throne and blackens every blot;' but

in this case a deep malignity has concentrated the burning rays of scrutiny, and I am amazed to find that so little of the necessary imperfection of human nature has been revealed. I do not mean by this to insinuate that our Pastor is perfect. No one is more conscious of weakness and imperfection than he; but I am speaking of the actual intentions of others, and the actual result of those intentions; and from these I unhesitatingly infer that his character is without reproach, and his devotion to his Master's cause cannot be impeached. He has his shortcomings, and I am satisfied that no one will more readily admit the truthfulness of that statement than he. He does excel in the pulpit—that we all know, and his enemies confess—he may not excel out of it. No man can perform every duty that falls to his lot with equal excellence and effect. But in reference to those duties that are incumbent upon our Pastor outside of his pulpit, I can say this much, fearlessly and conscientiously, and many others will bear me out in the statement, that those who know him best appreciate him the most. His heart does not respond suddenly, but when it does come forth, at the call of sorrow or distress, it is found to be tender and true. In my family, and in many others that I know intimately, the call of the sorrowful, of the sick and of the dying, has never been unheeded.

"Then there is another matter to which the Pastor incidentally alluded, and to which I, as a private member of the church, may briefly advert. The circumstances under which he came among us were such as to impose peculiar obligations upon us. He was under no necessity to leave his previous sphere of labor. He was happy, contented and useful where he was. He had no wish to leave, and no occasion for it. It was the continued importunity of these very brethren, who have harassed him for a whole year, that ultimately prevailed upon him to come. He did come, and he has labored continuously and successfully. Our congregations are doubled, our Sabbath school is flourishing, and our membership has been increased a hundred per cent. The past year's history of the church is, I know, unexampled for prosperity; but what might it have been if there had been, all that time, peace within our borders. We ought to go down on our knees and thank God for such prosperity; and we ought to be perpetually grateful to Him for sending us a pastor whom He in so distinguished a manner has deigned to honor and bless. I maintain that it is not for the welfare of the church that the Pastor should resign. I maintain, on the other hand, that, so far as human eyes are permitted to see, it is for our welfare that he should remain, and that we by a united voice should sustain him in the office he

has hitherto filled with the approval of God, and to the satisfaction and profit of his people."

Deacon Christie rose and said: "It would ill become me to say much after so much has been so ably said by our venerable Brother Gamble. I wish to have the privilege of seconding the amendment moved by him. Every one knows I am deeply attached to the Pastor, and that I have every reason to be so. My soul has been much blessed under his ministry, and my children have been converted. Brother Shankey tried to shake me, but I am thankful to say he failed. Time after time he came to me, and hour after hour he talked to me, but it was all in vain. With all my heart and soul I second, and will support with my vote, Brother Gamble's amendment, that the Pastor be sustained."

The vote was taken on the amendment, yeas and nays. The scrutineers appointed by the meeting collected and counted the ballots, and gave in their report, which was that the yeas had it by a large majority. THE PASTOR WAS SUSTAINED. The meeting was closed by singing the doxology:

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

CHAPTER XIX.

Conclusion.

The writer of these pages feels he must draw his narrative to a close.

He has no intention of drawing upon his imagination to furnish a sensational scene which shall thrill the soul of the reader, and hold him spell-bound by an artistic lie. No imaginary scenes of sorrow and death shall stain these pages. Life furnishes more than enough of real sorrow and real death. Actual life and its lessons can alone instruct aright.

Hezekiah Shankey, Duncan Smiler, John Cheesman and Rollo Duffy reluctantly tendered their resignations, and they were at once accepted. They prophesied all sorts of evil to come when the church was left without their wisdom to guide it, but happily the prophecy was not fulfilled.

Brethren Sumner, Cheney, Orton, and Eastmure

were elected, almost unanimously, to succeed them. They had never been in office before, and therefore lacked official experience, but they had the full confidence of the church and the Pastor. They took to their new duties kindly and humbly, and discharged them faithfully, up to the full measure of their capacity.

Hezekiah stuck to his word, fulfilled his vow, and went out; and let us hope that he afterwards became a wiser and a better man. Some went with him to keep him company, and cheer his lonely heart. He still retained Nil Desperandum as his motto.

A brighter day dawned upon the Battlemount church. All felt that its historical reproach was effectually taken away, and its moral reputation, in the eyes of the whole community, augmented rapidly. The demon of discord was laid, the long night of darkness and weariness was past, and the day spring from on high appeared. All realized "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." The old time promises were fulfilled in their experience; perhaps not in their fulness of preciousness and glory, yet in a fair measure, and to an enjoyable extent: "In my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee. The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and they that despised thee shall bow themselves down

at thy feet. Violence shall no more be heard within thy land; wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise."

The Pastor himself was not unblessed by the painful scenes through which he was called to pass. His trials had a mellowing influence upon him. True, it cannot be said of him "that the smell of fire had not passed upon him, neither was a hair of his head singed;" but it may safely be affirmed that he emerged from the furnace chastened and benefited. It was good for him that he was afflicted. He had a deeper attachment to Him who is "a very present help in every time of trouble." His views of God's dealings, and of Divine truth were enlarged. His patience and faith were tested and strengthened. He had proved, by actual experience, how faithful God is, and how he will not disappoint him who trusts Him, utterly, in the darkest hour. The personal intervention of God in human affairs was, ever afterwards, a truth most surely believed by him. The companionship of Jesus was more than a sentiment—it was a reality. The headship of Christ was taken out of the domain of theory, and placed in the catalogue of truths which actual experience had satisfactorily demonstrated. The utility and blessedness of embodying Divine precepts in human life were placed beyond a doubt. The inherent ten-

dency and power of right ultimately to overcome wrong-doing was fully made manifest. Thus important convictions ripened and strengthened, and the Pastor became, by such heavenly discipline, more fitted for the work which God gave him to do.

Douglas Sinclair is happy and prosperous as pastor of the Crossberry Church. His old aunt, after his settlement there, conceived a growing attachment to her hopeful nephew. When she died he found that his expectations were not unfounded. He came into the possession of a fair competency.

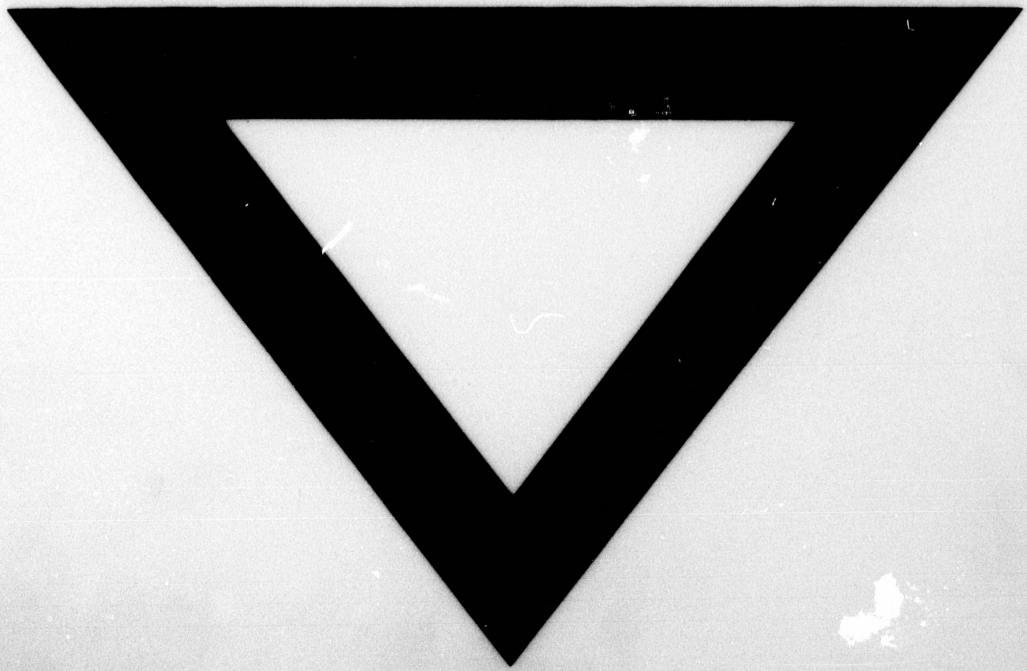
Roscoe Rosewood, of Crossberry Park, and Simon Jehu, the old driver, are both gone to "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." They were complete opposites in social status, but both were tender and true. A truer or more feeling heart than Roscoe Rosewood's never throbbed. He was the friend of all, and the enemy of none. His wife, his children, and his many friends miss him sadly. Let us hope he is reserved for the resurrection of the just. It would be indeed a pleasure to meet him in the regions where the sun never sets.

The old driver has gone where he can never feel lonely. Perhaps he has met his "chil'en," already grown more fair, and his old "missus," who forded the dark river before him. In that better land "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;

neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Mortimer Shelburne, of Shepherdston, continued his benevolent scheming for the welfare of the Shepherdston Zion, but was ultimately taken in his own net. He got "the more experienced minister" with whom he expected to run the Church. Unhappily things did not run smoothly very long; division ensued, and, like his twin brother Hezekiah, he soon had the grim satisfaction of counting himself among the "outs." Adversity taught him wisdom, and took away some of that pride which produced his fall.

Bewdley College still stands, and is regarded, justly, as an ornament and credit to the denomination to which it belongs. The old Professors are gone, and younger men have assumed their functions, and are discharging their duties. Many faithful ministers of the Gospel have been trained, and have gone forth thence, since Paul Vincent's time. His old classmates are scattered all over the world, prosecuting the same work, and bent on the same errand of mercy to perishing men. They may be found in England, Ireland, Scotland, the United States, Canada, Australia, Africa. A few have gone

up higher, and are already before the throne, serving God day and night in His temple. The Great Father will bring them all together some day, and then, with eternal gratitude, will they think of all the way He hath led them.

THE END.