

THE  
RECTOR OF ROXBURGH

A Story for our own Times

BY  
WILLIAM HICKLING, pseud.



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## PREFACE.

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THE reader will readily detect the fact that the author of the following story has his own ecclesiastical preferences ; yet he commends the volume to catholic-minded people of every name, for the reason that the principles which he has endeavored to set forth apply with equal force to all.

NEW YORK, *Advent*, 1872.

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THE  
RECTOR OF ROXBURGH.

CHAPTER I.

About the Town.

"Go you through the town to Frogmore."

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

"Who never leave gaping till they've swallowed the whole parish,  
church, steeple, and all."

PERICLES.

THE town of Roxburgh was situated in one of the most beautiful and picturesque portions of New England, where, as is generally the case in that part of the country, the land was not equal in quality to the landscape; but where, nevertheless, an inventive enterprise supplemented the otherwise insufficient prosperity, by utilizing the waters of a deep, rapid stream, which, on the north side of the parish, gave immutable metes and bounds. Thus, while the farmer sowed, the sparkling waters would grind and spin; all aiming at prosperity.



The population of Roxburgh was somewhat mixed. The Celt and the Teuton were prominent agents in executing plans which the clear-headed descendants of the Puritans devised; though the agricultural interests of the town were cared for by the children of the early settlers, who took a just pride in tilling the well-kept acres which their plain and industrious ancestors had for generations turned up with the plow. The township was favorably known for its good roads, instead of many streets. Of the latter, it boasted but a little more than one. It was a long one, however, and at the south end was a beautiful and airy "Green," around which stood the various town and county buildings; for Roxburgh was the shire-town, be it known, and a place of some importance, at least in its own eyes. And the matter, too, was susceptible of demonstration; for, if you were to drop a line straight down from the Roxburgh Green, the plummet would exactly touch the centre of the earth.

But, lest we should appear to trifle with the feelings of the inhabitants of an important ilk, let us leave this experiment to be tried

by others, the sceptics, for instance, while we take a stroll northward from the Green towards the river. At the time of which we speak, even as to-day, the pedestrian passed many residences of both ancient and modern architecture, with fine gardens and gravelled walks; while graceful elms, the pride of the whole county, interlaced their branches overhead in cathedral arches for more than a quarter of a mile. Here dwelt the greater portion of what might be called the aristocracy of Roxburgh, whose upper crust was composed of a large number of families characterized by much refinement and culture. Few New England towns, especially those devoted to the manufacturing interests, could show a better state of society. As we shall hereafter see, in some respects the community lacked breadth of view; yet the Roxburghers,—and here, of course, we speak of the native population,—united liberal culture with integrity and high moral purpose.

But when this portion of the town was left behind, the street assumed a new aspect, becoming crowded with stores and buildings of various kinds, in front of which stood

wagons and teams, while on the sidewalks and in the windows were seen the customary paraphernalia of a live inland town, whose sharp shop-keepers were ready to drive hard bargains with all comers, even in the matter of an ox-bow, an egg, or a gimlet.

At this point, the animation of the scene rapidly increased, while the way grew narrower and the buildings more irregular, until at last it took a sharp turn and ran off, in a disorderly fashion, down to the river, where it spread itself out in a number of narrow courts and unkempt, ill-ventilated alleys. In these restricted purlieus, where, as at the Auld Brig, two wheelbarrows trembled when they met, lived the operatives, who toiled more hours than was good even for beasts of burden. At night, the many-storied factory buildings, lighted up for work, appeared from a distance like castles of the genii. Yet there was no magic within, except that of the tireless and swiftly-flying machinery, which remorselessly dragged the pale-faced, haggard child back and forth over the slippery floor, miles and miles every day. So much for our "modern improvements."

And here, in what we might call the lower town, there existed a state of things which few in any part of our country care to contemplate; a state of things, indeed, the existence of which in New England is not unfrequently denied. But, whatever we may say of Africa or Utah, it is very certain that the heathenism throughout these noisome quarters was positive, pithy, condensed. In fact, the ungodliness was epigrammatic. And it is perhaps worthy of notice, that there is no home heathenism like that of the smaller inland towns, where manufactures draw together, not a mixed *community*, but a miscellaneous *assemblage*, in which personal selfishness, intensified by a squalid poverty, forms a bar to fellowship of soul. It is true that the heathenism of great cities, like that of London and New York, for instance, is often more picturesque and romantic, evolving, as it frequently does, from its misery and rags, suggestions of fallen greatness, gleaming fitfully in broken lights of former days; and yet for genuine, unadulterated heathenism, many small towns, isolated from the refinements of the metropolis, can never be excelled.

We must not be deceived on this point. Country heathenism cannot tell a very pretty story, but the *grit* of the thing is there. The city ruffian, like the metropolitan poor, unconsciously imitate more or less the bearing and manners of those who move in the charmed circles of the most polished society. The city bully is very unlike the country boor. One may confidently commend the country heathens, like those of Roxburgh, to the lover of the moral picturesque, who is continually dwelling upon the rustic simplicity of those who dwell amid broad green fields and babbling brooks.

But it is not of this part of the community of Roxburgh that we now desire to treat. The title of our story promises an introduction to the Rector of Roxburgh and his people.

And this reminds me that in the brief description of the principal street, there is no mention of such an institution as a church. Yet there it stands to-day, as of old, on the west side of the Green, opposite the white court house, wherein, on certain quarter days, the judge sat, so patient and wise,

while the county attorneys essayed to earn their round, fat fees by confusing their own and the jury's ideas of justice and law.

St. Mark's, Roxburgh, was, confessedly, a good, well-proportioned church, correct in its symbolism, and impressive in the simple purity of its Elizabethan lines; indeed, its influence was a sacred poem in stone, which sent forth a perpetual *Sursum corda* to every passer-by. And there it rose opposite to the hall of the wranglers, the Gospel benignantly facing down the Law, and giving a seeming approval to the superior wisdom of friendly Robin and Rosinante, who stood rubbing their noses together under the maples by the court house door, while their angry masters foolishly fought within. But the influence of this beautiful structure was felt outside of Roxburgh. This has proved to be the case in a multitude of instances, all over New England, where the architecture of old England stood out in such contrast with the ugly barn-like creations inherited from the early inhabitants, that the later generation could not endure it. Hence around Roxburgh there sprang up various feeble imitations, nearly all abounding

in contradictions and anachronisms, but which, nevertheless, served to illustrate the silent power exercised even by cold stones when shaped and laid by a master.

Roxburgh was, of old times, a Puritan town, but in the course of years, and from a small beginning, St. Mark's Church sprang up, and, through its rough-ashler beauties, bore testimony to the power of that primitive truth and apostolic order which, with an even chance (or without it,) will, in the most opinionated communities, win their way. A woman began the enterprise, by instituting a Sunday-school, of which she was equally the superintendent and teacher, librarian and clerk, persevering in the work in the face of many obstacles, until several masculine croakers, who did not believe in woman "making herself so public," and who knew the plan "wouldn't succeed," became fairly ashamed of themselves, and went to her help; so that St. Mark's Church, in the end, became an institution of the place, and a monument of feminine faith and zeal.

At the period when this sketch opens, the parish had been in operation for twenty years;

and, in accordance with the spirit of the uneasy times, which gives Episcopacy all the evils, and none of the advantages, of the Methodist itineracy, St. Mark's had now secured its *eighth* rector, the Rev. Marmaduke Walton, a cultured, faithful and genial man, who lived in the snug stone rectory, standing on a corner of the church lawn.

Sundry ancient hatchets, that had worked the former incumbent some harm, had now been buried, and all were in the enjoyment of a tolerable degree of peace, the chief grievance or drawback being found in the unsatisfactory condition of the parish treasury. There was certainly money enough in the town, a fact vouched for by the financial exhibits of the Roxburgh Bank; and St. Mark's Church certainly had its share, for in this town, as everywhere, Episcopacy cut perpendicularly down through the loaf of society, taking a certain representation of most all classes. Various old families, of abundant means, worshipped at St. Mark's, and among the carriages sheltered under the sheds adjoining the church, would be found, every Sunday, a good proportion from the solid farmers,

who came in from a distance of two and four miles. Yet St. Mark's was, on the whole, poor. At least the people *felt* poor. In fact, this state of things flung a gloom into the pretty rectory, as the minister's salary, while small in itself, was always in arrears. The parish had evidently declined from its first zeal. The church and rectory having long since been secured, with the exception of a small debt, the people had settled down into a state bordering on indifference. To buy, sell and get gain, was the great end kept in view by most of the parishioners, whom the rector vainly sought to interest deeply in the immediate affairs of the parish. It really seemed at times as though everything accomplished was done grudgingly; and his pointed allusions to the denial of the faith implied in the neglect of one's household, failed to excite a fresh current of thought. As a logical result, there followed extreme neglect, which preyed upon the Rector's mind. "What could it all mean?" This was one leading query of his life. In the mean while, all appeals from missionary and benevolent institutions remained unanswered. But in this respect he

had only followed the example of his predecessors, who sought mainly to take care of themselves. As a matter of course, St. Mark's, Roxburgh, was never heard of in charitable circles, and every year the parish was more and more inclined to insist upon that charity which begins, and ends, too, at home. As we have seen, this policy did not yield any satisfactory dividend; and, therefore, when the wants of the outside world were urged, there was no contribution available. At the same time the parish debt was unpaid, by reason of the demands for the salary, and the salary was kept back on account, forsooth, of the debt.

In addition to this, the manufacturers averred that times were dull, and the farmers were dissatisfied with their crops. Both, in truth, had grown "hard-fisted." They earned all that they gained, and were in no hurry to give it away. As it was, however, the most liberal givers were people of small ability, who contributed to the support of St. Mark's more in accordance with their means. Yet the majority of the people thought that the giving should be done by their neighbors,

and especially by that class known to possess abundant wealth; as if a church could stand better, supported by one or two large, instead of a number of smaller but judiciously distributed pillars, any one of which could be removed without endangering the safety of the building. Such, nevertheless, was the average view entertained in the town of Roxburgh, with whose inhabitants the reader will hereafter enjoy a more intimate acquaintance. Our next business, however, will be to introduce the Rector and his wife.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Situation.*

"And sometime comes she [Mab] with a tithe-pig's tail,  
Tickling a parson's nose as a' lies asleep,  
Then dreams he of another benefice."

ROMEO AND JULIET.

ONE morning, while the affairs of the parish of St. Mark's, Roxburgh, were in the condition described in the previous chapter, Mrs. Walton, the rector's wife, a lady of much refinement and elegance of manner, entered the cozy study where the Rector himself, the Rev. Marmaduke Walton, was deeply engaged, poring over a book. Her handsome face was flushed with vexation, and in her hand she held a quantity of papers.

"What *can* these people be thinking of!" was Mrs. Walton's exclamation. "Do they expect that we can live on nothing? Here are all these bills, and the Treasurer of St.

Mark's has not shown his face at the rectory for six months ; no, not for six months ! It is a positive shame."

Having thus declared an unquestionable truth, Mrs. Walton seated herself on a lounge, sank back, and looked steadily into her husband's face, observing the effect of the declaration. Marmaduke Walton met his wife's gaze with a troubled and anxious look, which did not, however, express a tithe of the feeling which began to well up in his heart. He at once remembered the past ; full of days of idyllic joy and peace ; those days when love was sweetly blind, and when, with Mary Morton by his side, the future seemed so fair. But now the *mirage* had disappeared, and while accusing others he likewise accused himself. Perhaps, however, we should here distinctly recall the reason why.

In her father's house Mary Morton had never known such a thing as want. And yet, though reared in comparative affluence, she turned from all the "flattering prospects" upon which her friends would at times dwell, and accepted an unostentatious life in the society of one, who, though not endowed with

wealth, was every way worthy of the love that she gave.

When the elders, with the best of intentions, essayed, after the usual worldly fashion, to tell how prudently a maiden should wed, she replied in the spirit of one, who, paraphrasing a passage from La Bruyère, says, under similar circumstances :

"My dear young lady, when you meet with any one whom you are inclined to like, do not take the trouble of ascertaining if he is good and high-principled. Oh dear, no ! Provided he be not a thief, or has not committed some great crime, that is enough. Do not indulge in high-flown and ridiculous ideas of perfection. But be sure you inquire if he has money enough to give you and your children the means of indulging in all, and more than all, the superfluous luxuries of life. If you can make sure that this is the case, do not hesitate to marry him ; you are sure to be happy. But if, on the contrary, he has only a competence, then, although romantic people tell you that his wife will be an enviable woman ; that his character is the best safeguard for her happiness ; that his religious principles are

excellent, and his habits so moderate that he is never likely to run into foolish expenses, be sure you turn a deaf ear to these absurd speeches, which betray an utter want of sense and of the commonest knowledge of the world."

In the end, as we have seen, the high-spirited girl acted on her own convictions. Miss Morton's parents finally consented, yet not without many misgivings. Rich Uncle Morton, however, inveighed bitterly against the match, thinking it simply outrageous for his charming niece to "throw herself away on a poor minister." Still, though he hinted strongly about what he might say in his will, if Mary gave up the "whole thing," his niece remained firm. In the end, as the result, Uncle Morton simply sent her a wedding present, "not because she deserved it," he was reported to have said, "but for the looks of the thing;" thereafter remaining distant and grumpy, never alluding to the subject of his displeasure, except as "my unfortunate niece."

Hence when Mrs. Walton's parents passed away, leaving only a small and encumbered

estate, her life at the rectory continued pretty much what it was at the outset. It is true that at the beginning, in common with her husband, Mrs. Walton looked forward to much happiness, believing that life need not consist in any abundance that one might possess. Nor had her expectations been disappointed. The croakers had foretold dark days, and the dark days had come; not indeed, much to the credit of the croakers, as the sunshine of life, even with the wealth of Croesus, cannot be had all the way through, as most persons very well know. It requires, in the present constitution of society, little inspiration and less brains to play the part of the family owl. But, let us not diverge. We were saying that Mrs. Walton anticipated much happiness; and she actually enjoyed much, notwithstanding the hours of trial which alike overtake all. Trials came in their regular course and went away again. Yet there was, nevertheless, one difficulty that of late had evinced no disposition to leave. In fact, for some time past it had been getting worse and worse, and even looked as though it had become chronic. We



allude, of course, to the condition of the family purse ; for while Mrs. Walton had lived in St. Mark's Rectory, the financial condition of the parish had led to experiences which one of her refined and sensitive nature was not well fitted to bear, and on this occasion Mrs. Walton, though a woman of a thoroughly Christian mind, could endure no longer ; hence her abrupt entrance into her husband's study with the exclamation that fell from her lips. Therefore it was, that on this occasion, the Rector found his mind recurring to that past to which allusion has been made, and which was now brought into such forcible contrast with the present. As he sat there in the study, with the half-beseeching eyes of his wife fixed upon him, he felt very deeply for her, besides suffering from his own wounded pride ; and was tempted to regret having taken one whom he ardently loved, from a life of ease, to share with him a station so "cribbed cabined, and confined." Indeed, he began to fear that he had acted the part of a very selfish individual ; and, therefore, as he noticed her flushed cheek, and saw the moistening of her tender eyes, he could not, at

first, command words for a reply. To be so pressed and mortified, simply for a little money !

But Marmaduke soon choked down the rising indignation, and thrust back the strong words ready to spring forth, managing to say, in a tolerably composed and soothing voice, "It is certainly very annoying, and positively wrong ;" yet as he was too wise to add needless fuel to a fire, Marmaduke added, "this state of things wont continue forever."

"Certainly not *forever*," responded Mrs. Walton, unable to banish from her voice that peculiar tone which indicates the feeling which is awakened by an insufficient reply.

"Well, then, Mary, we will say *always*, instead of *forever*," added Marmaduke, with an unsuccessful and most distressing attempt to smile and at the same time impart a cheerfulness to his voice. He forgot that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. In church and on the platform he was a good elocutionist, but under his own roof he was no actor. Mrs. Walton was not thus easily assured, and so she continued, from her place on the lounge, looking straight

at her husband, who really felt supremely weak and miserable.

At last, realizing that an issue had come, he rose from his seat, laid down the book which he had hitherto held in his hand, and said deliberately: "I see that something must be done. I can bear this myself, but then" (and here his voice grew notably unsteady), "it is too hard to feel that the neglect of the people is pressing so severely upon *you*, Mary; I never thought it would have come to this, otherwise I could not have had the heart to"—

Precisely how the Rev. Marmaduke Walton would have ended, we cannot now say, nor is it at all necessary, for, as her husband's thought gradually approached its perfect statement, Mrs. Walton's countenance lost its fixed expression, and rising from her seat she came, her eyes swimming with tears, and broke off the sentence by laying her head upon his shoulder.

"Don't say *that*, Marmaduke; it is too hard for *you*," were Mrs. Walton's first words when she gained her voice. The brave, tender-hearted creature, true to the traditions

of a noble womanhood, was now completely lifted out of herself. So Marmaduke agreed not to say "that," whatever "that" may have been, and they sat down to consider the situation; which was one that even grumpy old Uncle Morton would have hastened to relieve, however much it may have been relished; not only by himself, but by Mrs. Walton's brother, a purse-proud creation of Uncle Morton's, who, having opposed his sister's marriage, now managed, not without effort, to maintain a civil bearing towards the Rector; yet improving any opportunity that might occur, to say for the benefit of his sister, "I told you so."

Long did the Rector of Roxburgh confer with his wife, but without any practical result. It was the solemn conviction of both that the people were exceedingly mean, and Mrs. Walton expressed her further convictions in the declaration that the parish *must* be "*stirred up*."

"But," replied Marmaduke, with a ghostly smile, "haven't I stirred the parish up? Have you forgotten my sermon about the eagle and her nest?"

"By no means," was the reply, the wife's face suddenly lighting up with a glow of satisfaction. To tell the truth, that was one of the Rector's crack sermons, and he knew it. So did Mrs. Walton; who, at its conclusion, took her husband's arm and walked across the lawn to the rectory, conscious of the fact that Marmaduke's talents on that beautiful Sunday were the subject of general admiration. The next morning, likewise, Judge Bosworth leaned over the fence in front of the garden where Mrs. Walton was inspecting the flowers, and paid the Rector a very high compliment, which was an unusual thing for the Judge; but, if the discourse *did* cause that functionary to use a little more care in attending to his parish dues, the majority of the congregation were entertained by the Rector's oratory, rather than effectually "stirred up." Mrs. Walton, herself, notwithstanding her high opinion of the sermon, was finally convinced by the non-payment of the Rector's salary, that nothing radical had been accomplished. So there they sat, disconsolate, side by side, the parish finances almost a wreck, and neither knowing what to do.

Suddenly there was a quick knock at the study door, and immediately Janet exhibited her head and arm, saying, "A letter, please, sir." Mr. Walton's spirits at once revived. Indeed it was a peculiarity of his to be excited on the subject of correspondence; and, of late, the receipt of a letter filled his mind with a vague hope. The ravens fed the prophet in the desert; and perhaps, he thought, God would, by-and-by, send a raven to *him*. Letters bearing the postmark of the metropolis always had a special interest. And with good reason, too, because, forsooth, did not old Peter Bullion, a vestryman of one of the wealthiest parishes in Boston, say once, when spending a few weeks in Roxburgh, that a man of his ability should not be buried in a country town? Bullion shook his head, too, as if he knew more than he saw fit to say; and insinuated that there would ere long be a vacancy at St. Goldfrid's. And Bullion was no flatterer. This, perhaps, was why letters from Boston were opened with an uncommon interest.

And why shouldn't he have a "call"? Yet this letter which the Rector held in his

hand was certainly *not* from Boston. Mrs. Walton shared his disappointment, when this was apparent.

Now Mrs. Walton was ready, as we have seen, to share the lot of her husband anywhere. Nevertheless, did she not sometimes dream of a beautiful rectory in the city, on a noble avenue, where her own roof-tree would rise by the side of the towering church? Of course, she did not suppose that she would be any *happier* there than in the tasteful rectory of St. Mark's; yet, how much she desired the position for Marmaduke! Accordingly, her feelings were visibly dampened when it turned out that the postmark was not Boston. But then the elegant Dashaways, whom she met in Roxburgh last summer, were in New York, and vague hints had likewise been dropped by *them*. And when, therefore, after a lengthy examination, Mr. Walton decided that the postmark, though blurred and indistinct, was that of New York City, they both indulged in a momentary prospect of a solution of their financial difficulties in that distant commercial centre. Mrs. Walton's uncle was living there, too; yet the address was not the handwriting

of Uncle Morton. It had an ecclesiastical appearance.

These thoughts, so tardily penned, nevertheless passed quickly through the mind of the Rector and his wife, and then the letter was opened. It *was* from New York, but it had no connection with the hint dropped by the Dashaways. It was simply a letter from one of the directors of the missionary society; who, after dilating upon matters in general, went on to say, "the society needs, in order to meet present engagements, not less than \$20,000, the quarterly stipends of the missionaries already being over due, and all are suffering great embarrassment from the failure of the Committee to meet its engagements. By referring to the reports of the society, we find that St. Mark's Church has, during the last twenty years, made only two contributions for the support of our great work, and that the last collection was made fifteen years ago. May we not, therefore, look to you and your parish for a contribution at an early day, in aid of the cause," etc. etc.

The opening sentence of this letter swept away all of Marmaduke Walton's dreams, and

when he reached the end his disappointment almost passed into disgust. With a slightly petulant gesture, he flung the letter upon the table. Mrs. Walton, with a clouded brow, rightly argued that it was neither a legacy nor a "call ;" but the vexation of the morning having passed away, she rallied at once, and, in the sweet, clear tones which had never lost their early charm, said, "Well, Marmaduke?" The latter replied by handing her the missive, which she read from beginning to end with no change of countenance except at the words, "the last collection was made fifteen years ago," a statement that caused a slight expansion of her eyes, and a queer pursing up of the mouth.

It was now the Rector's turn, who said, "Well, Mary?" Mrs. Walton replied by slipping her arm under her husband's, and drawing him through the pretty little French window of the study out upon the gravel walk, and thence along the well-trimmed lawn bordered with box and roses, the care of which afforded the Rector of Roxburgh great pleasure. The sweet summer air seemed to revive his spirits, yet his mind was evidently

brooding over his troubles. He could not understand why he should be thus harassed, when he was faithfully endeavoring to do his work. Finally, as the best of men have done in all ages, he broke out in a general complaint against the ordering of life, forgetting which class it is that has its good things in this life, and imagining, for the time, that the plan of life was one that might be greatly improved.

In response to his murmurings Mrs. Walton said little, though she felt much. At last, as they walked among the shrubbery, the declining sun passed behind the Church of St. Mark's, which flung its shadow far and wide over the garden and lawn, whose green livery assumed a dark and sombre aspect, while the spire of St. Mark's, tipped with the hallowed cross, now bathed in the sunset sheen, burned with fires of gold.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed the Rector's wife.

"What, Mary?" was Walton's reply, being thus drawn from a momentary fit of abstraction.

"The spire, the cross—see!"

"Yes, beautiful, beautiful," was his reply, on looking up, thoroughly aroused by the sight.

"Of what does it remind us?" asked Mrs. Walton, who had been reading Tauler.

"Tell me."

"Of this: That what is dark *below* is bright *above*."

Marmaduke Walton's eyes, looking down into those of his wife, told his thankfulness for the timely lesson thus delicately conveyed; and drawing closer the arm resting so trustingly in his own, he walked toward the rectory, saying in a calm and now assured tone: "Yes, I suppose it is right; we shall know all above, hereafter." The Rector of St. Mark's was himself again. And yet there was no great mystery about the matter, as we shall eventually see. If the case might have appeared dark to *them*, there were those who could have explained everything on the spot. But the Rector of Roxburgh had something to learn, and, therefore, we shall here decline to give the dramatic surprise with which the purveyors of a well-known class of literature turn the flank of

want, and invariably bring the suffering saint out of disaster, proving thereby, in defiance of truth, that goodness in this world is always a remunerative thing.

Yet, while positively declining, in this emergency, to introduce rich Uncle Morton with a roll of bank bills, or the leading members of a repentant parish showing works meet for repentance in the form of a check for arrears, with a solid donation; and much less rewarding the badly-used divine with a ten-thousand dollar call to New-York—we may, nevertheless, allow the Rector of Roxburgh one substantial alleviation, in accordance, too, with nature: for, as Mr. Walton and his wife neared the porch of their residence, after the conference in the open air, a little girl of seven or eight summers darted through the open gate, and came flitting across the lawn, arrayed in bright holiday attire. The fairy-like creature seemed hardly to touch the ground, so light and easy were her motions. Seen in the distance, in contrast with the carpet of green, one might easily imagine that he saw a large butterfly. But a closer examination devel-

oped the face of the beautiful child, with her long, golden hair, violet eyes, and finely marked intelligent features, that bore every indication of perfect health. Whoever had seen the Rector's wife, would recognize at a glance the wonderful likeness of the daughter. In most respects, she was the mother in miniature. The same resemblance was noticeable in the tone of the child's mind, already characterized by sweetness, gentleness and trust, combined with a resolute spirit and recognized strength.

"Oh, papa!" shouted the little maiden, as she advanced, "we've had such splendid fun!" and thereupon proceeded to inaugurate more, by tossing herself into her father's arms, a confused mass of millinery and hair. Escaping at last from his embrace, Eva Walton repeated the performance with her other self, only with this difference, that at the end of her frolic she nestled gently for a moment in her mother's arms, thus telling so truly who *was* the mother. Marmaduke himself, in the mean while, looked on with the keenest delight, the thought of unpaid dues being quite effectually banished, and the wrinkles smoothed out of his brow. As the trio en-

tered the trellised porch, around which the soft evening air was faint with the fragrance of the rose, Janet rang the bell, and they went in to tea. And what an elegant room was that when the board was spread. If St. Mark's, Roxburgh, was just a little bankrupt, no one would have discovered it there. What a wonderful thing is a woman, especially when she combines all Mary's rapt zeal with Martha's thoughtful care.

### CHAPTER III.

#### Searchings of Heart.

"He who had so aduanced vs is our witness, how we both day and night, euoluing in our minds, did cogitate nothing more than how to satisfie the partes of a good pastour, in attending the health and care of the flocke."

FOX'S MARTYRS.

ON the evening of the day which included the events detailed in the previous chapter, Marmaduke Walton and his wife were seated in the study, where the afternoon's conference was held. They were now, moreover, engaged in a very pleasant general conversation. The debts to which Mrs. Walton alluded on her first introduction to the reader had not, indeed, been discharged, yet a load seemed to have been removed from their hearts. The original *magnitude* of a trouble is, after all, not the chief thing. Its weight depends upon the manner in which we bear it. It is in our power to make it more or less. With the maintenance of a right spirit, every

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trouble experiences an enormous shrinkage. In certain alembics, the crude things of life get pretty thoroughly distilled. Hence, when, in the course of their conversation, something was said which led the Rector of Roxburgh to refer to the financial situation, Mrs. Walton treated the matter as one of little consequence after all. Yet the Rector was alive to the necessity of meeting the issue, and finally said :

"But you know, Mary, that I cannot allow you to be troubled about the matter."

"Indeed, I am *not* troubled ; the debts can stand."

"Of course, no one will *inconvenience* us on that score."

"No, and who is there in Roxburgh that would even *ask* the Rector of St. Mark's to pay a bill ? No one, I am sure."

"And why not ?"

"Because, oh—because."

"Because what, my dear ?" persisted the Rector, with a semi-amused expression upon his face.

"Because, well—because, if I must say so, we can't pay, at least *every* day ; people know it."



"Exactly," replied the Rector, with just a little of the afternoon's fever returning for the moment. "If I knew that I *could* pay *any* day, nothing would trouble me ; as it is, these parishioners of ours, by their neglect, push me into the position of a beggar."

"But, Marmaduke, you know that this is not *your* fault," said Mrs. Walton, in that deep, sympathizing tone that always went straight to her husband's heart. "If you do your duty, the blame must lie with the people. You know that with *your* talents in any other profession it would be easy to win a competence. But you have chosen the service of the Church, and of our Lord, who, when upon earth, had not where to lay His head. Ours is the common lot. You might do differently. You have made a voluntary sacrifice, and the people know it. They respect you accordingly. No man stands higher than you do to-day in Roxburgh."

As she uttered these last words her face shone with delight ; for she expressed a literal truth, and a wholesome one, too, for Marmaduke Walton in his present fit of self-depreciation.

"Still, unpaid bills trouble me," averred the Rector.

"But they don't trouble the people of St. Mark's Parish," replied Mrs. Walton, laughing, and still endeavoring to push those sinners well up to the front ; "the people of the parish are the ones to feel ashamed."

"And that is the worst of it," was the reply of Mr. Walton, still essaying to be cheerful, "that is the worst of it. They *ought* to be ashamed, but they are not. It often seems as though parishes were like ordinary corporations, for instance, like some of those here in Roxburgh, which have no souls. These people owe me money, the lack of which, they very well know, causes great inconvenience and mortification. Yet they care nothing whatever about it, and let things drift month after month, while I am positively annoyed by the sight of my creditors on the street."

"Still, Marmaduke, don't you really feel persuaded that I am right, and that the consequences should be left to go along with the *cause*?"

"I suppose, my dear, I am *persuaded*, if not

*convinced*," was Marmaduke's reply, making a distinction with a difference, and rising from his seat and leaning over the back of his wife's chair, looking down into the clear depths of her upturned violet eyes, which met his own, now sparkling with a mixture of love and fun.

"Oh, go long, Marmaduke," said Mrs. Walton, with a pretty attempt at indignation, but in a tone which indicated that she meant no such thing, the command simply serving to prove that the wife had not forgotten girlhood's days. So Marmaduke didn't "go along," but stood his ground, leaning closer and closer, until his lips touched his wife's brow. Finally, with a half lover-like reluctance, he returned to his own chair, when Mrs. Walton said :

"Now, Marmaduke, you *men* think that women are very illogical."

"I am afraid that we do, my dear," said Marmaduke, with a merry twinkle in his eye ; for, while the Rector of Roxburgh revered his wife, and regarded her as a noble type of womanhood, he trusted her *intuitions* rather than her logic, a very safe rule to follow, with

well nigh all the sex, which, by the aid of a sort of heart-inspiration, loves to leap to conclusions, rather than to reach them by the way of the syllogism ; many of which conclusions, however, being far more desirable than the ends often arrived at by the strong man in strict sympathy with Aristotle. Therefore it was that he could safely impugn his wife's reasoning. But it is one thing to make a suggestion, and another to secure its due effect. Therefore Mrs. Walton experienced no difficulty in going back, to set forth the case in accordance with the dictates of common sense, if not in consonance with a severe logic. The substance of it was, that those should be ashamed who have something to be ashamed of. In this whole business, the *parish* was to blame. He, Marmaduke Walton, had consecrated himself to the service of the Church, and, whatever might be the incidental inconveniences of his calling, he had no reason for feeling mortified, and might hold up his head anywhere. And, to tell the truth, he *did*. Moreover, Mrs. Walton said so on this occasion. Still she could but confess the practical difficulty that stood in the way of the mainte-

nance of a right feeling. It might appear very reasonable that the consequences should be linked with the cause, yet whatever might be the force of this conclusion, it was not strong enough to lift the weight that daily oppressed the Rector's heart.

But by this time both were tired of the discussion, especially as neither inclined to argue. Both, in all such matters, were wont to *confer*. Therefore, after sitting in silence a little while, plying her needle, Mrs. Walton went up to the nursery to look at Eva, and ascertain if she was nestling comfortably in her crib. In the mean while the Rector of St. Mark's settled himself in his chair, and began to study the situation, considering how he should effectually "stir up" the people.

And while he gives himself to a quiet hour, let us endeavor, from what we have seen of the case, to attempt a diagnosis.

The Reverend Marmaduke Walton, some years before, had graduated at a musty old theological seminary which, at that time, was not particularly distinguished for the breadth and generosity of its thought; and the most

of the Alumni unconsciously fell into the notion that, in a certain sense, at least, it was the chief business of a clergyman to look after his own interests; a principle which, perhaps, we need not quarrel with at all, in the case of those who comprehend *where their interests lie*. But all do not. The students of the seminary in question were taught to take serious, but not *large* views on the subject of ministerial duty and usefulness. An overpowering centripetal force was ever present in the circle of seminary thought, and, under systems which repressed expansion at every point, a wealth and liberality of soul was seldom known. Hackneyed forms on the subject of Christian giving, for instance, were sometimes heard within the seminary halls, but the matter was not *applied*. The thinking was not full, and the practical theology was defective. The poorly-endowed professorships, too, were often knocked about in games of ecclesiastical foot-ball, and thus the students were with difficulty taught what was the great palpitating nerve of Christianity. So it came to pass that the parish was the objective point of thought, while systematic beneficence, and

kindred activities were lost amid schemes of pastoral theology and bald historical truth. The old seminary walls had never rung with the tones of broad, liberal, comprehensive thought. Its thinking was the thinking of a dead, mouldy past, fostering selfishness instead of self-sacrifice. Forth from this unsymmetrical and unbalanced system, Marmaduke Walton went to his struggle with the world, being, it is true, devout and reverential in mind, and devoted to his duty, so far as it was comprehended in the round of his thought. He gave his best efforts to his work, and performed the duties of his office with conscientious zeal. He had now been three years in his present field, and one result of his labors has already been indicated by the collapse of the parochial purse.

But though thus far Mr. Walton's financial vexations have had a prominent place in this sketch, no one should suppose that he was a selfish man, or that he placed an undue estimate upon money. There was no penuriousness in his composition. If a selfish man, he would, perhaps, have carried his talents into another vocation. On the contrary, he

sought, not his own, but his people's good. In his wife, daughter and parish, all his thought was bound up. He would endure almost anything for the sake of either one of this sacred trio.

Yet we have to notice this, that, while Marmaduke Walton was thoroughly devoted, the force of his devotion sought the centre instead of the circumference of things. His beat was hemmed in by narrow bounds. He went through his duties displaying an unquestioned ability and zeal, but, after all, it left a bankrupt parish on his hands. And at the end of his efforts, he was left to wonder what could be the matter.

At the last anniversary of the County Agricultural Society, he delivered the customary address. In the course of this address, he not only dwelt upon the dignity and the blessings of labor, but insisted upon large and liberal views on the part of the agriculturalist. Forcibly contrasting the success of the present as compared with agriculture in the past, and showing that this large success was mainly the result of a more liberal system, he exhorted the farmer to look far beyond his own

farm, to encourage the literature of farming, to endow schools for the study of applied chemistry, and to take a constant practical interest in the success of his calling in every part of the world.

The vast audience, clustered around the canopied platform, enthusiastically caught the idea, and at the end of the peroration filled the air with deafening applause. At the close of the day the Reverend Marmaduke Walton rode home to Roxburgh, complacently meditating upon the largeness of his own views, not to mention the eloquent and successful manner in which he had set them forth.

And yet how very different was this from the policy which he was at present pursuing in connection with his parish, where he was attempting to pursue a sort of spiritual husbandry. As will be seen in the sequel, the same principle that rules in one case applies in the other ; and therefore, are we at all hasty in forming the conclusion that the eloquent, cultured, far-sighted, aye, and long-suffering, Rector of Roxburgh supplied in his own person an illustration of the case which he had

presented in his address, of the narrow-minded farmer who painfully cultivated his own little patch of ground, always selfishly keeping within his own pale. But of all this we shall have more to say by and by. In the mean while we leave him sitting in his study chair, distressed by the prospect held out by the financial situation, and dreading wondering what he could or should do.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Created Doctor.

4 "For doctor he is ynowne  
And of Scripture the Skyful."

PIERS PLOUGHMAN.

"O when degree is shaken  
Which is the ladder to all high design  
Then enterprise is sick."

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

ONE day, while affairs were progressing pretty much as usual, the Rector leading a perplexed and harassed life, he was overtaken by a genuine surprise. This surprise, however, cost him a pang. Let us therefore tell what it was that formed the surprise, and how it came about.

The announcement which so completely filled him with astonishment was conveyed through the medium of a document printed in Latin, declaring, substantially, that the person named therein was very much superior to the great majority of his ministerial brethren. Having for some time past confined himself

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to the English instead of the Latin classics, Marmaduke, or—for we humbly beg the Rabbi's pardon—the Reverend Doctor Walton, had some little difficulty in discovering what it was all about; but finally, after persevering, he came out flushed and triumphant, that is, over the Latin.

But the reception of the missive itself, as we have intimated, was not an unmixed pleasure. The letter came in a large, long, ecclesiastical-looking envelope, the post mark of which was stamped in letters unmistakably clear. It was not, and he knew it at a glance, from rich, stuffy, old Mr. Bullion, asthmatic from Boston's east winds. It was from New York. Its very aspect excited the profoundest hopes.

"It *must* be a call," was his inward conviction, while a *Te Deum* was involuntarily rising to his lips. The time had certainly come for a good man, suffering adverse fortune, to receive his reward. Yes, it was from New York, the Mecca of American clergymen, towards which many a distant toiler now longingly lifts his eyes, and which many an ambitious country priest one day hopes to reach; that

Mecca where no ecclesiastical pilgrim ever comes to want, where life is filled up with days of luxurious ease, and where even every curate, happy and honored in his splendid metropolitan existence, finds his pudding abounding in plums. Again, therefore, the discontented Rector of Roxburgh asked himself why it should not be. Why should others be taken and he left?

This envelope bore a monogram which he knew to be the peculiar emblem of a well-known, wealthy and flourishing up-town church. In fact he was *sure* of his point, and, with breathless haste, he tore open the missive, which, however, did not inform him that he had been elected to the incumbency of St. Softphronosius' Church, with a rectory and ten thousand a year. It contained the information already given, conveyed with many typographic and chirographic flourishes on imitation parchment paper.

"Well," said the Rector to his wife, when he had recovered from his hallucination, "it's better than nothing."

"A *great deal* better than nothing," was the reply, the beautiful violet eyes expanding

with wonder, and exhibiting a couple of heavens under the influence of the Rector's astounding indifference; "yes, a *great* deal better than nothing," Mrs. Walton repeated. In fact she was profoundly gratified. It was true that her husband was still quite a young man. Of course *her* husband must be young; yet she remembered others equally young and not half so deserving, who had received the honor. On the whole, she was not at all surprised.

Yet the Rector of Roxburgh *was* surprised, and he asked himself what he had really done to merit such notice from a university. Perhaps he had done as much as many men of double his years who had received the degree; and yet he remembered the contempt which the action of a certain college inspired by conferring a doctorate upon Sugden, of Bowville, who could hardly handle the stock phrases from the Fathers, and who, for half a century past, had given his best efforts to the task of driving the fumes of tobacco through and through the air cells of his light corky brain.

Now if the Rector of Roxburgh had been

less conscientious, his pride would have pointed to other and very different considerations. But he was a true man. He felt an instinctive hatred for sham. Therefore it was that he asked himself again, what he had really done above others to deserve such distinction, and to be called Rabbi. He knew very well that his studies had not been characterized by any unusual breadth or depth. It was true, that in some departments he was a very fair scholar, while every product of his mind proclaimed the man of cultured thought. Besides, he had never aimed at deep and varied scholarship. He believed that there was a place in the church for pastors, as well as theologians, and he made a specialty of parochial work, without departing at all from pulpit preparation.

The Rector of Roxburgh was really an admirable preacher. Yet he was fond of outdoor work, and looked faithfully to the sick and the poor. In fact, he had never even dreamed of getting himself up for a Doctor of Divinity. Now there was his venerable friend, and almost father, the Rector of Merton, who had devoted his entire life to close and

absorbing theological study. He was as familiar with the original tongues of the Scriptures as with the English. Though modest and unassuming in his bearing, and careful to abstain from anything like a parade of learning, he was, nevertheless, a sort of walking encyclopedia. His large and comprehensive mind was a library in itself, arranged with extreme care, and ready for instant use. The Rector of Merton was, in fact, by his large attainments in Biblical learning, more than competent to fill the most requiring theological chair. Why not, then, confer a doctorate upon Mr. Thornley, at whose feet he, the Rector of Roxburgh, so often sat? Could he, Doctor Walton, ever occupy that Pauline position again? How could he give up his Gamaliel? Still he was a "Doctor of Divinity." Inwardly, he feared that he might have some trouble with his honors. Yet, with his knowledge of his dear old friend, the Rector of Merton, he could not forecast anything more than a benevolent smile, however much he feared that some of the clergy might carp, and hold forth on the affront that even the



Rector of Roxburgh felt was being put, in these days, upon sound learning. In reality, he was tempted to decline the degree on the spot. He desired preferment, but not preferment of this kind, at least just now. Still, on reflection, he thought it would hardly do to decline the diploma. Above all he was puzzled to know how it had come about. As for Swellville, the seat of the distinguished university, whose honors he was invited to wear, he did not recal the place. But the mystery was cleared up by the next mail, which brought a letter bearing the same monogram that adorned the previous but larger missive. Its receipt threw him again into a state of nervous excitement which Mrs. Walton shared. While he held the letter in his hand, before breaking the seal, thoughts sufficient to fill a chapter rushed through his mind. Of course, the letter had something to do with the doctorate, and both had been inclosed in the superfine stationery of the vacant up-town parish, already alluded to. Possibly *this* letter contained a *call*. The vestry may have managed the matter of the doctorate with

reference to this action, it readily occurring to his mind that the erudite shopkeepers and opulent brokers of St. Softphronosius would consider it incompatible with their high standing to deal with anything less than a "D.D." It was therefore with no little expectation that he broke the seal. But his hopes only suffered fresh pangs. It was *not* a call. The letter was from a friend in New York, who wrote to say that the diploma had been forwarded, he having, "as a compliment," used his influence with his associates on the Board of Trustees of Swellville University to have him "created" a Doctor of Divinity. Having finished reading the letter he dropped it upon the table in utter disgust. Still the letter was the hearty and polite communication of an old friend, a man of the world, who thought he was doing a kind and handsome thing. The Rector was stung by the unconscious sarcasm, saying within himself, "created," "as a compliment." So completely was he absorbed that he almost forgot the presence of his wife.

"What now, Marmaduke?" sympathizingly asked that individual. In reply, he handed

her the letter, which she read with evident satisfaction, even though it did not concern the matter of which her husband had so often dreamed.

"No call *there*, Mary," he observed despondingly, when she had finished.

"That is true, Marmaduke ; but it was certainly very kind of your old friend, Harry Wilton, and *very* complimentary."

At this last word, a shadow darted across the young Doctor's countenance, passing away with an inward groan.

"Marmaduke, you are not well !" nervously exclaimed Mrs. Walton, at once noticing the expression upon his face.

"O yes, I am," he replied with an attempt at a little gayety. Still he was both sorry and glad that his wife did not feel the sting of terms so hateful and well-nigh infuriating in such a connection ; and therefore, in the divided state of his mind, he resolved not to explain ; in all of which he acted very wisely, as there are always some things which a man may withhold from his dearest friend, however much he may desire a confidant. Therefore, he put on a cheerful aspect, and, after some

general observations with reference to the letter of Wilton, who had but lately taken up his residence in New York, he concluded by saying merrily, "Well, anyway, Mary, you know that I'm a doctor."

"Yes, though you will never be anything to me but Marmaduke, dear *Marmaduke*," said the wife, rising, and flinging her arms in a girlish way around her husband's neck, looking up at the same time into his eyes.

Marmaduke was an odd name, to be sure, yet it was just as much to her now as it was of old, when she learned it leaning upon her lover's arm, as she walked under the apple blossoms in her father's garden. Such words from his wife were worth more to the Rector of Roxburgh than many academic degrees, even then coming to be very recklessly scattered about by institutions like that of Swellville, which often take this method of informing the public of their existence. Yet, however much Mrs. Walton may have been pleased by the honor thus unexpectedly offered, she was a woman of sterling sense, and therefore made no allusion to "the Doctor" the first time a visitor called.

But while the people in the Rectory were silent, and the Doctor himself was secretly considering if he might decline the "compliment" altogether, the action of the trustees of Swellville University was duly reported in town, and the *Roxburgh County Gazette*, unwilling to miss a "local," proceeded forthwith to sound the young divine's fame. This was accomplished in such persuasive and well-put paragraphs, that the Rector himself receded somewhat from his original position, and began to feel that Swellville had, after all, done a very judicious thing. He even went so far as to consider what he could *do* for Swellville, and meditated a donation of books from his own scanty library, with something better when he should begin to reap advantages that might after all accrue from the honors which he now blushingly bore. Very likely Swellville itself had such contingencies in view.

As might be expected, the articles on the Doctorate in the *Gazette* had the effect of sending a flock of parishioners to the Rectory with congratulations. The Rector was an admirable preacher, and a rather popular man

in town, and his parishioners, of course, thought it all very right and proper. Besides, it helped the parish, and gave it more consequence in the eyes of all. "Doctor Walton" sounded well, so did "Doctor Walton, of St. Mark's." They also hoped it would make things easier in the parish.

"A compliment, a fine compliment, 'pon my word, Doctor Walton!" exclaimed the rich, self-important Mr. Dorsey, when he dropped in, as he, being the senior warden, was accustomed to do; and he, of course, considered his own opinion as vital.

The word "compliment" made the honest Rector feel just a little sick again, yet he was getting used to the hollowness of the whole business, and was, moreover, comforting his conscience with resolutions which, if carried out, would, in the end, make him, in reality, a deeply-learned man. Certain it was, that thenceforth he took more care with his sermons than ever before. He had an increased reputation to sustain. Still, strange to say that, with an increase of honors, there was no visible growth of prosperity. Nothing was done about the church debt, and the salary was in

arrears as ever. The doctorate did not amount to much, financially, after all, while he had frequently to endure the sly thrusts of brethren who knew a great deal more than himself.

## CHAPTER V.

### *Light Breaking.*

"Shall the shadowe go forward ten degrees, or go back agayne ten degrees. And Hezekiah saide it is a light thinge for the shadowe to go downe ten degrees, therefore I wyl not that : but let the shadowe go backward ten degrees."

BIBLE, 1551.

IT was now the Rector's third year in Roxburgh, and, as we have seen, things had not essentially improved, while the treasurer of St. Mark's still told the old story about the depleted parish purse. In fact, the townspeople were already beginning to wonder why he had not already, like his predecessors, been starved out ; while there was little or no spiritual fruit. The first year, the Bishop visited the parish immediately after the Rector's arrival, when there were no candidates. The next year, only four or five came forward to receive Confirmation, while the Rector now anticipated the third visitation with uneasiness and chagrin. He really

began to think that he should be obliged to institute a more ornate service, and thus "stir up" the people. How, indeed, would a choir of surpliced boys do, with some processionalists, and perhaps early services, altar lights, and various other devices; none of which, however, met final approval with his judgment. The Bishop would not approve, and beside, however great the fondness of people everywhere for the objective and dramatic, he might go too far, and cause an explosion. Above all things, he wished to avoid occasion for dissension, he being eminently a man of peace. He could not sacrifice the tranquillity of the parish, on any account. It was a thing not to be thought of. Affairs were therefore, as we have seen, in all respects at a low ebb, and it was with great difficulty that he could find teachers for the few scholars in the Sunday-school, who, oddly enough, he thought, could not be interested in the subject of the church debt, so that his penny collections, instituted after a careful estimate of the amount "certain to be raised," grew small by degrees, then beautifully less, and finally were forgotten. It is true that the seniors in the

congregation favored the idea in connection with the children. It was a happy, vicarious sort of arrangement, and one that would save an inroad upon their bank-notes. Yet the illusion was finally dispelled, and, at last, some openly expressed the opinion that "children didn't amount to much, after all." They must be wonderful children, indeed, whose zeal could flourish in the atmosphere of selfishness breathed by the Parish of St. Mark's.

Of course, there was somebody to be blamed beside the people of the parish, and hence we have not thus far sympathized much with the estimable Rector of St. Mark's. And yet the people deserved severe censure. They were able to do far differently, and, like most parishes in the older portions of the country, had abundant means of providing suitably for the services of religion. Nevertheless, they maintained that penurious policy which to-day is driving away the best class of candidates from the ministry of the Church, leaving their places to be supplied in many instances by feeble drones, elevated to the sacred office by the pitiable doles of eleemosynary insti-

tutions. The Church is evidently pursuing a fatal policy.

In these days, the expense of living has come to be heavy, and when young men look forward to the future they know not how to take so important a step as the preparation for the priesthood implies. The offer of a free education does not answer, when the question of adequate life-long support immediately follows. And hence the number of able clergymen is small, while all other professions are crowded.

It may be said that "such as hesitate are hirelings," and that men should enter the ministry regardless of their personal prospects; yet, nevertheless, men must live, and talented men will be repelled from a course of life which, in an enlightened land, subjects them to perpetual injustice. Look for the martyr spirit among the martyrs, and not among boys, nor even brave boys. We are to take the world as we find it, instead of demanding that in others which we are not willing to give. If we want an abundance of cattle on a thousand hills, we must provide pasturage to supply their wants. But the

people of Roxburgh did not believe much in pasturage.

We have said, however, that St. Mark's was not alone to blame. Tell it not in Gath, but in some respect, the Rector was a blind leader of the blind. That person, therefore, first of all needed light. This was destined to come, for he was a progressive man, possessing abundant strength, manliness and courage, and ready, even at the cost of a large confession, to remedy what the observer has seen to be the evils of deficient training. The light, however, did not come at once, though he engaged from time to time in severe reckonings with himself. It will therefore be our next task to show how a revolution was brought about, a change whose successive stages were analagous to the growth of the blade, the ear, and the full ripe corn.

Early one evening the Rector sat in his easy chair in his study, turning over the leaves of a volume containing the proceedings of the Roxburgh County Agricultural Society, while Mrs. Walton occupied an ottoman near him, engaged with her needle; little Eva, the mean while, nestling at her mother's side,

poring over the wonderful pages of a volume of *The Chatterbox*, the book being nearly buried amid the loose locks of her long, golden hair. As Marmaduke Walton rambled on through various departments treating of the county crops, cereals and fruits, with timely suggestions on the subject of how to plant, graft, sow and reap, he came to his own production, the address delivered at the last anniversary, and which won such golden opinions. As he went through the leaves, conning here and there a sentence, or refreshing his mind with some particularly fine thought, he came to the following paragraph:

"How narrow the ideas, how unwise the policy of the nineteenth century farmer who gives exclusive attention to his own field! How fallacious the logic which argues perpetually **for** self! Confined to such limited bounds, the heart becomes alienated from progressive thought, and the intellect loses the stimulus that is imparted by the example of enterprise, while the withholding from the world at large the knowledge and experience which he has himself amassed constitutes an irreparable wrong, which, by a well-known

law of compensation, returns with an increased force to attack his personal interests. Let, then, every Roxburgh farmer feel that he belongs not to the borough, nor even to New England, but to the *world*. Let him sympathize with those engaged in his own calling, wherever the agriculturalist with an upright intention earns honest bread by the sweat of his brow. And at the same time let him give generous aid according to the measure of his personal power, confident in the high faith that in the effort to help others he will always elevate himself."

And with many more such wise words the public-spirited orator sought to impress upon his audience the demands of the age for mutual help and sacrifice.

"Well-turned sentences, those," thought Marmaduke Walton, with that feeling of paternal pride with which most men view their productions, deeming every duck a swan; "well-turned, and a timely embodiment, too, of an unimpeachable policy. Our farmers don't think enough of such things." And now, as he mused over his address, and the circumstances attendant upon its delivery, he

remembered the words of one individual, a stranger, who, among others, came forward to congratulate him, and who, after speaking of the pleasure with which he had listened to such enlightened views, remarked, in a slightly changed tone :

"I wonder that you don't get on faster in Roxburgh."

Marmaduke felt just a little puzzled, as well as annoyed, by the remark, but the next moment the stranger had gone, and in the excitement attendant upon the succeeding exercises, the remembrance of the remark passed away. But to-night, in his study, it returned. Once more, the stranger—a cultivated, commanding and scholarly man, appearing like some rusticated bishop in disguise—stood before him, and he heard again those words, "I wonder that you don't get on faster." What did it mean? Then followed a long season of profound cogitation, in the course of which he failed to notice the prattle of Eva, who had laid aside *The Chatter-box*, and was now gravely lecturing a great doll on the propriety of going to bed ; failed likewise to hear the direct address of Mrs.

Walton, when, bending busily over her work, she wrinkled her forehead to ask :

"Well, Marmaduke, what now?"

It will not be necessary to detail here the train of thought that passed through his mind, but the conclusion brought the words of Paul : "Ye are God's husbandry." At this stage, his hand, which had been raised in a confused way to his head, suddenly came down upon the great chair, while at the same time he drew a long breath of relief, with the general aspect of a man who had made up his mind. This huge breath caused Mrs. Walton to look up again, while Eva forgot her little homily and her doll. At last the Rector of Roxburgh spoke, his words and his countenance both expressing earnestness. He opened the following conversation :

"Mary,"

"Well, Marmaduke."

"Mary, don't you think we should prosper better, if we thought less about our own interests?"

At these words Mrs. Walton felt perfectly astonished, never more so perhaps in her life ; for the Rector's wife believed profoundly in



two things,—The Creed and her husband. In matters essential, it was really impossible for Marmaduke to err. And yet, what was this he was now saying? At last she spoke:

"You certainly don't mean *that*?"

"I certainly *do*!"

"You mean *me*, not *we*," Mrs. Walton being always ready to accuse herself.

"I mean *myself*, not you."

"Why, what possesses you, Marmaduke?" replied Mrs. Walton, now much concerned, "there isn't a person that I could mention who cares less for himself; and everybody knows that you are a perfect slave to the parish."

"*And that is just the trouble.*"

Mrs. Walton was now more puzzled than ever, and knew not what to say, and so (like a wise woman) she said nothing.

"Yes, Mary," the Rector finally went on to say, "I have been thinking too much of myself; that is, I have identified myself exclusively with the parish, and thought of nothing beyond the parish, absorbed in the aim to administer affairs so as to make the position of the parish comfortable. In so doing I have

been thinking only of myself, of my own interests."

"Oh, is that all?" was Mrs. Walton's reply, in a relieved tone, which indicated that the charge thus brought against himself was a trivial matter.

"Yes, that is all; and it is enough."

"But how thereby do you defeat yourself?"

"Why, just as a farmer defeats himself when he does everything in a small narrow way, and thinks only of his own farm."

"But we must take care of ourselves first."

"Is that the way in which the Church of Jerusalem was established?"

"Perhaps not."

"Is that the policy that was adopted by the Apostles?"

"Why, certainly not. They only *began* at Jerusalem; but you know that *we* are not Apostles, dear Marmaduke," the violet eyes here looking a triumph.

"But we have ended, as well as begun, in Roxburgh."

"Do you certainly think so?" was the again somewhat concerned reply.

"Let us ask ourselves, rather, what is the

*fact.* See that letter. There it lies just where it was dropped so long ago. It is unanswered, like many others of the same kind from missionary and other societies."

"What can they expect of us, here in Roxburgh? Is the sailor whose ship is sinking able to assist others?"

"But there is no analogy between this parish and a *sinking* ship. The church is always in danger, and yet always safe. We cannot sink, because One is with us, and will be to the end."

"Yes, Marmaduke, but let us be practical, and *take our own case.* How can we, for instance, undertake to help build missionary churches while our own house leaks so?"

"We must remember, Mary, that there are more reasons than one for leaky roofs. While some roofs leak because there is no money to buy shingles, others leak because the occupants have done nothing to encourage mill and lumber interests and pioneer enterprise. I really begin to believe that we have been thinking too much of ourselves, and too little of the welfare of the world at large. Science tells us that *everything grows in a solution of*

*itself*; and clearly the solution in which we have so long been immersed is that of *selfishness*. What, therefore, must the hearts of our people be most like? This parish is coming to be so much condensed selfishness, the solidification of the atmosphere in which it grows. For, remember, again, that everything grows in a solution of *itself*."

The look of triumph, which had sprung out of the feeling that she was vindicating, not herself, but her husband, now disappeared, and Mrs. Walton was sorely puzzled for a reply, and began to suspect that they had really been indulging in narrow views. And this suspicion gave her quite as much uneasiness as it did her husband. For, as we have seen, Mrs. Walton was of a chivalrous, disinterested disposition. Living in the seventh century, her unselfish heart, under the guidance of a pure and deep religious feeling, would have led her to go forth like Etheldreda the virgin Saxon Queen, on the mission of self-denial. Like the niece of Hilda of Whitby, she would probably have founded an abbey. But her lot was cast in more fortunate days, and, turning aside from the career in fashion-

able society which both her mind and person fitted her in an eminent degree to adorn, she became the wife of a quiet clergyman, in whose pursuits and interests she took the utmost delight. She had resolved in the beginning, which was no difficult task for one of her high moral purposes and complete devotion, to make common cause with her husband in every good work that he undertook, without regard to the cost. Yet, sympathizing as she did with Marmaduke, all her ideas had been bounded by the parish. The parochial relation was, to her mind, the most delightful of all. The term pastor she deemed exhaustive, as a definition of the most faithful performance. So Marmaduke had thought; and at the seminary they had "pastoral" theology in abundance. Still, as he finally came to realize, the head of a parish must be something more than a pastor, in order to illustrate the husbandry of God. But all this involved a confession, and Mrs. Walton was quite unwilling to believe that Marmaduke could be wrong. She could readily allow him to question her own logic, for like most women she had been accustomed to such

things; but for Marmaduke to arraign and condemn himself! That was a little too much; yet, by degrees the mind of both the Rector and his wife cleared, and one evening, when reading the *Task*, Marmaduke came to the following lines, and recited them aloud to his wife:

"The crowded roots demand enlargement now,  
And transplantation in an ampler space.  
Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply  
Large foliage, o'ershadowing golden flowers,  
Blown on the summit of the promised fruit."

"There," said the Rector, "that is just what St. Mark's wants—*transplanting*."

"How so—must it get up and move?"

"No, but it must be transplanted, at least relatively; fix itself in new, fresh and fructifying soil; have a new atmosphere."

Mrs. Walton caught at the idea with pleasure. Those were gracious words, indeed. The old atmosphere had become heavy enough. She was longing for a breath of something more bracing, a strong tonic, with sunshine bursting through the murky clouds. But then, "would *anything* wake up St. Mark's? Had not the hard-working Rector done all for this vineyard that he could do?"

Marmaduke was of the opinion that something very essential had been left *undone*. They wanted in the parish a spirit of liberality; and how had he treated the subject? To tell the truth, he had not treated it at all. When he came to examine his sermon record he was astonished to find how it had been overlooked. His studies in the matter of giving had been confined to a particular point, and the principles of liberality, the philosophy underlying the law of contribution, had been neglected. He had never even spoken of offerings as forming a part of divine worship, or of the high function of the soul in its aspect as a giver. In fact, he had been narrow and timid on the whole question; and he now realized that he must advance boldly, and plant himself by the side of the Apostles on the whole question of liberality, and teach the absolute duty of giving constantly, on principle, and according to individual ability. He had in reality been dallying with side issues, and he saw that he must temporize no longer, but take radical views, and thus get at the root of the whole matter.

"Why, Marmaduke, you will turn the parish upside down, and alienate all the people. I never suspected that you were so revolutionary."

"Yes, you are right; what I propose is a revolution."

"But then think of telling such a man as Mr. Dorsey, who owns well-nigh half the town, that he must give according to his ability. Why, if he did *that*," she said, with a slight slip in her logic, "he would have to pay off every debt of the church."

"Well, but you know, my dear, that Mr. Dorsey is not alone, either in his wealth or responsibility. Quite a number of our people are helping him to-day in this business of owning the town."

"That is true, and therefore there is so much the more danger of an explosion, and you know that you have always said that you would do anything to maintain peace."

So much Mrs. Walton said, not indeed with any intention of dissuading her husband, but for the purpose of sharply defining the serious difficulties that lay in the way. She knew that every administration must first be *pure*,

and afterwards peaceable. She would indeed have felt ashamed if her husband had been capable of shrinking from duty where the obligation was plain. When, therefore, the Rector of Roxburgh fully made up his mind, he had an enthusiastic ally in his wife.

But now how should he proceed? It was no easy matter here in Roxburgh (encrusted as was the whole parish with the accretions that accumulate in connection with fossilized thought) to break in upon the old order; and yet, it must be done. On this point he dwelt, expecting to see the way open.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *Right Shade.*

"Ye night shineth as the day; the darkness and light are both alike."  
BIBLE, 1553.

"There is a reaper whose name is death,  
And with his sickle keen  
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,  
And the flowers that grow between."

LONGFELLOW.

WHILE the thoughts of the Rector of Roxburgh were gradually assuming a practical shape, in accordance with what we may call his new views of parochial administration, a shadow fell upon his path, a shadow in comparison with which everything else appeared bright.

Now there are times in the experience of nearly every person, when the troubles and vexations of life seem grievous to bear, when every stroke of fortune appears adverse, and when the individual reaches the conclusion that the bottom of tribulation has been touched, or at least that one iota more of

sorrow could not possibly be borne. The Rector of Roxburgh and his wife, as we have seen from the opening chapters, already had, at times, a feeling something like this. From this feeling they indeed rallied, and yet the vexations of life continued sore, on account of their pecuniary embarrassment, which, as it bore so hard upon the Rector's wife, went in no small measure to embitter his own experience.

Doctor Walton cared nothing about himself, but when the burden fell upon *her*, he experienced a feeling something akin to exasperation. Perhaps he thought too much of this, and should have followed the suggestions of Mrs. Walton, who tried to throw off the feeling of mortification, and place the blame upon the parish. However that may be, Marmaduke Walton was destined to see the troubles which had hitherto clouded his life in the Rectory fade away into infinitesimal proportions. For one evening Mrs. Walton entered his study, saying :

"Marmaduke, Eva is not well to-night. She appears feverish. I wish you would step up and look at her."

This was a summons over which the Rector lost no time ; for, ascending the stairs hastily, in less than a minute he was by his child's side, kneeling over her crib, and holding her hot hands in his own. Mr. Walton was not an alarmist, and therefore he took an encouraging view of the case at once, agreeing with his wife that a physician was not necessary, and suggesting one of those simple and yet efficient remedies which a mother always has at command. An hour afterwards, Eva softly fell asleep, with beads of moisture on her brow, while her father, assured by these signs of relief, retired to his study, and buried himself in his books.

But the symptoms were deceitful ; and, when morning came, Eva lay struggling with disease, which evidently had taken hold of her brain. Dr. Montague, the Rector's parishioner and friend, a man of large experience and unquestioned skill, was at once called ; but when he saw the child's condition, his face assumed an anxious expression that it seldom wore, while his inquiries and observations were made in a way that indicated serious doubts. Finally he ended his exami-

nation, and decided on his mode of treatment for this, a well-defined attack of brain fever.

Thus the house became a hospital, while every resource was drawn upon in the general effort to disarm this terrible disease. But, for a while, all that was done seemed in vain, and Eva rapidly sank under the fever, until the patient little sufferer writhed in the agony of delirium, while the Rector and his wife waited and watched with hearts wrung by an anguish that no words can describe. At the end of a number of days, however, she began to revive, while consciousness returned, and, to their great joy, a look of recognition lighted up the depths of her eyes. With thanksgiving they now poured out their prayers for the life of their child; while Dr. Montague studied the symptoms anew, and gathered fresh faith to ply his skill. For a time there was hope, and the terrible cloud seemed on the point of lifting. But God had not so ordered. With the approach of nightfall, Eva's eyes lost their calm, assured light, and the delirium returned. Dr. Montague saw the prophetic change, and his countenance plainly told that there was no hope. The Rector looked the impersona-

tion of despair, and knelt with his wife by the side of the sufferer's bed, vainly studying to perform some act to mitigate her pain. All saw now that the end was nigh. Again, at the expiration of a couple of hours, Eva began once more to grow more quiet, until at last her little hot parched hands lost some of their heat and finally rested quietly on the bed. The fire had nearly burned out and done its dread work. Now a faint gleam of consciousness returned, and, with a smile, she received the kiss which her mother imprinted upon her lips. Then her eyes closed, and her head reclined peacefully upon the pillow as if she were in a trance.

"Almighty God, and merciful Father, to Whom alone belong the issues of life and death! Look down from heaven, we humbly beseech Thee, with the eyes of mercy upon"—

Thus far the sorrow-stricken man proceeded, and no farther, the prayer being strangled by grief. But now the lips of the dying child were seen to move, and soon she whispered:

"They are coming."

"Who are coming, darling?" gasped the mother, clasping her hands.

"The angels; I hear their wings! see! see!"

In the ghastly light of the low-burning midnight lamp, the appearance of Eva, pointing with her half-raised finger toward the invisible forms, was strikingly supernatural; and Dr. Montague himself, though long familiar with scenes like this, felt profoundly impressed with the belief that others were present besides the parents and the dying child. Yet Eva, with a vision now bathed in the immortal effulgence, saw eye to eye. Again she spoke, her face radiant with joy:

"Mother, hark, the music! They are here. I am going: good-bye."

At the last word her lips ceased to move, and they knew that she had gone. At the same instant Marmaduke wildly stretched out his hand above the bed, as if expecting to retain the spirit of his child; but he grasped only the thin air. Eva was indeed gone, gone with the Shining Ones that all now believed had been there.

In the morning, the bell from out the tower

of St. Mark's told the people of Roxburgh that the painless soul of Eva, the Rector's daughter, was now resting with God.

For the next two days within the darkened house there was an unseen, interior and secret gloom that only the bereaved parents could fathom; yet there was light in the midst of the darkness, and the sorrow was not unmixed with a solemn joy which strangely increased as the hour for the burial drew nigh, so that, when the Rector and his wife bowed at last near the chancel of St. Mark's, their minds had attained to a state of comparative peace.

The committal was performed at the cemetery, beautifully located beyond the immediate limits of the town, on the summit of a low hill overlooking one of New England's most lovely lakes, which at this time lay mute and motionless, and shining like the Apocalyptic sea of glass. The season of Autumn was now bordering on the period known as Indian Summer, called by the Acadian peasants The Summer of All Saints. And never had its phenomena appeared more marked than on this day. The pulseless air, the hazy sky, the fading foliage, the looming hills, the sleeping



lake,—all combined to give a supernatural effect to the landscape, and to tempt the sensitive soul, smitten with grief, and reaching out beyond the dividing vail of the flesh toward the loved and lost, to believe that, amid the inarticulate utterances of this holy season, it could hear the still small voice of God. Standing by the grave of their child, with the manifestations of nature interpreted and indorsed by the voice of the church, the Rector and his wife felt that, not only through the agency of ministering spirits but *by His own immediate Presence*, God was there. With holy confidence they listened to the declaration recited by the Bishop, "I heard a voice from heaven," etc., a declaration with which even nature was in sympathy; for, the listening air caught up the sound, and the rugged cliffs beyond the shining lake flung back the words, "*from heaven.*" The effect of this antiphon was only intensified by the hymn, so exquisitely sung at the close by the choir of St. Mark's. It was from the Rhythm of Bernard of Morlaix, celebrating the Christian's "happy retribution," of "short toil" and "eternal rest." "Rest," with quivering voice

sang the choir; "Rest," repeated the echoing hills; while Marmaduke's own heart took up the strain, and responded, "*Rest.*" It was a balm to his soul, and at last he returned to the silent rectory in peace, yet still questioning the meaning of their affliction. As they stepped from the carriage and crossed the lawn, the setting sun once more smote the tall tower of St. Mark's and played on the Cross with fires of gold, while below all was bathed in solemn shade. This time Marmaduke spoke:

"Look, the Cross; what is dark below is light above."

This time the lesson was taught with deep reason.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *A Certain Ploughman.*

"Here is a rural fellow."

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

"And now shall tell you who be the plowed; for God's word is a seede to be sown in God's field."

LATIMER'S SERMON OF THE PLOUGH.

"Does not the honest ploughman, whose strength is his whole estate, and his day's work his revenue, carry about with him as light a heart and as clear a breast as he who commands armies, or can call thirty-five millions his own?"

SOUTH.

THE time having now come to make the acquaintance of some of Dr. Walton's parishioners, let us leave the Rectory and get afield, simply observing that what follows belongs to the period closely connected with the Rector's bereavement.

"Well, Mr. Flint, I guess it's 'bout noon," said the younger of two Roxburgh farmers, as he left the oxen he had been driving standing in the furrow, and went and squinted laboriously along the shadow of a tree that he used for a sun-dial.

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### *A Certain Ploughman.*

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"I think so, too," said the elder, who stood behind the plough, leaning on the handles, "you always hit it about right."

The last speaker we have not met before, though he was a vestryman of St. Mark's; yet the former is easily recognized. The blue coat and brass buttons are wanting, but there is the earnest, frank and manly face of the outspoken person who told Dr. Walton that his missionary announcement was "just the thing." It is Ezekiel Cheever, who was also a member of the parish of St. Mark's.

Mr. Norman Flint and Ezekiel Cheever were both hard-working farmers—though the vestryman was somewhat advanced in years, and in good circumstances. Mr. Flint also had a better education, for Ezekiel's father had been able to give him few advantages, and when he was suddenly taken away, the son at once devoted himself to the care of his mother, with whom he lived on a small farm. Yet, while Ezekiel was inferior in certain respects, the vestryman was no match for him in strength of mind; and subjects exceedingly perplexing to the vestryman were handled by Ezekiel with a sort of intuitive ease.

Ezekiel had recently taken a farm near Mr. Flint's, and they now saw one another on other days than Sunday, when both with great regularity attended St. Mark's Church, notwithstanding it was full four miles away. They were also accustomed to lend one another a helping hand about their farms. They had accordingly been at work together to-day, breaking out a new piece of ground on Mr. Flint's "Snow-down" farm as he called it. But noon having come, they turned out the team, and sat down in the shade to eat their dinner which they had brought to the field. Consequently they had a chance to talk; for, during work, the cattle had occupied Ezekiel's attention, while the vestryman had to keep his eyes on the plough, which seemed endowed with a sort of intelligent depravity, and, instead of running smoothly, improved every chance to balk and shy.

As the conversation progressed, Church matters were mentioned, when Mr. Flint said to Ezekiel: "So you go to St. Mark's now; you have come to be as regular as any of us."

"B'lieve so," was the modest reply; "one

likes, also, to show a little feeling for the doctor, just *now*."

"Yes, that was a hard blow for him; and he don't seem to get over it. A great loss, but you don't know anything about it yet though. Still, as I was saying, I hardly expected that you would come to be one of us at St. Mark's."

"True," said Ezekiel, "true; I didn't expect it myself."

"I'm very glad it's so, any way; though I never knew how it come about."

"Well, it's a pretty long story. I wasn't brought up to the 'piscopal ways, you know. *You* was, so to speak, *born* so, while I was like the man whose liberty cost a great price. And so, p'haps, I think the more of it."

"We can hardly think too much of our privileges; but really I always wanted to know how it was."

This remark finally opened the way for Ezekiel, who went on to tell his story, which grew to quite a length. This, however, the reader shall hear:

"Well, you see, father was Congregational, and I wish I was half as good as *he* was, too."

"Yes, your father *was* an uncommonly good man; and, though I am a Churchman, I am not afraid to say it. It's my motto to give every man his due."

"Zactly," said Ezekiel, "it's no use of keepin' a peckin' all the time at your neighbor's religion. It isn't liberal. Still truth's *truth*. As I was sayin', father was Congregational; but I wasn't much of anything. I never took to his religion. I expect there was good in it, *else sharp folks wouldn't have paid for it*. Still, you know the old sayin' that what's one man's meat's another's pizen. Well, I couldn't stand *the decrees*, and when Elder Shumway, down at the Corners, preached them at me,—for mind he always preached *at* you,—I got riled up. If Elder Shumway, I said to myself, was right, what sort of bein' was He that made the world? Father tried to cool me down, and said, 'Zekiel, you'll understand it better by-and-by; but I said I warn't to understand it *now*; and father couldn't explain, no more than the minister himself. And so, under that kind of preaching I begun to grow a little hard. It made father look solemn, but I couldn't help it. It

warn't his fault. Now just about that time, one of the Lyceum folks from Boston come to the Corners to lecture, and I drove down to hear him, as they said he was smart. He made the folks look a little scary with his '*views*.' He said that the first man was an ape; that is, we was developed from apes, and he put on a sort of humble look, and thought we'd better not be ashamed of our genealogy. It was *scientific*. But he didn't tell us what the apes come from; maybe it *warn't* scientific to follow it up, and ask what them was that come before the apes, and what was before them, and so on. 'Spect he was afraid that he'd git round to the Scripture statement, that man was first made of a little dirt. But then, according to him, the Bible was wrong,\* miracles was impossible because, well, because

\* That this is a fair statement of the arguments against miracles will appear from an examination of the question in all its phases, from the time of Hume until now. It is declared that a departure from law is impossible, therefore the alleged miracles could never have taken place. The declaration that a departure from law (even if miracles involve that) is impossible, is simply an unscientific deduction, drawn from a few facts; a crude and unfounded generalization which *assumes* that the declarant is perfectly acquainted with all the laws of the physical world.

they *was* impossible ; and he didn't believe there was any God after all. I didn't see the weak points then, and was taken up with his ideas, as I thought it helped me to git red of the *decrees*, which I couldn't stand. It settled my mind ; though I didn't see, at the time, I was getting to feel *hard and unnatural*. Well, as I said, I was quite taken up for a time with the 'views,' but by and by it didn't seem such a fine thing after all that corn should be left to grow alone without any Creator. As for the juices he told about, what do *they* know ? Poor things to depend on, but I had got red of the decrees ! and so I didn't care much in the end ; and when the great sugar-maple that father was choppin' fell over and killed him, I thought more of the 'views' than ever. Ef there was a Supreme Power, such as Elder Shumway told about, why didn't he do things different, and leave a man to his family in a pinch, just when he was wanted ?"

In this respect, Hume and his long train of followers play the part of the charlatan, and beg the whole question ; offering us the childish argument that miracles are impossible, as Ezekiel puts it *because they are impossible*.

"Yes," put in Mr. Flint, "there are many things that we can't understand here."

"Jes so," said Ezekiel, "but I wanted to understand everything at once, without waiting to put this and that together ; and so, after the funeral, I begun to grow more hard, and didn't care to go to the Corners at all. So one Sunday mother was a settin' in her chair, with the big Bible open, reading. She seemed to read it mor'n ever now that father was gone ; and after she read she would set still and kinder look up in the air, in a strange sort of way, and then shut her eyes. She didn't seem to see me at all, and appeared taken up with some unnatural idee. It made me feel queer. Once I went, when she laid down the Bible, and I see that it was open at the last chapter but one, and when I read it I felt jest a leetle cold ; for, if the 'views' was true, the things told there was nothing to me. But I was a sayin', that on that Sunday mother set with the Bible, and after she had read a long while she said, 'Zekiel, I should like to go down to the Corners to meeting.' As I set there, I was a reading the *Agriculturalist*, and, without lookin' up, I said, 'Oh,

it's no use goin' to meeting, anyhow ; *I* don't b'lieve in God.' Then I went on a readin' ; but in a minnit I looked up and see that I'd made a mistake. I shell never forgit that look. She *said* nothing, but held on tight to the Bible, her lips all pale and close together, and her eyes full of tears. I'd cut her soul eenamost in two ; and now I couldn't stand it myself. There was a great chunk a coming in my throat, and so I went straight out and set down behind the barn. Then I got a thinkin' in earnest, and afore you'd b'lieve it I come to consider that the '*views*' warn't of much account any way. I see what they'd done already, and calculated what they was likely to do, settin' a man against his own mother. So I made up my mind, and without making any noise I went into the barn and harnessed Whitefoot, and drove round to the door just a little still, and stopped and said, *I'm ready*. Mother see me, and looked up awful surprised, and the tears come agin, though this time they was tears of joy. In fact, I felt better myself, but we didn't say much all the way down, though I knowed she was pleased, only as we come up to the

meeting-house at a thorough-going pace, she said, "'Zekiel ain't we going a little fast for Sunday ?' You see," said the speaker, "that I didn't calculate to take anybody's dust. But there, I'm a spinning out, and here's this field to be plowed. I never *could* make a short story."

The vestryman said that as for the field he didn't think *that* was in a hurry to be stirred up. "We'll get it done, I guess," he said, smiling, "in time ; we'd better let the cattle get a little more grass." In fact, the vestryman was tired himself, and glad of an excuse for pillowing his head on a log. So, at his request, Ezekiel went on with his story.

"Well, I've digressed," he said, "but it's all a part of it. I was a saying that mother and I went to the Corners. Elder Shumway preached, and didn't make me feel *quite* so uncomfortable as I expected ; and after meeting we drove home. I see plainly mother felt better ; still, I didn't make much headway, and felt a good deal unnatural. The '*views*' *might* be true, after all. In fact, I'd something to learn yet, about decrees, *and it come*. You

remember the great freshet we had on the Pawtunxet River?"

"It was when I was out West."

"Well, that was the greatest risin' I ever knowed. It was in the spring, and one day it grew warm and began to rain and the snow melted. In four hours there was a flood. I got up in the night to see what was going on, and look after the cattle; but when I opened the door I stepped splash into the water. The river had got up to the house. So I waited until it was light, and then, kinder like Noah, I put my head out of the winder to see how things was gitting on. Well, I eenamost thought that the world was drowned again. Still there was things to be seen to, and so I and Sam (that was my little brother,) went out and waded to the ridge, you know the place, and then walked on to the pastures and found they was five feet deep with water. The river was up full sixteen feet. Just then, Josiah Pratt come along and said that the Pawtunxet mill had got to go. The water wus up in the second story, and it couldn't stand it long. John Newman, the watchman, was on top and couldn't get off.

We followed down along the ridge toward the mill but couldn't get very near. The sight was awful. The river run like suthin' mad, and full of trees and lumber, haycocks from the medders, and whole houses and barns sailing along. It looked as if Pawtunxet village was a going to sea. And there was the long brick mill, only half out of water, and the river rushing against it, while John Newman was on the roof holdin' on to the chimbly. John was an awful wicked feller, and was one of them that stomped when the Boston man at the Corners said there wasn't no Creator. I don't know what John thought *now*, for though he hollered we couldn't hear what he said, the river made such a noise. I could see that he looked terrible, but we wasn't able to do anything, and had to stand waiting expecting every minnit the mill would go. At last we see it was settlin', and John Newman was clingin' on to the chimbly tighter than ever. Now we held our breath. But it didn't go then. At last it began to kinder teeter and teeter, and before we hardly knowed it the mill spread out at both ends, and went down. We expected it would make

a great splash, but it didn't. It took its fall in a pashunt sort of way; and, when John Newman and the chimbley went under, the river biled just a little, and then rushed on, as the Scriptor says, seeking something to devour. That mill warn't no account at all.

"Josiah now said that we had better go home, and so we started mournfully like, with the rest of the folks, as it was clear that we couldn't be of any use. We went on slow till we had got a third of the way to the house, when I on a sudden said, where is Sam? Josiah didn't remember whether he started with us or not, but I thought he must hev, and so we went on. But as Sam didn't come in sight I grew uneasy, and stopped to wait for him, but he didn't come. Then I guessed he left us before the mill went down and went higher up the river; so I walked back with a sort of feelin' that there was somthin' wrong, but I couldn't find Sam. Then we went where we stood at first, and looked at the rushin' river. Suddenly I see a sight that made me feel a sort o' palsied. It was nothin' less than Sam a comin' down past where the mill was, on top of a hay-cock. I knew in a

flash how it was. He'd gone up along to get a nearer sight of the mill from a hummock, and the river cut through behind, and undermined the whole thing, when he crawled top of the hay. Now he was a goin' like mad, and we couldn't help him any mor'n we could John Newman. *It was Sam's turn now.* He knewed we couldn't hear him, and he didn't holler, but set still on top. I could almost see his eyes when he went by, lookin' like one dead already. An' so he went like a shot over the mill-dam, where the water run almost level; and when we got up to the top of the hummock so as to see further, Sam was out of sight. I was staggered *now*; I thought the 'views' *was* right and that things run loose. Josiah was dreadful mournful, and said at last that we had better go back to the house; and so, with a sort of sick feelin', I went. Where's Sam, says mother; but our faces, all white, she said afterwards, told the story. At last Josiah had to say just how it was, for I couldn't; and you never see anything like the effect. When father was brought home dying mother was calm, and looked up as if she see angels comin' to strengthen her. But this



time the angels didn't come. There warn't no strength *now*. Sam was the youngest, (a sort of Benjamin, you know,) a bright boy, and just the stuff for a minister, with father's eyes and make;—and so mother set right down and covered her face. But after a while she dropped her hands slowly and said, 'Zekel, don't you think you could find—?' That was all she could say; but I knowed what she meant, and started for the river, while Josiah went to tell the neighbors that Sam was drowned. The storm was over now, the water had gone down, and the sun was shinin', but somehow I couldn't see. My eyes was like Jerimiah's, but my *heart* warn't. In fact, I was desperate. I knew twarn't no use to hunt for the body, but I went because mother wanted me to. So I walked and walked along the river, and see nothin'. If found at all, it would be a long way off. Still I kept on most three miles in the edge of the woods and fields, and come to the High Falls where the river tumbles straight down thirty feet. Right above the falls was a rocky island which was all under water now, but the top of a great apple-tree in the middle was above it, and

when I got where I could hear the bellerin' of the falls, I thought I see somethin' in the branches. Still, I don't know why I kept on; but as I come near, it looked like hay. Then I run, and come opposite the tree, and, would you believe it! there was the hay-cock plastered inter the top of the tree, and Sam top of that, as comfortable as Moses in the bulrushes. Afore that, it seemed as if there *wasn't* any Creator rulin' things, but now I *kinder believed there was*. Still, I felt short of breath. I thought I was a goin' to be a ghost. The feelin's all stopped pumpin' up inter my eyes. At last I cried, is that you, Sam? And Sam says jest so. Sam, I said, how are you? Then the little critter hollered out, All right! After a heap of danger, we got a boat and got him ashore, and started for home. Sam was too tired to talk, you can guess, and I only said, how did you feel when you went over the dam? As though it was lightenin', said Sam. But I kept up a thinkin', and said to myself, them decrees *might* be right after all, only Elder Shumway put the wrong end of the wedge first. Clearly that apple-tree saved Sam, and how come it there? It warn't

even planted, but was one of them wild things that growed of itself. If that seed hadn't dropped in that *perticular spot*, years and years ago, I wouldn't a found Sam safe in the top of that tree. Maybe there *are* decrees; for what sort of a Creator would he be *that hadn't made up his mind?* Half way home we met Sy Blanchard, and told him what had took place; and when he see I warn't in for a joke, he took hold of Sam's close and see that they was dry, and said (after he drew a long breath), Sho, 'Zekiel, mericles *can* be done. Well, at last we got back to the house, and while I was thinkin' how to break it to mother, Sam run ahead, and so I had to foller. The house was full of folks, but mother heard our steps, and next she see Sam! I thought at first she would have dropped, but she didn't. At last she stepped forrard and caught him in her arms; then she went down on her knees and looked up rapturous like, all the while holdin' tight on to Sam. Well, it's no use to try to describe that. We read in Scripture of women who received their dead again, but here it *was*; as for the Prodigal Son, why, he warn't nowhere."

At this point, Ezekiel took a fresh squint, consulting the sun, and observed that he was making a long story. They had better get to work, and leave the rest for another time. "The great thing, you know," said the speaker, with a professional allusion, "the great thing is to get the ground ready. After that field is broke up," he said, pointing to the scene of their work, "it wont be much to get a crop."

Therefore we leave the farmers at their work and turn elsewhere.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Beating to Quarters.*

"Though we are justices and doctors and Churchmen, Master Page, we have some of the salt of our youth in us."

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

THE death of his daughter, as we have seen, fell heavily upon the Rector of Roxburgh, yet he well understood the high office of work, not only as a preserver but as nature's restorer. He therefore soon began to give himself anew to the duties of his office, yet not without great sorrow and heaviness of heart. He believed that there was no good reason why the present deadness in the parish should longer prevail. He earnestly desired to inaugurate a new state of things, believing that with a general feeling of liberality in the parish there would be no difficulty about his own support. He could not, indeed, under any circumstances, speak for himself, but he could, and would, insist upon the maintenance of the principles and the spirit whose opera-

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tion would bring personal relief. He would, therefore, treat with boldness of the uses and abuses of wealth, without regard to any man in Roxburgh.

In forming this resolution, he well knew the opposition that he might excite and the ill-will that it was possible for him to gain, but such considerations could not move him. There was rich Mr. Dorsey, the Senior Warden, so fussy, purse-proud, consequential, narrow and dictatorial, a man who always wanted his own way, and was inclined to rule or ruin. Notwithstanding all his care and prudence, the Rector felt himself continually on the border of a disagreement with this functionary, who was inclined to be peaceable so long as he had his own way. The warden liked to have it understood that he, Mr. John Dorsey, was the great man, not only of the town, but of the parish. In fact, he sometimes fancied that he carried the parish in his pocket. It is at least certain that on election days he controlled votes. He was hasty and choleric, also, and quick to take offence. In a word, he was a difficult man to deal with. Everybody, saint and sinner alike, found him so.

Yet in saying all this, we do not mean to convey the notion that Mr. Dorsey was a bad man, only that he was very human. It is true, that at times the warden felt, as well as confessed himself, the miserable sinner described in the Litany; but it was, after all, a sort of official feeling.

John Dorsey desired, on the whole, to be well spoken of, especially as he *meant* to do about right. More than this; he aimed to do *well*. He was a man of good general intentions, and not without Christian feeling, but still an unsymmetrical, cross-grained man, who did not always put his best side out, and who tired one's patience exceedingly. But, as we have said, he possessed Christian feeling; for a man may be very strange, eccentric, and queer, and yet be a Christian, just as a tree may be gnarled, crotchety, and crooked, and bear very good fruit. The knowledge of one such character should therefore teach a lesson of charity, and prepare us to find around the throne, when the day of translation dawns, not only saints who never heard of our sanctuary, martyrs not in our calender, true men of God who never bowed at our

altar, women who never breathed our prayers, but a great multitude of all sorts and conditions of men whom the narrow and shrinkable mantle of our charity never covered, and whom, in our Pharisaic perfection, we have set down as hopelessly crotchety and perverse.

But Warden Dorsey was not the only man in the parish capable of making trouble. Every such man, in a New England town, has his dependents and creatures, many of whom find their worldly advantages in watching for the great mill-owner's nod. For New England mill-owners, be it understood, are mighty men, and sometimes not to be crossed in a hurry. Yet other slightly disagreeable characters, of whom Roxburgh had its quota, need not here be pointed out, lest, when put on trial, they might not find an impartial court. We say, therefore, in general terms, that the self-willed rich man had his allies, who, also, as the Rector of Roxburgh knew, could give him, or any one else, some trouble. Yet, however he might desire a continuance of the now prevailing peace, he was determined to act with entire independ-

ence. If necessary, he was always ready to deal with nettles; and he knew the policy of grasping them with a strong hand.

Yet, for some time, he could not decide upon the best way of creating the new atmosphere so much desired. In the mean while, his mind began to take a morbid tinge. In the course of the next season, however, an opportunity was presented for making a beginning. It was brought about as follows. One day a letter came from the Secretary of the Roxburgh County Convocation, who wrote to ask if it would be convenient to have the Convocation meet in his parish during the next month.

Indeed, the Rector had been applied to on this point some time before; but when he mentioned the matter to his senior warden, the latter said so much to discourage the idea that the Rector gave it up, and returned the Secretary a general reply. But Roxburgh was the shire town, and it was important that the Convocation should make a demonstration there; and hence he now renewed the subject. With this second application, Dr. Walton made up his mind.

"I think the Convocation will have to meet

here the next time," he observed to his wife, one morning. "I must give notice of it next Sunday."

"Indeed; but what will Mr. Dorsey say?" was the reply; for Mrs. Walton well knew his views, and feared that he would make trouble.

"Oh, of course, Mary, he will oppose it; but I have made up my mind."

Mrs. Walton knew what *that* meant, for when her husband once saw his duty he was never known to shun it. So she simply replied, "I hope it will be all for the best; in fact I am sure it will, whatever trouble may come."

"I have no doubt of it," he said; "it will wake us up a little, and open the way for something else. We are dying here as a parish on account of our narrow, illiberal views, from our want of sympathy with the church and the world. The Convocation will prove just as useful as anything in sowing liberal ideas, which is what we want."

But this time, he took care to say nothing to Mr. Dorsey, who was certain to infer that a collection would be expected from the

congregation; and if there was anything which he particularly abhorred, it was to see money carried out of the parish and the town. "Charity begins at home, sir!" he would say, "yes, at *home*," driving the sentiment itself home by settling his gold-headed cane upon the ground with an emphatic thud. Therefore, as we have said, he did not consult the senior warden, but on the following Sunday gave notice that the County Convocation would hold its next quarterly meeting in St. Mark's Church.

This notice, he could clearly see, awakened no particular joy in the hearts of the people; while at the close of the service, Mr. Dorsey, instead of stepping into the vestry, as he frequently did, walked deliberately out of the church, and sought his home. The greater portion of the parish, however, cared nothing whatever for the announcement. *They* should not trouble themselves with the matter, any way. Still, there were those who thought something of the subject.

"Well, I never!" said Mrs. Jones, the wife of Farmer Jones, who regularly rode in from the outskirts on Sundays; "Well! I never!

The Doctor's really waking up. What's coming next?" This remark was addressed to one of her rustic neighbors, when she had reached the porch.

"I don't know what good it will do to have missionary meetings here; precious little *money* they'll get. I guess Mr. Dorsey will have something to say."

Now, Dr. Walton had said nothing about a collection; but the people knew that that was the *rationale* of the matter, and accordingly snuffed it from afar. Time would fail us to repeat all the comments to which the notice gave rise. To some, it was almost like thunder out of a clear sky: and the Rector of St. Mark's reached the rectory with but a single word of encouragement. This came from Ezekiel Cheever, the young farmer, a part of whose history has already been laid before the reader, and of whom we are to hear more in due time. On this occasion, Ezekiel was, of course, dressed in his best Sunday suit, which included a nice blue coat with brass buttons. He was seated in a buggy, and was driving out from the carriage shed by the circular path to the front of the church.

Catching a glimpse of the Rector standing near the robing-room door, he reined up, and turned his bright honest face, and said in a confidential way: "Just the thing, Doctor, just the thing; time to think of something besides ourselves."

Mrs. Walton, however, had an additional word of cheer; for Lawyer Mason's wife had also expressed great gratification, and hoped that much good would be accomplished. The Rector was glad of even these crumbs of comfort. The very next morning Mrs. Mason called at the rectory.

"Good morning, Dr. Walton: I've called early, but I wanted to know what you would do with so many clergymen when the Convocation meets, as you cannot certainly have them all at the Rectory, at least over night."

Now, that was precisely the point in the Rector's mind, and he was exceedingly glad to feel assured that he was not going to be without at least one helper in this matter. So he replied:

"Yes, Mrs. Mason, it *is* time to think of the question, for it will be too late, when the services are over, for the clergy to return home."

The result of the interview led to the resolution on the part of Mrs. Mason to constitute herself a committee on hospitality. And such a decision was equivalent to success; for what she undertook she thoroughly performed. Mr. Mason was a vestryman, and a person of large influence in the county, while his wife was popular, and understood the art of winning people over to her views. Consequently, before nightfall she was able to drop in again and report to Mrs. Walton the fact that ample arrangements would no doubt be completed for the entertainment of as many as came. Mrs. Walton thanked her warmly, and felt that a great load had been removed from her mind. Mrs. Mason had excited interest in quarters where it was least expected, and the reputation of Roxburgh for hospitality was not likely to be imperilled after all by this unexpected inauguration of an unpopular movement.

In the mean while, Mr. John Dorsey nursed his indignation, seeking a fair opportunity, in order to give the Rector an expression of his opinion with respect to this strange and unwarrantable proceeding, which forms "a

novelty," he said to his wife, accommodating a quotation, "a novelty very much calculated to disturb our peace."

"Well, then," said good-natured Mrs. Dorsey, who was different in all respects from her husband, "let it disturb *our* peace, alone. I certainly hope you will not carry the matter into the parish."

But Mr. Dorsey was not so easily tranquilized, and a few minutes later, when he left his house, he met the Rector face to face on the street; and, after some preliminaries, took Dr. Walton to task for his "inconsiderate and hasty action, which he, for one, as a warden of the parish, could not reconcile either with a just regard for the rights of the laity or the best interests of the Church."

But it would hardly prove profitable here to report the discussion that ensued, and it will suffice to say that Marmaduke Walton conducted the interview in an exceedingly calm and dignified manner, ably defending the rights of the clergy and his own rights in particular; finally sending away the excited and flushed senior warden with a diminished sense of his personal prowess, also with a very

strong conviction that there was at least one parish priest in the diocese with the courage to resist the assumption of dictatorial rich men, and able to make his *own* position secure in the exercise of his rights. In fact, the strong but quiet handling which he received was exceedingly mortifying. Yet when he got away, which he was profoundly glad to do, he nevertheless felt a degree of respect for the Rector which he had never known before. He was thus appreciative, if perverse. And well he may have been, for Marmaduke Walton had shown a manly courage and independence which could not have been increased by the ownership of half the world.



## CHAPTER IX.

### Ezekiel Again.

"By the all-working Providence that fashions out of dangers, toils, debates, those whom it hath ordained."

ANON.

"Most haps did he foresee, though he might do naught to meet them."

SAGA OF GRETTER THE STRONG.

"Indeed St. Chrysostom, that noble and eloquent doctor, in a sermon '*Contra fatum*, and the curious searching of nativities,' doth wisely saie that "ignorance therein is better than knowledge."

ASCHAM'S SCHOLE-MASTER.

A FEW evenings after the Rector's encounter with his senior warden, Mr. Ezekiel Cheever walked over to Mr. Vestryman Flint's. Report said that he frequently did so. Report, likewise, added a possible explanation, averring that, as regards the honest Ezekiel, the heart of Mary Flint, the official's daughter, was not likely to prove as hard as the family patronymic implied. However that may be, report was quite true in maintaining that Ezekiel not unfrequently walked that way. This evening, however, he conferred largely with Farmer Flint, talking of

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the crops and the prospect of the next season. Finally they touched some matters relating to the church, when the vestryman observed that he understood Mr. Dorsey was very much opposed to the meeting of the convocation in St. Mark's. He also said that he understood the Rector had had some discussion with him, in which the warden probably got the worst of it.

"No doubt of it," said Ezekiel, "there's good stuff in the doctor. Mrs. Walton's an uncommon good person, too. Last Sunday in church she seemed just like a saint, as she set a lookin' up towards the ceiling, claspin' her hands, as though no one see her, but as though that she see some one. Yes, I told mother that she looked like the picture of a saint, that I see in New York. Mother said she was thinkin' of the little girl that's gone. Still she looked jest like a saint, sad-like, you know, but wonderful calm, and not troubled and ruffled like the Rector, who don't look like a saint. Still I agree that *he's* uncommon, too; as I said, there's *stuff* in him, and I'm glad to see him stand up for his rights. That's my way of thinkin' a rector's

a rector. Besides, what's the use of a flock of sheep gettin' a shepherd and then tellin' some old sheep to pay no attention to the shepherd, but jest to lead off. It's my opinion that folks ought to stand by their minister and not see one that ought to be taught himself instructin' the whole parish. I say, let the parson and not the people rule. Least-wise, not have everything ruled by one man because he's rich."

"Exactly so," said Mr. Flint, "and I hope the people will stand by the doctor. He evidently knows how things should be done; and, in my judgment, when he gets uncertain on such points he will resign. I say this, of course, without forgetting the rights of the laity, which I will be the last to give up, and which Doctor Walton would be the last to tread on. The members of the church are not sufficiently active in these days, I know; but then, Ezekiel, it is not the business of any of us to try to take things into our own hands, or for the people to be badgering the priest. We must study to follow the middle course, and respect the rights of *all*. But, remember, you have never finished your story

which you began one day when we were taking our nooning."

Acting on this suggestion, Ezekiel Cheever ere long caught up the thread of his narrative, and went on, beginning where he left off with the rescue of Sam from the river.

"After this, you see," said Ezekiel, "I went regular to the meetin' at the Corners, for you know that we then lived full seven miles from Roxburgh. Elder Shumway, too, begun to speak to me; but, though I had less trouble about the decrees, I knew we couldn't hitch. At last one Sunday he preached against prayers that he said was read, and didn't come from the *heart*. He said the Apostles never did that way, and hadn't no written prayers. In fact he was a little furious, and said a good deal against the Prayer-book. I didn't understand the drift *then*, but after meetin' I heard that a 'Piscopal minister was agoin' to preach at candle-light in the school-house. Then I see what was the matter. And while we stood on the meetin'-house steps, Elder Shumway comes out (a smilin' now) and shook hands with me and Josiah Pratt. The Elder said compliments of the season, and Josiah

said, same to you. Then the Elder said he was glad to see us present ; the privileges of the Sanctuary was great. Josiah said he always went to meetin'. Then they got a talkin' about the sermon ; and, in course of remark, Josiah said, one thing troubled him. The Elder asked what it was, and said he was always glad to help folks in their speritual difficulties. Josiah then said that he was told in the sermon that the Apostles never had any forms of prayer, but in the chapter he read "they lifted up their voice to God," united like, "with one accord." Josiah had kept school one winter, and he warnted to know why there was such a difference between the sermon and the chapter. He said this, innocent-like, but the Elder lost his gracious smile in a minute, and looked like pizen. Then he said something about com-montaters, and Josiah remarked that the 'Piscopal minister didn't understand it that way. 'And so you advise with him, do you ! That bein' so, I have jest *this* to say to *you*, Josiah, *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees !* Then he put for home. But still, Josiah *didn't* beware, no mor'n I ; and he and

me, when it was time, went to the school-house."

At this point Vestryman Flint, who seemed greatly pleased, indulged in a hearty laugh. Ezekiel, however, had not finished his story, and so continued :

"You see, up to this time, I knowed nothin' about our church ways, but I wasn't, like a good many, prejudiced against what I hadn't seen, and was ready to learn what I could. When the minister, Mr. Mountfort, come, I liked his looks. He was somewhat tall and dignified like, had a good voice and a kindly sort of eye, and I knew that he'd had experience. He brought a bundle under his arm, and when he ondid it a surplice rolled out. I didn't know what it was then, and John Burbank, who set next me, give me a nudge, and said he guessed that he was goin' to preach in his shirt sleeves. I nudged him back, and said he ought to be ashamed. We'd come to Divine service. So he set still. As the minister stood by the door and slipped his surplice on, without any parade, I heard him say to Josiah, loud enough for most of us to hear, that the ministers of God hed always

wore appropriate robes in the service, and that the surplice, like the garments worn in the Temple of old, signified the state of mind and heart which the minister ought to bring to such a holy service. I liked that. And then, when he went and took his place at the desk, he first knelt down and said a prayer. I really hadn't seen such a thing in my life before; but I didn't object. It was a good deal better than the way the Elder did. He always the first thing set down on the red merhogn'y sofy behind the pulpit, put one leg over the other and run his fingers through his hair, all the while starin' round at the folks. When Mr. Mountfort got up, I see that he had a bundle of books, pamphlets-like, and he said he would like to distribute 'em berfore he begun, as this was the first time he had held a service at the Corners. Josiah carried 'em round, and the minister told the page where he would read. He first give out a hymn, one we often sung at meetin', and Josiah set the tune. I see that *he* was in for it. So it went on, and afore I knowed it I got interested. At Elder Shumway's we had no more to do than if we was at a lectur',

but now I had to look out for the responses, and the whole thing seemed right. But I forgot to say that before the hymn Mr. Mountfort made some remarks about forms of prayer in general. Somebody had told him what the minister at the Corners had said, or else he had been in a back pew himself. However *that* was, you ought to seen how quick he hove the Elder. In a few remarks he settled the whole thing, without seemin' to go at all out of the way, for he observed that he'd come to the Corners, to-night, not to dispute, but to preach the Gospel here, he sed, where only one in ten worshipped God at all.

"Then as for the prayers, I didn't see but that they come from his heart jest as much as Elder Shumway's. For my part, too, I thought, on the whole, that as we always had the same object in goin' to meetin', why shouldn't we have the same service and the same prayers? What was the use of always bein' a wrigglin' and twistin' to find some new way of sayin' a thing? Elder Shumway couldn't. His forms was as set as any in the Prayer-book. I knowed by the clock how

long he would be in gettin' through with the Jews, and how many minutes he would pray for the Gentiles. Same for inscrutable decrees. Never left 'em out. For heads of families he said jest the same every time, and as for the stiff-necked and pervurse (like me), we was *always* standin' in the same old slipp'ry places. He couldn't fix us any other way, no how. I had the whole thing by heart; and if sometimes he had only made us who was in the slipp'ry places *slide*, it would a been a *boon*. And now that I come to hear forms that *was* forms, I realized more'n ever that Elder Shumway's was awful poor. The Elder said he didn't want *his* prayers *precumposed*, but they was always precumposed afore *we* got 'em. Now, thinks I, *wew'e got to have forms*. Even the Elder can't get along without 'em; and as we allers have the same thing to say, *why not say it right?* That sort of forms, Mr. Flint, grows on one. It ain't the saying of the same words that becomes tegious. Our Lord, you know," and here Ezekiel lowered his voice to a reverential key, "our Lord 'prayed the third time, saying the *same words*.' No," he added, resuming

his natural tone, "it's not the *same* words, but the *wrong* words, not the *repetishun* but the *vain* repetishun, that fags a feller out. Yet, maybe I'd never heard of the Prayer-book, if it hadn't been for the Elder."

The vestryman said; "I've known the Prayer-book for well nigh fifty years, and I only like it more and more. It was almost the first thing I ever heard, and very likely it will be the last."

Ezekiel understood what he meant; and after observing that the last words it says for us are very precious, he continued as follows:

"Well, I must finish up. The sermon that Mr. Mountfort preached was fine. Everybody liked it, and many said they wished he could settle. Josiah interduced me after it was over, and he told us he was goin' to have a Sunday-school: the young was the hope of the Church. I was quite excited and said I would be lib'arian (you see I was runnin' afore I was sent). Mr. Mountfort smiled, and said that we *had no lib'ary*. But I was stirred up by the sermon, and warnted to go to work. I afterwards found that works warn't the *first* thing a Christian has to do, there was something

about faith and repentin'. Maybe that's works, too. Anyway there was the Sunday-school, and after some talk Josiah agreed to be Superintendunt if the minister would help. So we started right off, and the thing grew, and before long I *was* lib'arian, though the duties of the office didn't hurt me, and the most of the time I was in Mr. Mountfort's Bible-class. Mother see that I'd got out of the woods, and, in consideration that she knew the Elder had no mission for me, she was reconciled to my leavin' the meetin'. Of course it was natural to warnt me with her, but then she said that the school-house was just as near heaven,—and a good deal nearer for *me*, thinks I. She was glad that the 'Piscopal had come. She didn't feel like the Elder; and *he* didn't feel like some congregational ministers I've see since. He was *awful* blue, and fairly druv me out. There was work enough for six, mother said, and you'd a b'lieved it if you'd a seen' the folks at the Corners turn out when a circus come along. So, as I've said, the work grew and abounded. 'Piscopacy had come to stay. I hear that when it gits the roots down they always clinch.

Still, I was sorry myself to leave the meetin'-house. It was a queer old place, and in the pews you could see where the people used to lean their guns when the Corners was first settled, and they was afeared of the Injuns. It was the place 'sociated with boyhood. I used to enjoy it afore I got to thinkin' much about what the Elder said. *Then* when I see that we'd got to part, I hung around the place with a new feelin', and was kinder sorry I ever tried my jack-knife on the high backs of the gallery pews. It's hard after all partin' with what we've always been used to, if it isn't just what we like. Then the old bell. It sounded so meller among the hills as we rode toward the Corners on Sunday mornin'. It was a wonderful bell,—brought, they said, from over the seas, where folks throwed into the meltin' pot gold and silver rings, and didn't try to make it *cheap*. The workmen labored as for the Lord."

At this point Ezekiel seemed to be musing with himself, but he came back again and took up the thread of his story. "Well, 'Piscopacy took so well at the Corners that at last the Elder felt it his painful duty, (that's what he

said,) to accept a call to Ryessville. The folks went in strong for Mr. Mountfort, who preached every Sunday mornin' in the school-house, until they was afeared they'd lose him, and turned to and built a church. But you know all about *that*, Mr. Flint. I see your name on the subscription paper. By-and-by, I got pretty well acquainted with the minister, and went on fast. I had got my feet on the rock, now that the '*views*' was dissolved, and didn't see why I shouldn't go ahead, for the Prayer-book way was the thing for me. The more I see of the Church way, the more I liked it. Some of the folks at the Corners said the 'Piscopals was aristocratic, and that the ministers always run after the rich. But Mr. Mountfort doesn't, says I. Well, you'll see, they said. Pretty soon John Higgins' child died. John and his wife, you know, took to drink, and the little girl was deserted, and come on the town. Nobody knowed where *they* was, and Mr. Mountfort looked after the funeral. Licker makes folks awful cruel. I never heard the Burial Service before. He read beautiful, and the choir sung uncommonly. I see, too, that the minister's wife,

(in a wonderfully tender way, her fingers all a shakin', as if she was reminded of somethin' in her own experience,) put a white posy in the hand of the little thing that now laid so still in its narrer house, with its face all pinched up by poverty, but somehow lookin' as if angels had come to her before she died. And when Mr. Mountfort spoke about father and mother forsakin' little ones and the Lord takin' 'em up, I guess that most folks had as big a swellin' in their throat as I did. Nobody at the Corners had seen such a funeral before. Even Deacon Brown, who was awfully Congregational, liked it; but, 'Zekiel, says he, if Squire Leslie hed a died, wouldn't you seen the 'Piscopal parade? Well, the Squire *did* die, and though he had give six hundred dollars cash towards the church—he got no better funeral than the little thing that died on the town. Well, we wouldn't a believed it, says some of the folks; there's comin' to be no distinctions in society now. *And that's aristocracy, is it?* says I. Then they shut up. So it was clear to me that the Prayer-book was the thing for the *people* of all sorts and conditions. Josiah spoke to Mr. Mountfort

about it, and what the folks had said, and then the minister repeated some poytry about our Mother the Church havin' no one child that she thought the *most* on.\*

"Then the first Easter that come after we fairly got into the church, I learned a good deal that set me ahead. There was in the church the handsomest cross of white flowers that ever you see. Such purity! Why, it reminded one of the robes of them that stands day and night around the Throne. When I see that cross on the altar, I said to myself, 'Zekiel, such as that Cross is you orter be; blessed are the pure in heart. Still, I didn't belong to the church, you know. But when Mr. Mountfort come to the sermon, the flowers had another lesson, and the minister alluded to them when he spoke about the resurrection.

\* The allusion here is to the lines in one of the *Christian Ballads* :

"Our Mother the Church hath never a child  
To honor before the rest,  
But she singeth the same for mighty kings  
And the veriest babe on her breast :  
And the bishop goes down to his narrow bed  
As the ploughman's child is laid,  
And alike she blesseth the dark-browed serf  
And the chief in his robe arrayed."

Then I said to myself, this is what Easter means,—the Resurrection! That was some-thin' we hadn't heard much about at the Corners, leastwise except in argument, and I didn't care to dispute. But now Mr. Mountfort spoke of it as a fact, a *historical* fact, he said. It give me a new idee. As he went on he seemed to throw some light on many things and almost reconciled me to my little sister Mary's bein' taken away. Afore I knowed it the tears was rollin' down my face. It was a reverlashun. It was the greatest thing of all; for you know the Scripture, Mr. Flint, if Christ be not risen ye are yet in your sins:—the greatest thing of all, I say. Now it was all clear, and at the same time the prophecy of the flowers, as Mr. Mountfort called it, was more beautiful than ever. And I now see how the Prayer-book brought out all the different parts of the Gospel, which it didn't argue about, but took it for granted that they was facts, and treated 'em as such. So, after that, Easter always seemed to me just as much a fact as the Fourth of July. Soon Mr. Mountfort told the people that the Bishop was a comin', and invited all who



wanted to be confirmed to make it known. I thought that that meant *me*, for it was now time to make up my mind. So the first chance I got I went to see the minister. Of course I needn't tell you what we talked about ; but when I was a comin' out I said he might consider that I had concluded to *jine*. So you see how it was."

Thus Ezekiel ended his story, which, if it has proved a long one, nevertheless has the merit of being substantially true ; while it indicates that there are some in New England who do not find "the subject of religion," as Emerson phrases it, quite so distasteful in conversation as literary philistines sometimes suppose.

## CHAPTER X.

### *Friends in Council.*

"Good morrow to this fair assembly."

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

"Helps and furtherances which scriptures, council, laws, and the mutual conference of all men's collections and observations may afford."

HOOVER.

AS we have already seen, Dr. Walton had determined on his plan for the meeting of the convocation. And from this he could not be dissuaded by an individual who, if he had taken up the notion, would have been ready to turn the whole church out of doors. St. Mark's was not going to be a "one-man-parish." The Rector very well knew that behind Mr. Dorsey's opposition there was a terrible financial fear, based on a narrow, penurious feeling, as deadly in its effects as the fabled Upas Tree ; and however little he may at that time have cared about the convocation itself, its session, held here in old Roxburgh, would, he thought, prove as

useful as anything in preparing the way for a parochial revolution and a new atmosphere.

Yet, as the time approached, he was not without misgivings. The memory of his little Eva, who so recently left him to tread the untried paths of the silent land, induced many days of deep melancholy; while the opposition that, with all his peace-loving tastes, he was clearly evoking, only served to deepen the gloom. Yet when the day for the meeting actually arrived, the bright sky, the pleasant air, and liberal arrangements for the entertainment of the guests, perfected by that whole-souled woman, Mrs. Lawyer Mason, combined to render him tolerably cheerful and assured.

Early in the forenoon the members of the convocation began to pour in. The sight of so many of his brethren sent his spirits up several additional degrees.

It had at first been thought that his study would accommodate all who came to the business session; but soon they found it necessary to adjourn to the church. Since, however, they sat with closed doors, I will not undertake to report the proceedings. My

clerical readers, if any there be, can guess what was done, while the rest of my constituency probably have no curiosity at all on this point. It will, therefore, be sufficient to say, that the object of the convocation was very unlike that of those meetings of the English clergy, who, if the butler reported their business aright, came together for the purpose of "swapping sermons." The uninitiated reader being therefore disabused of any misapprehension existing on this point, is left to guess the rest.

Late in the afternoon, however, the solemn conclave broke up, and the clergy came pouring out of the church door. Quite a number of the members were, of course, invited to dine at the rectory, and enjoy a hospitality that the incumbent could neither afford to dispense, nor to dispense with; and which, we may all feel very sure, was followed by a lean larder for some time afterwards. The guests, who sat at the board, knew very well that the feast was the precursor of a fast, yet this inward persuasion did not affect their spirits, nor destroy their appetites. They would do the same thing in turn, and, with a smiling

martyrdom, play into the relentless cog-wheels of "society," which, in its present constitution, often expects clergymen, who exist on a dole of eight or ten hundred a year, to live and act like gentlemen of wealth.

But I was going to tell the reader where the clergy went to take what was a very late dinner for the steady-going New-England town of Roxburgh, in which the people had not yet adopted that outrage upon nature which is implied in a systematic dining after dark. For once, however, they strained a point, rather than to sandwich their entertainments between two sessions of a private meeting. So, while some (and, as we have said, too many) went to the rectory, a much larger delegation took their way to the stately residence of Mrs. Lawyer Mason, whose household had been busy for three days previous with the preparations for this event. Others scattered by ones and twos; and while the Rector stood for a moment in the church porch with the last of the departing guests, a horse and buggy, in charge of a bright intelligent looking lad, stopped in front of the steps, while at the same time the young driver raised his

cap by way of salute, and turned the front wheels aside, as much as to say, "all ready."

"Ah, Sam, so you are here promptly on the time," said Dr. Walton's companion, "but I might have expected it;" and with this he grasped the lad by the hand.

"Surely, Brother Mountfort, we are not going to lose you at the rectory?" said Dr. Walton.

Now, we have not mentioned Mr. Mountfort, the minister of "the Corners," yet he was present, and replied,

"Yes, Doctor, I am going to spend an hour or two with my friends the Cheevers, whom I promised to visit the first time I came to Roxburgh." And so saying he was off.

Less than half an hour—for Ezekiel Cheever would abide no beast laggard after its kind—brought them to the home of the Cheevers, who lived in one of those characteristic farm-houses with its neat out-buildings, trim fences, and traditional well-sweep, aiming upward like some Paynim's awful lance, ready to charge the unseen foe, secreted, no doubt, in the crown of the shadowy elm that towered hard by.

Ezekiel himself stood near the porch as his visitor rode up, arrayed in his Sunday suit, whose brass buttons, in the light of the declining sun, vied in splendor with the row of well-scalded and polished milk-pans, shelved near the dairy window in a seemly row. By this time the reader probably knows Ezekiel Cheever too well to require any further description; so we will go straight on, and say that, early in the afternoon, he had "punished" the last refractory clod on the surface of the field which he had been breaking up, and had come home in season to receive "The Elder," as he occasionally styled his former minister, when early training projected itself into the present from out of the non-episcopal past.

Now the time was when Ezekiel Cheever felt anything but glad to meet a clergyman. When a boy it had formed a terrible ordeal. The "minister," in his eyes, was a fearfully solemn character, while to be addressed personally by one of the cloth was the last thing that he could have possibly desired. As late as Elder Shumway's time he had felt a strong feeling of dismay when that functionary approached. And the fault was not wholly

Ezekiel's; for with what solemnity was the New England clergyman of former times invested. Even in Ezekiel's earlier days he walked a sort of demi-god, with the thunders of Olympus and Sinai sleeping around his unbending brows. The times have changed, but once the advent of "the minister" was sufficient to give a fresh chill to the most benumbed circle of elders; while the announcement, "the minister's coming," whispered with bated breath at the front of the house, would send all the young folks out at the rear as though projected by an air gun or catapult. In those days religion was largely identified with an elongated visage, and a man's orthodoxy was rated somewhat in proportion to the length of his face. Ministerial life was, in fact, as blue as the local laws, and the young people found the theological atmosphere about as pleasant as chamomile. But Ezekiel, however, had lived to see manners soften; and, with the advent of Mr. Mountfort, the old feeling, so far as the former was concerned, had died out. Now therefore, he felt no embarrassment. In fact he had on his best and easiest ecclesiastical air; though, when he

seized the hand of Mr. Mountfort, he pressed it with that vice-like strength which the simple and correct life of a New England farmer engenders, declaring that to see him was "good for the eyes," and inquiring after "all the folks at the Corners." As the public meeting of the convocation was still to come off, Mr. Mountfort did not enter upon an exhaustive account of his flock, but raised counter inquiries concerning Ezekiel's mother, who quickly appeared, and warmly greeted the clergyman, leading him into the "best" or "front room," ordained of old to serve only on high occasions,—and planted him in the great bow-back rocking-chair, furnished with its flaming hintz upholstery. It was plain enough that the minister of the Corners was "company," and *ministerial* company, too. Still, in the course of his professional experience, he had acquired not a little tact, and therefore, as the Cheevers were delighted to observe, Mr. Mountfort had no difficulty in making himself entirely at home; and yet, but for his own skill, despite the efforts of his entertainers, he might have been as uncomfortable as the gentleman in tight trousers,

cut-away coat and bell-crowned hat, who, with a tall lady in a coal-scuttle bonnet, figured as adjuncts to the obelisk and weeping willow in the funereal print on the wall—the said print being flanked on the one side by a distressing portrait of a Cheever of a former generation, and on the other by a framed sampler whereon another ancient representative of the same race had proved her skill in embroidery, by working a eulogy upon Virtue, prefaced with some lines beginning, "Perseverance is my name."

On the walls of the elegant parlor of Mrs. Lawyer Mason, her guests that day saw exquisite works of art, and the attentions paid were so skilfully performed that it was delightful to be their object; but none were received with sincerer greetings, nor enjoyed their visit more than Mr. Mountfort at the Cheevers. This, however, was not owing to any lack of refinement on his part, for among all Mrs. Lawyer Mason's guests there was not one superior in taste to the somewhat unknown minister of the Corners; (which place, by the way, has since, after the fashion of the times, had its name changed to "Brookville,"

for the reason, as Mr. Mountfort says, that beautiful streams of water abound there; though the Brookses, who by accident have recently become rich, and live in New York during the winter, try to impress strangers by insinuating that the whole thing was meant as a deserved compliment to the family name.) Mr. Mountfort's ministry had been cast chiefly among the people of the secluded rural districts, whom at the outset he viewed with little favor, but whom he soon came to regard with sentiments of the truest respect and the warmest esteem; and early in his ministerial life he relinquished that habit which clings to so many, of living in the expectation of being called to a city parish, to be surrounded by all the elegancies and refinements of metropolitan life, for which they deem themselves pre-eminently fitted, and in which, also, they think they can alone maintain a contented mind. Mr. Mountfort's experience taught him that a country parish had attractions peculiarly its own, and he realized that a person bent on doing good could be at rest almost anywhere. Hence he lived a happy, contented life, and, when he

went among the people, he had no difficulty in meeting all in the most frank and affable manner, finding his own culture no bar to the outflow of his sympathies. This was not only because his sympathies were wide, but because his culture was *thorough*: for it is the men of superficial training, whose classics and æsthetics are mere outside things, who cling with the greatest tenacity to the charmed circles of the *ton*, deeming suburban and country people unworthy of their talents, and shrinking from contact with human nature's rough ore. It should be remembered that the most of our theological giants, our *real* masters and doctors, were country clergymen; in proof of which we need only cite such names as Hooker, Butler, and Jonathan Edwards.

Thus it came about that, as we have said, Mr. Mountfort was at home, and able to parry, without appearing to do so, the excess of civility that the Cheevers and multitudes like them are wont to bestow upon guests, and especially the clergy; entering at the same time into the principal subjects that usually engaged their thoughts, now drawing

out Ezekiel in some of his characteristic remarks, now inquiring about Sam's studies, or asking for the particulars of his voyage down the Pawtunxet on the hay-stack, and, again, discussing with Mrs. Cheever the best method of making cheese. Finally supper, or, as it might be called, dinner, was announced, proving a compound of both, and wonderfully toothsome, though Mrs. Cheever declared that she was "really ashamed" it was "so poor." The hungry parson, however, strongly protested, and clinched his affirmation by repeated attacks upon the piles of good things, in which he was ably seconded by Ezekiel, who said that "Mother was only a fishin' for a compliment," (which Mrs. Cheever inwardly acknowledged to be true, as she was one of the best housewives in the county,) and at the close joined vigorously in the raid upon the baked apples and cream.

After the repast was concluded, there was still a full hour at their disposal, and then from temporal they passed by easy transition to spiritual and ecclesiastical subjects.

Of the character of Mrs. Cheever the reader must have gained some conception from the

story of her son, given in the two previous chapters. She is there represented as one of the strict Calvinists, but nevertheless willing that Ezekiel should choose his own ecclesiastical connections. Yet between that period and the date of her removal to her present home, she had made considerable progress. At the old meeting-house, after the secession of Ezekiel, she never felt the same. It is true that Sam, whose name we shall pretty soon have to spell out in full, still continued to sit by her side in the great, lonely, high-backed pew, but somehow he appeared a little restless. He had been several times, on extra occasions, to St. Paul's (so the new church at the Corners was called) with Ezekiel, and was fond of humming chants, which he quickly caught; so that his mother thought that she should be obliged to go herself and see what the charm could be. But then she had believed from her youth up that the Episcopal Service was highly Popish: still, if this were so, would *Ezekiel* like it? On the whole, she thought she would go, some time, "just for once." She was encouraged in this resolution by Elder Shumway himself, who

finally lost heart in his denunciations of Episcopacy. And when his itinerant successors came into possession of the pulpit, they spoke the language of a new and later generation. Puritanism in all its thought was a violent revulsion from Catholicity. The founders of New England in their severity had gone too far, and their sons were finding it out. But Mrs. Cheever, though a woman of excellent native strength and judgment, was not familiar with the interior merits of the subject, and did not understand what the falling off on the part of the preachers meant. Elder Shumway himself wavered a long time before he left, especially on the subject of the "decrees," though not in season to mitigate the feelings of Ezekiel. He evidently viewed the subject as just a *little* more "inscrutable" than he did when he was young, and ceased to be quite so positive. But those who came after him with occasional sermons *ignored* what at the founding of the society had been proclaimed as the "marrow of the Gospel," or else indulged in equivocal expressions, especially in regard to Calvinism, that made the deacons stare. Were the watchmen pulling

down the walls? Mrs. Cheever thought so sometimes. Therefore, one Sunday evening, after having heard in the morning some particularly uncertain sounds at the Corners, she resolved to pay her long meditated visit to St. Paul's, and notified Ezekiel accordingly. The service was performed by Mr. Mountfort in the old-fashioned way, and, as the result, she, good woman, was almost *vexed* to find that there was not an objectionable phrase from beginning to end, much less any Popery; while, contrary to her expectations, the "printed prayers," after all, *seemed* to "come from the heart." Then followed the sermon, in which there was *no* uncertain sound. It was full of what she called the "old Gospel," and she wondered if such sermons were always preached in the Episcopal church. Ezekiel said "that he was afraid not, but anyway that was Mr. Mountfort's style." That too, was the style of the Prayer-book; and he thought that anyway it would be "pretty hard for an honest man to preach one thing and pray another. In that case, the book was *straight against* him, and all the people knew it."



After this, Mrs. Cheever had many communings with herself about her position, especially as the administration at the old meeting-house grew more and more irregular, and, with "occasional preaching," the people were being blown about by every wind of doctrine. But then, if she went with Ezekiel, what would become of her belief in special Providence, a belief that so wonderfully supported her when her husband was crushed by the falling tree? Ezekiel did not know how to deal with this, but mentioned it to Mr. Mountfort, who pointed him to the Seventeenth Article, which he, in turn, showed to his mother. She was surprised to find that the whole subject was taken into consideration, though without assuming the risk of reducing it to rigid and inflexible forms, liable to oppress and harass the mind, if not to wound the heart. And as she pondered the subject, she considered whether it was not wise, after all, to avoid dogmatizing in connection with such mysterious themes. That God governed the world, all admitted. This being so, why not rest in that lofty and assuring belief, without vexing the mind about the precise method, or seeking to reconcile

the fore-knowledge of God with every accountable action of the individual? Had not her religious teachers, in framing their inflexible system, gone very far? Besides this, as she turned over the leaves of the Prayer-book, she came upon a hymn that summed up her present feelings better than anything else; the hymn beginning,

"God moves in a mysterious way,"

a hymn in which many a weary mind, after long and fruitless struggles over the secret things of God, has at last found rest. Really, the good woman asked herself, would not Ezekiel's church do for her, after all?

While this query was floating in her mind, they removed from the Corners to their present home. And here in Roxburgh the roots were all up. Occasionally she went to the Congregational church on the Green, near St. Mark's, but generally she went with Ezekiel and heard Dr. Walton, whose discourses she relished highly. Moreover, she thought Sam, who was studying Latin, would be a minister, —she hoped so at least. It seemed to her as if he was "saved in the apple tree on purpose." In that case, she had a feeling that you might

"count him for the Episcopals." And she didn't want to be separated from her children, especially from Sam, "the image of his father." While she saw Sam, she felt that she was near the good man who had gone "over the river."

Many of these matters she now rehearsed with Mr. Mountfort, who was no bigot, and who would not go a stone's throw, much less compass sea and land, to make a proselyte; yet, as blood is thicker than theology, as well as water, the liberal-hearted minister of the Corners inferred the result.

Thus far we have heard little about the convocation. Let Sam, therefore, announce the carriage, and take the party rapidly away to church, where, on their arrival, they found only a small congregation assembled. When, after some minutes, the service actually commenced, Dr. Walton was discouraged by seeing that the number had not materially increased. Nevertheless, the service, a short and appropriate one, sanctioned for missionary purposes, proceeded with feeling and spirit.

The prayers and praises being ended, Dr. Walton, in a few fitting remarks, announced

that missionary addresses would be made, and presented the first speaker, who proceeded to treat of missions in general; declaring, though the present service was a missionary service, we ought to remember that in the militant state of the Church, every service should be a missionary service, and that missions, in one form or another, should appeal powerfully to all hearts operated upon by the power of Christianity.

As the speaker concluded this train of thought, the senior warden, Mr. Dorsey, who had found his way to church, was seen to shrug his shoulders in a meaning fashion; while others in the assembly exchanged looks of surprise.

The next speaker, in the course of his remarks, reached the subject of finance, and touched upon "systematic giving;" and, further than this, a subject familiar enough to the reader, perhaps, but, nevertheless, to Roxburgh minds, invested with all the startling power of some heterodox proposition. Mr. Dorsey, in particular, looked as if he could hardly credit his senses; for all of which Dr. Walton could blame no one but himself,

since, while he had allowed the subject to sleep, the enemy had improved the occasion to sow tares. Hence it was that his chief parochial officer now appeared well nigh dismayed by this bold presentation of a simple truth. But Mr. Dorsey felt no better, as the exercises proceeded, since the rest of the speakers insisted upon the same principles with equal directness and force. When all the clergymen in the chancel had made brief addresses, the Rector, looking towards the pew where Mr. Mountfort sat with the Cheever family, remarked that there was one clergyman present from whom, he was sure, the people would be glad to have a few words, as anything he might say must be founded upon personal experience; he would therefore call upon the Rev. Mr. Mountfort to address the meeting. The Rector of St. Paul's was embarrassed for just a moment by this unexpected demand, yet he was not a man to flinch, and therefore he arose, went to the front of the chancel-rail, and, after endorsing the remarks of his predecessors, said that, inasmuch as he had been called out, he would make a few suggestions. But in the end, his

few suggestions took the form of some lengthy remarks, which astonished the people more than anything previously said. Adroitly outlining a fancy sketch that held the mirror up to the people of St. Mark's, he went on to inquire what was the excuse for so much deadness and indifference to the public enterprises of the Church? "Why," he said, in a tone modulated by a well-bred sarcasm, but which was, nevertheless, a tone that caused the Rector himself to feel an uncomfortable twinge, and to regret, for the moment, that he had brought Mr. Mountfort out, "they are too poor, they tell us, to do anything for this work, which constitutes one of the first and chief duties of every Christian man. But I tell you that, in my judgment, they are too poor *not* to do anything. Otherwise, they cannot *afford* to dispense with the privilege of contributing to the general work of the Church, a privilege in the exercise of which there has always been found a source of strength and growth. The act of giving for any *ordinary* object led directly to feelings of self-confidence, if not of munificence." It made the man feel that he was the *possessor* of

something; that he was not a beggar, but a person of resources. It led to an undeceiving of self, that undisciplined self which, when a gift is asked, inclines to feel that it has nothing. And, besides, one act of liberality makes the following not only possible, but easier. It constitutes the removal of an obstruction that hinders the general flow. Everybody knows that, in forming a new sluice-way (and here he spoke specially to the mill-owners of Roxburgh who were present), the great point is gained when the first full head of water goes coursing on its way. Much more is the principle seen to be true when considered in connection with Christian liberality. For here the natural law is reinforced by a Divine power that comes with our obedience to the provisions of the Divine promise, which says: *Give*, and it shall be *given to you*. While we feel poor, and refuse to consider the claims of those beyond our own circle, our own prosperity will drag. In fact, it always drags. Such, he said, was the case in the parish of which he then had the charge, and such had been the case with every parish of which he had any knowledge. "What we

want, first of all," said the minister of the Corners, warming with his theme, "is not more wealth, but more liberality; not a large increase of money, but an increase of the disposition to make a true use of what we have, for the will hews out its way. We cannot afford to live without earnest desires. Our own good demands general activity and broad sympathies for all around us. And then we shall find that those who water others are abundantly watered."

At the close, being full of the spirit of the occasion, the Rector of Roxburgh expressed his confidence in the views which the various speakers had set forth, and intimated pretty broadly that in the future the parish of St. Mark's would be expected to shape its policy in accordance with the convictions that appeared to animate the assembly. He then invited the people to give some substantial token of their approval, at the same time advancing to the chancel-rail, according to his custom, holding the two plates for the collectors, who always stepped forward to receive them. But on this occasion the junior warden was absent, while the senior failed to move. Seeing the

hesitation, and anxious to give time, Dr. Walton began the opening sentence, "Let your light so shine before men," at the same time holding one of the plates towards Mr. Dorsey. While he stood thus, Vestryman Flint came to his relief to perform duty for the absent junior warden, taking a plate and moving to the south side of the church, expecting that Mr. Dorsey would take the other. But the senior warden did not stir an inch, and sat in the corner of his pew, as if glued to the bench, plainly saying thereby that the whole thing was contrary to his views and wishes, and that the Rector might extricate himself as he best could. It was indeed a very impulsive and foolish thing to do, as Mr. Dorsey was well aware on the morrow; yet there he sat immovable, publicly making a declaration of war. The Rector, however, took in the situation and interpreted the action. It was *his* turn to appear flushed now; but, after standing a moment with the great beads of perspiration bursting from his brow, he said, quietly: "Will some one be so kind as to pass this plate?" On this demand each, though ready to serve, waited

for his neighbor, until finally, being able to endure no longer, impulsive Ezekiel, arrayed in his never-to-be-forgotten blue coat and brass buttons, rose from his seat, went forward, took the plate and started on his tour, his honest face all on fire with the embarrassment growing out of his sudden appearance in such a new rôle.

As might be supposed, this open demonstration on the part of Mr. Dorsey caused a sensation; and, while the plates went around, some telegraphed their opinion of his performance in the shape of indignant glances shot off in the direction of that functionary's pew, while others held whispered conference with heads mutually inclined. All comprehended the affair, and none more clearly than Ezekiel, who, notwithstanding his embarrassment, adroitly managed to emphasize the unhappy warden's offence, and visit it directly upon his head, by stopping when opposite Mr. Dorsey's pew, to give him an opportunity to put something on the plate. Ezekiel certainly could not have done less, and yet by this act all eyes were drawn to the warden, to see if his resolution would relax. But though Ezekiel gave

him ample time (some said that he mischievously gave more) the new collector was obliged to proceed on his way, leaving the warden sitting with tightly folded arms, and with a countenance as stony as that of the Sphinx. When, however, the plates were turned, and the service was over, the rigidity of his face disappeared, and the people said that he looked fairly abashed as he escaped through the church door. Thus ended Dr. Walton's missionary meeting. And we can all easily imagine what were his feelings. But his clerical brethren, knowing that they could do nothing to mitigate his chagrin, wisely ignored the whole transaction. In the mean while, Mr. Flint and Ezekiel counted the collection, and found that it amounted to a considerable sum, at least for hard-fisted St. Mark's—though it was pretty certain to the mind of Dr. Walton that there would not be much left if they were to deduct what came from Mrs. Lawyer Mason, Vestryman Flint, and Ezekiel. The next morning the members of the convocation departed for their respective homes, and the Rector of Roxburgh was left to arrange his difficulty with his senior warden as he best could.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Tried in the Balance.*

"Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin."

THE PROPHET DANIEL.

"His greatness weighed, his will is not his own."

HAMLET.

THE next day Dr. Walton felt very much depressed, and inclined to dwell on what he now came to consider the too-feeblely defined relations of priest and people, which led laymen to indulge at times in acts of insubordination like that of the senior warden. This in a few days led to a fresh revival of the melancholy which now began to assume a morbid form, especially as he took no measures to clear up the misunderstanding.

But in the mean while we must inquire about the movements of Mr. Dorsey. As already intimated, that person went out of church, at the close of the missionary meeting, somewhat chagrined. He was, moreover, exceedingly

vexed with himself, a somewhat unusual thing for a consequential man. But here was a clear case, and one wholly indefensible. He had foolishly thrown down the gauntlet to the Rector, and caused him no little mortification, likewise, in the presence of the whole congregation. And his opposition was soon published among the townspeople, so that when abroad he felt almost like a marked man. Still he resolved to retract nothing, and he felt determined to block the Rector's new policy by every means in his power.

He did not care now so much about the financial issue as about having his own way. He would like to know who was going to rule in St. Mark's. The *great* issue, however, he would keep in the background, while he would shove the money question up to the front, believing that that was the best way, in close-fisted Roxburgh, to win. In his work he found an excellent ally in the treasurer of St. Mark's, who had no idea of seeing money flow out for work abroad, while he was unable to meet the obligations of the parish at home. He prided himself on being a "practical man."

Still this functionary was not destined to give law to the parish without opposition ; for, in the course of two or three days after the difficulty arose, Mr. Dorsey, on entering one of the stores on the main street of the town, met Ezekiel Cheexer face to face. Evidently the former was anything but pleased ; but, as they were well acquainted, the confused senior warden could not do otherwise than return the greeting extended by Ezekiel, though he felt exceedingly unamiable on account of the advertising which Ezekiel's act gave him on his refusal to carry the plate. He accordingly felt very sorry that he was not going out of the store, instead of going in. But, as it was, there could be no escape from Ezekiel, whose eye twinkled with satisfaction on gaining this unexpected opportunity. He therefore opened upon the warden at once, saying, in his blindest tone, "A pretty interestin' meeting that, Wednesday night."

Now if Ezekiel had studied the subject for a month, he could not possibly have made what, under the circumstances, would have proved a more provoking remark. It reached an exceedingly tender spot, and brought the

color to Mr. Dorsey's face, as some of the townspeople, who are always lounging in country stores, distinctly observed. Nevertheless he thought it best to control his rising indignation, and quietly replied, "I suppose you *think* so."

"Well, that ain't my opinion alone; it's what the folks say that was there," said Ezekiel.

"In that case, then, they had better make the most of it, because it will be some time before St. Mark's Church looks upon another such gathering."

"I don't view it so at all. *Guess* the Doctor's made up his mind."

"And I have made up *my* mind, too," said the warden, in a positive and self-sufficient tone.

"Very likely," said Ezekiel, paying no attention to the warmth of Mr. Dorsey, "very likely; but there is *laws* to the Church."

"Yes, there is the law of reason and common sense, which will, in due time, be heard from. Now look here, friend Cheever," he continued, changing his tone to one of offensive patronage, "if I *must* be detained here in

public to speak of these matters, let me give you a piece of advice, which is, not to interest yourself too much about the administration of the parish. Some of us old churchmen know quite as well as young converts how to conduct matters, and we are not going to have the established order of things interfered with in any revolutionary way. As for missionary societies, those are all very well in their place; but they must be kept *in* their place. People have first to take care of themselves. And so it is with parishes. Your friend from the Corners had a good deal to say about giving, and *that*, perhaps, was all very well; but still we *practical* people know that it was not the think to preach here in Roxburgh, where we have *nothing to give*, and what is worse, are deeply in debt; debts, too, that have hung over our heads for years, while the Rector's salary is always behind. I tell you," and here the warden began to get excited and speak very loud, "I tell you, whatever men may *preach*, that we can't *afford* to have money carried out of the parish while this state of things continues; we must stop the leaks, yes, stop the leaks," reiterated the warden,



bringing down his gold-headed cane after his own peculiar style upon the shop floor, and raising a cloud of dust, symbolical of the murky state of his own mind.

"Stop the *leaks*!" replied Ezekiel, without appearing to notice Mr. Dorsey's manner, "*ketch* a fish afore you fry him, is my motto. Things has been stopped so tight they *couldn't* leak, and Dr. Walton ain't got in sight yet of his quarter's salary that was due 'most three months ago."

"Well, and he never *will* get in sight of it, if he is so insane as to insist upon sending our money to people scattered all the way between China and the Rocky Mountains. We're too poor, I tell you, to indulge in such operations."

"Now, Mr. Dorsey, jest look at them flowers," said Ezekiel, in reply, pointing to a row of young verbenas and heliotropes which the proprietor of this New England "variety store" had arranged neatly on a bench to entice some fair customer; "jest look at them flowers," Ezekiel repeated. "They are certainly very delicate things, and have very little strength; but 'spose *they*

said to themselves, we are very feeble, and can't afford to be sending out our fragrance all around, and then stopped giving you so much as a sniff; how do you 'spose they would get on? And I tell you what it is, St. Mark's Parish can't afford to shet itself up any more than a posy; for if it does it'll *die*."

"But who cares for all that poetical stuff, you get from your betters," said the senior warden, sarcastically, now making no effort to conceal his rising wrath.

"Yes," said Ezekiel, "He *is* my betters Who preached about considerin' the lily."

"But I did not ask you to teach me a lesson from the Testament. Tell us what analogy there is between St. Mark's Church and those flowers."

"'Nalogy!" almost roared Ezekiel, "*no* 'nalogy! One is as delicate and gen'rous as can be, and the other's strong and mean as pizen. The debts would have been paid long ago, if the people hadn't been so plaguey narrer. Why, sir, I know, and *you* know, *one man* in the parish who could pay every cent the church owes out of his last year's income, and not feel it."

Now if there was any one thing more than another that Mr. Dorsey liked to be reminded of, it was the fact that he possessed large wealth. The tax-lists of Roxburgh showed that he owned in the vicinity of three hundred thousand dollars, largely in mill property, which brought him dividends ranging from seven to fifteen per cent. But the form in which this information came was altogether too uncomplimentary. Therefore he was filled with disgust; and, without giving Ezekiel a chance to get in another word, he turned furiously on his heel, and strode pompously out of the place, muttering (so one of the idlers said) something about "insolence." Certain it is, that the rich warden left a loud laugh behind him; while before night the story of the rencontre between him and Ezekiel had been described, with variations, by all the gossips in town. It was the general opinion that down at sleepy St. Mark's they were getting waked up.

Now in his rencontre with Ezekiel Cheever, Warden Dorsey had gained no advantage whatever, though aware of the fact that he had afforded the very idlers of the town

a subject of merriment. But he was nevertheless an important person, and he felt it incumbent upon him to maintain his position and follow his difference of opinion with Dr. Walton to the end. In this respect, he imitated the example of many an ill-judging parish official, and illustrated, very forcibly, the manner in which one false step usually necessitates another. Therefore, at the very next meeting of the wardens and vestry, he commenced his demonstration. Having previously held a session with the treasurer, Mr. Holdlock, in regard to the finances, he was prepared to make a telling report on the delinquencies, which he naturally expected would sufficiently impress the majority of his associates, and enable him to carry his measures of resistance. These were to assume the form of a regular resolution, to be offered by a third party, who was ready to aid him in opposing the policy of the Rector.

When the evening for the meeting arrived, there was an unusually full attendance, Vestryman Mason alone being absent. As the Rector entered he was very cordially received,

except by Mr. Dorsey and the treasurer, between whom and Dr. Walton the greetings were formal and stiff. In fact, the Rector and the senior warden had not exchanged a syllable since the night of the missionary meeting; the former having been well-nigh devoured by melancholy; now kept alive by the unprosperous condition of the parish. And on this occasion he came to the meeting with a dull foreboding that he would there encounter opposition. Nevertheless, he was assured by the greetings of the majority that he would in any event find some warm supporters.

The regular routine business, on this occasion, passed off without exciting any particular remark, until they came to the treasurer's report, from which it appeared that the parish was exceedingly backward; two quarters' salary still being due to the Rector, while the treasurer did not know where he could get the money, and purposely observed that it seemed to him absolutely necessary to practice the strictest economy, if they expected ever to meet their obligations.

This gave the senior warden the opportu-

nity which he desired, when he at once proceeded to unfold his thoughts. He said that, in this connection, there was one matter which he particularly desired to bring to the attention of his associates, though he should do so with a great deal of hesitation. Nevertheless he would endeavor to be frank, as he believed that the time for him to speak had come.

His associates here thought they knew what was the burden upon his mind, and were of the opinion that he had been too frank already, at least in *deeds*, if not in words. On the whole, they were not favorably impressed with his beginning, for it was generally thought, that, whether the Rector was right or wrong as regarded the missionary meeting, an apology was due him from Mr. Dorsey. Nevertheless the senior warden went on, and finally came to his point, which was, that, in his judgment, the action of the Rector was, under the circumstances, highly inexpedient and unwarrantable. To that end he offered a formal resolution, designed to interdict the Rector from making any collection for purposes outside the parish, while the debts of the church

remained unpaid. The Rector had not indeed expressed his intention to call for any such collections, yet that was all the same. The warden simply wanted to know "who was going to rule." This was his way of getting at the matter.

Now by this bold demonstration, Dr. Walton was at first somewhat abashed; but, recovering from his astonishment, he suffered the question to come before the assembly, though not without first reminding those present that, possibly, the nature of the resolution was such as would justify him in laying it altogether aside, if he saw fit. Still he did not feel weak, and was not afraid to give the subject a hearing.

Mr. Dorsey, therefore, went on in some general remarks in favor of his proposition, and ended, for the time, by calling upon the treasurer for some more detailed statement of the church finances. This information was very promptly given, having been tabulated in advance for the purpose; and it appeared that the mortgage on the church, notwithstanding the legacy recently left by a deceased member, amounted to the sum of twenty-nine

hundred dollars, the interest of which was already overdue; while there was a floating debt of eight hundred dollars, in addition to arrears of Rector's salary. The committee on repairs, also, estimated that the amount needed at once to put the roof of the church and the rectory in a proper condition could not possibly fall short of six hundred dollars. The organ likewise needed some alterations; while the sexton, catching the spirit of a recent movement among the Roxburgh operatives, had "struck" for higher wages. Thus triumphantly did the man of figures wind up his exhibit.

Mr. Dorsey took up the strain, and desired to know, if, in the present state of the parish, it would not be well to keep the missionary contributions at home. Otherwise how could the church *ever* get out of debt? To his mind, it seems, the case was conclusive. When Mr. Dorsey had finished, the Rector turned to the treasurer, and inquired in the quietest, business-like tone, "if he had included in his estimate *all* of the liabilities of the church?" "All; every cent," was the prompt reply.

"Possibly this may be so," said the Rev. Dr. Walton; "but, as you have the books with you, Mr. Holdlock, will you be so good as to turn to the financial statement for the year 18—and see what was the *amount* of income, and what were the *sources*; but no matter, perhaps," he suddenly added, "about the *amount*, let us know the *source*."

At this, the treasurer looked not a little puzzled, while Mr. Dorsey, though an "old Churchman," as he called himself in his interview with Ezekiel Cheever, shared in the feeling. He had not always been a member of this body, and was not very well acquainted with the earlier business affairs of St Mark's. But the treasurer quickly found the place, and began to run over the items of income for the year designated, until he suddenly came to one, the reading of which nearly took away his breath. It was as follows: "From the Treasurer of the Board of Missions, \$300." Mr. Dorsey was also taken aback; but the most of those present relished this development exceedingly, while some laughed outright, at the same time casting meaning glances at the wilting warden, who

was not slow to detect the bearing of the fact.

"I think, Mr. Holdlock, that we shall have to add *that* item to the church debt, shall we not?" said the Rector, in his former quiet and imperturbable manner, affecting to take no notice of the merriment which he had excited. Mr. Holdlock was, for the moment, too well persuaded to demur, and too much chagrined to assent, and so he remained silent.

At last Mr. Dorsey got his voice, and observed, in a tone of assumed indifference: "Oh, I suppose that most all parishes have at some time accepted such trifling charities from the missionary society, or whatever they call it."

"I hardly think that 'charity' is the right word to apply to such appropriations," said the Rector. "The Church, through that representative body, does not treat her people as *paupers*; but recognizes the principle of this loan in connection with every transaction. What is conveyed is not a *gift*. In every sense of the word, those three hundred dollars constitute a loan, and, as such, is it

not to be honestly accounted a part of our church debt?"

Now this was altogether too good reasoning for the senior warden to brush lightly aside, and, therefore, he sought to avoid the issue by remarking that he had "no disposition to split hairs about *terms*, while, as for the money received from the society, if his associates were inclined to view it as a loan, he would make no objection, though he would insist upon discharging the great debts first, as the society could very well wait."

But here, again, the Rector, having the advantage, followed it up, inquiring "if those who held the mortgage upon the church were in haste about the principal?" This remark touched Mr. Vestryman Flint, who held the most of it, and he stoutly declared "that there was no haste at all. It was a good investment, and all they cared for was the interest." As might be supposed from what we have previously heard of Mr. Flint, he was heartily in favor of meeting the claim.

By this time Mr. Dorsey began to regard the fate of his resolution as dubious, and was

already considering how he should recall it, and beat a respectable retreat; being afraid to change his ground and open a new issue, basing his action upon an alleged desire to maintain the rights of the laity. But it *did* occur to him that he might gain a substantial victory after all, if he only persisted upon paying the *great* debt first, and leave the missionary claims to wait. To this end he addressed his arguments, being seconded by his ally, the treasurer, and even succeeded in enlisting a third person in favor of his view; while on the other side was the junior warden and Mr. Flint, which left the scales quite evenly balanced. But Dr. Walton was a good tactician, and, therefore, when his opponents had done their best, and exhausted their force, he prepared, like a good general, to bring up his reserves, and decide the question. He now took occasion to remark, that as some were anxious to discharge the largest debt first, it would, perhaps, be as well to ascertain which liability *was* the largest. The treasurer again looked perplexed, feeling persuaded, after hearing this last suggestion, that the Rector was thoroughly acquainted

with his ground, and knew more about the church finances than he knew himself. And well the Rector might, as the said finances had kept him awake a great many nights. At all events, the Rector quietly called upon the treasurer to look at the statement of the income for the year previous to that just examined, when there was found the same sum acknowledged from the missionary society. Going back through the four *previous* years, five hundred dollars were found in each year from the missionary board. They had considered the case an unusually fair one, and were liberal in the appropriation, confident that they would receive it back again with compound interest. For the two years following there was an appropriation of two hundred dollars. At the end of that time St. Mark's was able to go alone. "Now," said Dr. Walton, "will the treasurer be so good as to foot up the amount, and tell us how much it is, without the accrued interest?"

The obliging treasurer made the best grace possible of the situation, and quickly presented the sum total. Thereupon Dr.

Walton observed, that "if the greatest debt had the strongest claim, they now knew where to find it."

Mr. Dorsey at once recognized his defeat; and, without requesting leave to withdraw his resolution, moved an adjournment, which was gladly agreed to, as all were heartily weary, and others quite ashamed, of this disagreeable piece of business. We must, however, do the senior warden the justice to say that he was one of the latter class, as well as of the former; for whereas when he came to the meeting he had to regret having taken *one* false step, he was now obliged to bear the odium of *two*. Nevertheless, he went from the vestry-room without seeking to make the *amende honorable* to the Rector, though the treasurer shook hands with Dr. Walton and managed to raise a laugh. The Rector of Roxburgh had gone up in his estimation a number of degrees. As for the Rector himself, he came out of the vestry meeting confident in the strength of his position, and with something of the old depression lifted from his mind. His chief concern, now, however, related to the course that might be pursued

by his senior warden, who had been mortified beyond degree.

But here, let us remark, that though we have taken the pains to detail these particulars in the history of the parish of Roxburgh, the instance is by no means singular. All the essential features of the case may be recognized as their own by various parishes in different parts of the land, which, in the rush of events, soon forget the pit from whence they were dugged, or, otherwise, become forgetful of the obligations which they are actually under to others. Therefore it is that in so many cases they turn a deaf ear to the appeals of those who often plead in vain for some recognition of the generous aid received by them in the hour of weakness and need.

Then, too, the parish of Roxburgh was likewise a pattern parish, in respect to the fidelity with which it persisted in pleading its *poverty*, while in reality it was tolerably rich. It was the *truth* of Ezekiel Cheever's remark to Mr. Dorsey, in regard to his personal ability to cancel all the parish debts, which so nettled that erring individual, and caused

him to rush hastily away from the conference at the store.

St. Mark's Church was *not* poor, except in faith. The mortgage and other local debts formed comparatively the merest trifle, while the small salary so tardily paid to the Rector was really unworthy of their means. What they lacked was the spirit of liberality, a large sympathy with the great religious and benevolent enterprises of the day. Without some measure of this largeness of heart, Dr. Walton felt assured that all the parish interests would drag. He was persuaded that while Christian people cared nothing for others, they would care little for themselves. Otherwise, God's sunshine could not be enjoyed *strictly within the parish bounds*, and unless they possessed this sunshine, the parish interests would not thrive. There, to illustrate, was Mr. Dorsey. His income ranged from twenty-five to thirty thousand dollars per annum, as was the case with several other parishioners. And yet the degree of liberality that he practiced was contemptible. And what was the result of this niggardly feeling in the parish? Why, it made the labor of the



treasurer actually *onerous*, in collecting a beggarly account of pew-rent, or an assessment for repairs on the church roof. But we shall return to this matter again.

## CHAPTER XII.

*The Drovers.*

"I dreamed there was an Emperor Antony."

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

"An extreme desire did lately assail me to entertain between my other private studies, some such discourse as might work upon my own mind, and at last abstract awhile, if not elevate my cogitations above all earthly objects."

RELIQUE WALTONIÆ.

WHILE the Rector of Roxburgh dwelt on the condition of things, he grew more and more inclined to despond, notwithstanding the strong ground which he had previously taken. It was true that he had gained a decided advantage over his unruly warden; but he knew Mr. Dorsey too well to suppose for a moment that that individual would cease to oppose him. The rich man's wealth gave him influence with many who cared nothing for him personally, and as Dr. Walton believed, he was determined to use other means than those already tried to establish a sort of supremacy for himself in the

parish of St. Mark's. Therefore the incumbent began even to query whether or not he had better remain in the parish at all, to encounter, for aught he knew, endless vexations, which would detract from his usefulness and render him wretched in the extreme. He saw in Mr. Dorsey, now that he was thoroughly aroused, that typical individual whom so many rectors have encountered in the man of large wealth who values the indulgence of his own whim more than the peace of the church. Yet, when the Rector of Roxburgh spoke with his wife on the subject of the difficulty, and hinted something about resigning his charge, the proposed step was deprecated with much earnestness and concern. Mrs. Walton declared that in what he had done he had acted aright, and now having put his hand to the plough, how could he look back? Besides, she did not believe that Mr. Dorsey would, or *could*, carry his opposition so far, after all. "And then, if he *did*—" she said, but here Mrs. Walton's eyes, losing their wonted calm, actually began to flash with the indignation that lighted them up on her first introduction to the reader. The beautiful

proprietor knew it, too, and so checked herself and remained silent. If Ezekiel Cheever, however, had seen her then, he would not have changed his opinion about her saintliness. He believed in righteous indignation himself.

In this matter Mrs. Walton simply expressed his own persuasion in the premises; for would he be justified, on the whole, in giving way to a single individual who sought simply to assert his personality at the expense of everything else? It would only be paving the way for fresh tribulations on the part of his successor. No, he must remain. Still, the resolution at which he arrived did not set his mind at rest, since he daily saw some evidence to indicate that the senior warden was at work, and using all his influence to make his administration uncomfortable. He accordingly secluded himself by degrees from the people, and suffered many seasons of deep dejection, during which he dwelt more and more upon the memory of Eva, who seemed, in some mysterious way, to connect him with the invisible world.

All this took place at a time when a large

portion of New England had become excited with regard to certain phenomena, for which many asserted a distinct supernatural origin and character. The feeling was not exclusively confined to any particular class, though its most noted victims were generally drawn from the uneducated portion of the community, and many men of fine intelligence and culture were carried away for the time by manifestations which they could not explain. Mental aberration was therefore the order of the day, while there were few circles so exclusively occupied with their own immediate interests as to exclude what had come to be a topic of conversation and thought.

The phenomena to which we allude affected different persons in different ways. Some hailed them with satisfaction, and even delight; others were inspired by a profound contempt; while a few, who had previously felt more or less sceptical with reference to the existence of the soul after death, now began to believe sincerely in immortality. Others again were repelled by the grossness almost invariably associated with the subject, and inclined to hold with those ancient Sad-

ducees, who claimed that there was neither angel nor spirit. Still, in the main, these phenomena found human sympathy on their side; for when are bereaved and smitten hearts not ready to recognize any new bond that promises to reunite them with the loved and the lost?

And, as we have already seen, Dr. Walton, in common with many other strong men, was predisposed to give the subject a fair, if not an over-fair, examination. The question was one peculiarly suited to the morbid and desponding condition of his mind, which at this time was not under its usual even control. He therefore resolved to investigate the subject; and, being a man of thorough mental habits, he began with an examination of the Fathers, whose works he diligently perused, in order to ascertain what were their views with reference to communion with the spiritual world. Not, of course, that he had never previously entertained any definite scheme with respect to the whole question of the seen and the unseen. In his early studies, in connection with the Article of the Creed which touches upon the Communion of Saints, he had gained

some clear views concerning that lofty Christian companionship which overpasses the bounds of time, space, and earthly sense, and forms angels and living saints and the dead into one ever-increasing fraternity ; but now he sought for its evidence. Hence he dwelt upon personal vagaries of early writers, and, instead of resting upon the general consent of the Christian world, inclined to entertain thoughts that have been regarded with suspicion. He also considered whether it was really true, as one of the ancients averred, that, in the *Ter-Sanctus* at the Holy Communion, angels and spirits hovered above the altar, joining in the ascriptions. And from the early writers he passed to modern times, lifting down from its shelf that repository of New England wonders, Mather's *Magnalia* ; and pondering likewise the weird and inexplicable tale of the Wesley parsonage,—a subject that will long continue to puzzle the most clear-headed and astute. Nor could he in his wide range disdain the vulgar annals of still more recent times ; at least while statesmen, politicians and grave judges sought in these same annals for subjects to weave into essay,

disquisition and ponderous tome. And, as might easily be imagined, his mind became strangely fascinated with the subject.

And while pondering these things, he, one day, took a long walk beyond the town, for the purpose of calling on one of his rural parishioners, then suffering from sickness. Returning homeward, he selected an untravelled route, which was, in fact, hardly a bridle path, but which lay through a wild and romantic neighborhood, of which he was extremely fond. While resting near the brow of a precipitous cliff, situated on the face of a low hill, overlooking a secluded glen, he glanced down, and by chance perceived what appeared to be an excavation in the earth. Looking more closely, he found that he was correct, and, moreover, that three men were at work. As the route selected lay through the glen, he resumed his walk, and descended to the spot which he had observed from his perch on the cliffs, when he found several wild and uncommon looking individuals plying their spades. On his approach, they looked up, ceased their work, cast meaning glances at one another, and

then turned to the Rector of Roxburgh with an expression indicating surprise and a sense of intrusion. Dr. Walton saw at once that they expected some explanation, and so remarked: "I saw you at work from the cliffs, and wondered who could be preparing to build here in this retreat among the hills."

"To build!" exclaimed one of these singular appearing persons, with a dash of contempt in the tone of his voice; but the next instant, perceiving from the expression of his associates that they appeared anxious and solicitous about what he might say, he turned from the Rector to one of his companions, remarking: "Well, Hezekiah, you know as well as I that it ain't no use to talk about building."

"Oh, I did not mean to be inquisitive," said Dr. Walton. "I saw you at work, and supposed that you were engaged at some ordinary affair."

Thereupon the individual addressed as Hezekiah took up the conversation, and observed, "Well, I suppose that John is right, and that it is no use to make folks believe that we are going to build; and yet, if we find what we want, we shall have houses a plenty, and

land, too." As he said this, his eyes glowed with a wild, supernatural light, while, at the same time, he leaned forward with both hands grasping the handle of his spade, and looked searchingly into Dr. Walton's face to discover what he might be thinking about. Dr. Walton at once took in his meaning, and replied:

"Well, I suppose then, that you expect to find something valuable; treasure of some kind?"

"Exactly," said John, who was the brother of the two men, his companions. "As I said to Hezekiah, it's no use to try to cover the matter up. The land we've bought; and what we find is *ours*, anyway."

"On what grounds do you base your expectations?" said the Rector.

"On the *best* of grounds, for hasn't he told us that all we want is under this rock?" said John, at the same time picking up an iron bar and driving it down a few inches in the loosened earth until it struck heavily upon an underlying ledge.

"But remember," said the third person, now speaking, "the stranger don't know who *'he'* is."

"Maybe he don't *want* to know. A minister, I guess, by his clothes; and some of them folks are prejudiced against *our* views."

These words were addressed by Hezekiah to his brothers, but they were intended for Dr. Walton, who replied that he "should like very well to know who could be the author of such remarkable information."

"Well, then," said Hezekiah, "Brother Absalom there," pointing to the third person already mentioned, "had an inkling of it himself; they *hinted* it to *him*, but it took Gershom Brewer to bring out the full revelation. But maybe you have never heard of *him*?"

The Rector assured him that he had not.

"Then I will tell you about Gershom. He's the greatest medium in these parts. *Wonderful* insight! You ought to see his power in the circle. But then," he continued, "perhaps you don't think much of the new philosophy. Still, whatever men may think, the revelation will go on, and out of all the present disorder will come a spiritual system of perfect harmony. Gershom Brewer says

that we have already passed into the transition state. But I suppose you doubt. It's the way of *your* profession."

Dr. Walton replied that he "certainly had doubts," yet he, nevertheless, should have no objection to investigate the matter.

"Gershom will hold a circle at Seth Crane's, next Friday night," exclaimed the Spiritualist, without attempting to conceal his satisfaction at the prospect of having a clergyman present at one of their sittings; and proceeded to enlighten Dr. Walton with respect to Seth Crane, of whom they had bought this piece of land at a high price. Seth's house was situated nearly half way between St. Mark's Church and Vestryman Flint's farm.

These points having been settled, the trio became exceedingly talkative, especially on the subject of the hidden treasure which they were sure to find; and entertained Dr. Walton with their views on the religious questions of the day, in their relations to the new light.

When matters assumed this aspect, the Rector of Roxburgh rose from the stone upon which he had been sitting, and took his leave. As he passed out of the romantic glen, he

heard the voice of Hezekiah bidding him to "Remember Friday night."

At the tea-table, Dr. Walton said to his wife, "You did not know that there were people searching for treasure trove in Whar-ton's Glen, I suppose?"

"O, yes; but I forgot to mention that I heard of it; the three Smiths, whose home is at the Corners. What a pity that they should be throwing away their time and money."

After this he did not mention that he had received an invitation to attend the circle on Friday night.

During the intervening days, Dr. Walton thought much on the subject that had already occupied his attention too long. Especially he considered what sort of a person Gershom Brewer must be to wield the influence which he appeared to possess, and how he should meet him; for this he had made up his mind to do. When Friday morning came, he found himself suffering from the effects of an unquiet, disjointed night, part of which was spent in wakefulness and part in dreams. In the course of the latter, for this he remembered with marked distinctness, there appeared

to him a man of venerable aspect and bearing, with long hair, a full, flowing and almost silvery beard, a well-shaped forehead and a calm, saintly eye. Who or what this marked personage was he did not know, much less why he came. The man of his dreams spoke no words, and disappeared, leaving only the impression of his appearance and bearing. These were indelibly photographed upon his mind's eye.

But the work of the day came, and, being busied with various duties, the apparition of the previous night was forgotten. Not so, however, with his engagement, which he kept in mind, and justified his resolution, on the ground that, if there were nothing reliable in the so-called manifestations, he would at least, by an acquaintance with them, be the better prepared to meet them with arguments when occasion demanded. Accordingly, after tea, while Mrs. Walton was absorbed by some household duty, he excused himself, and started for Seth Crane's, where Gershom Brewer's circle was to hold its session. A rapid walk of twenty minutes or more brought him to Seth's

house, a lonely place, just off the county road which led to the "Corners." Seth Crane, it appears, had been notified that he might expect a clerical visitor that evening, and when Doctor Walton knocked, the door was quickly opened by the master of the house, who cordially invited him to enter, though he did not recognize him as the Rector of Roxburgh. To tell the truth, Seth Crane had not darkened a church door for many a year, and had studiously kept out of the way of clergymen. He now showed his visitor into a sitting-room illuminated by a dismal candle, which, besides rendering the darkness visible, afforded a glimpse of the three Smith brothers whom the Rector had encountered in the Glen, a couple of middle-aged, wiry-looking women, and a pale girl with wonderfully dark and lustrous eyes. Seth's wife was also present, and besides these were several nondescript figures engaged in a ghostly sort of conversation in a corner. The Smith brothers at once opened a brisk conversation, and brought forward their great topic, which they maintained, until the company was increased by fresh arrivals; then all

were invited to repair to another room, evidently reserved for the purpose, the furniture of which consisted of a large table and a number of plain chairs.

The great spiritualist had not yet arrived, but Seth Crane thought that the circle had better be formed at once, that all might compose their minds; which was especially desirable, he observed, as one or two of those present were strangers, and might unconsciously interfere with the spiritual flow. All therefore took seats around the table, the Rector with the rest, the latter feeling not a little foolish. Thus they sat in perfect silence, the room being very poorly lighted by an oil lamp. They had waited but a few minutes when a rap at the door called out Seth Crane, who essayed in the most solemn manner to retreat on tiptoe, though the harder he tried, the worse his "best boots" creaked, and the smaller was the prospect of a visitation from the spirits. When he re-appeared, he brought with him another person, also a stranger to the circle, and one who had formerly known the Smith brothers at their former home, and who, hearing that they were at Seth Crane's,



had come around to have a chat and inquire after the people at the Corners. This was no less a personage than Ezekiel Cheever. Accepting the invitation to remain, and moving with the required gravity to the place assigned him in the circle, the young farmer subsided into a seat directly opposite the Rector of Roxburgh; when, slowly looking up, to his unspeakable surprise, he saw Dr. Walton. And Dr. Walton saw him. Now which, gentle reader, was the more surprised? for all can imagine which party was the more chagrined. But neither of them uttered a syllable, nor exchanged looks of recognition. Ezekiel saw that Dr. Walton wished to remain unknown—he was glad to have it so. But the current of the Rector's thought was soon diverted into a new channel, by the whispered announcement, "He's come," which told the august presence of Gershom Brewer. As that individual entered the room, the light of the lamp fell full upon his tall figure, and clearly revealed to the Rector of Roxburgh *the man of his dreams!* All his embarrassment and chagrin now fled, before this sudden rehabilitation of the unknown one. There

was the identical man, with his reverend mien, his flowing beard, and calm eye. Passing to the seat reserved for his use, without inclining his head or greeting any one, the seer nevertheless took in all before him, and recognized the fact that he had, in some way, impressed the one member of the party in a most remarkable degree, though he was not satisfied in his own mind in regard to how it was done. Still he was sure of the *fact*, for he was a keen psychologist. After a little time spent in profound silence, the benignant master intimated in the usual way that the circle was complete, and that spirits were ready to communicate. Still no one seemed in a hurry to improve the opportunity, and Hezekiah Smith was the first to put a query to the invisibles. But his anxieties were of a mercantile character, and Gershom adroitly brought his queries to a close, and in a ghostly way signified that there was now an opportunity for strangers to prosecute any inquiry. As we have seen, Dr. Walton was profoundly impressed by the coincidence of his dream. It was a very remarkable thing, and what did it signify? Was it an intimation

that would justify confidence in this man? For the time he could not interpret it otherwise, and he passed quite under the spell.

Now, therefore, an opportunity being given, Dr. Walton inquired, under the medium's direction, if any spirit friend of his were present. In response came a rap that shook the table. Again he asked if his friend would communicate with him. Then came another affirmative. Now would the friend rap as many times as there were letters in his or her name. Yes; and then followed three distinct raps. "Eva!" thought Dr. Walton, while his astonishment at the reply was expressed upon his countenance.

And now, would this friend make assurance doubly sure and write the letters of the name by the hand of the medium. Yes, was the reply indicated. Whereupon, Gershom Brewer took a pencil, and, with closed eyes and seraphic countenance, wrote "*Eva*." The paper was handed to Dr. Walton, who recognized the name, written in a childlike hand, which, under the circumstances, he readily accepted as resembling the characters that Eva had often formed on scraps of paper

on his study table. At the sight of the writing he could not suppress the deep emotion which he felt; and signified to the rest to go on with their investigations. When, however, the people saw that he inclined to inquire farther, they gave him an opportunity; and, after some thought, he desired the spirit to indicate the tune which, when on earth, it had loved best. Whereupon there commenced a series of gentle tappings, out of which he distinctly evolved the structure of Eva's favorite tune, the very tune which he then had in mind! And now was he persuaded? asked Seth Crane.

The Rector of Roxburgh was so strangely affected that he could not speak, and allowed silence to yield consent. By this time he felt exhausted and faint, owing to the profound excitement attendant upon the scene; and the conference passed into other hands.

Absorbed, for the time, by his own thoughts, he failed to notice what passed, though he was aware that Hezekiah Smith had reopened the question of treasure-trove, and was receiving instruction through some sturdy rappings on the table.

At last Ezekiel Cheever presented a series of questions, to which there were some prompt replies, and business proceeded well, until Ezekiel, turning suddenly to the medium, sarcastically inquired why he "didn't do that without machinery, like *other* operators?"

"There is no deception practiced here, sir, you must understand," said the benignant Gershom, with an unwonted sternness in his voice, at the same time executing a quick movement with one hand underneath the table.

"That may do for *some* folks, but *I* don't swallow it," was the reply.

The words, however, were scarcely clear of his lips, when Seth Crane, his face flushed with anger, said, that "people who come here are not expected to reflect upon the character of the house."

"No reflection," said Ezekiel, "only if *I* was in league with sperits, I wouldn't use any of them traps sech as Gershom Brewer has under his coat. Fust class operators git along without them."

"It's false," coolly replied the medium; but, unfortunately for him, as he rose, a smooth

piece of pine wood, in sections, united by hinges, and furnished with various little appliances to facilitate its manipulation, fell out upon the table, at the sight of which the Smith brothers looked aghast. But the seer did not perceive this mishap, and with his face deadly pale, quietly reiterated, "it's false!"

At this, Ezekiel picked up the unlucky lever, and held it before his face.

Now, whoever has seen the surface of a tranquil lake suddenly smitten by a storm, can imagine something of the change which overspread the spiritualist's countenance; for, with this unexpected exposure, he was seized by a paroxysm of rage that was fearful to witness. Out of those calm, spiritual eyes there suddenly flashed the wrath of a demon, while every blood vessel seemed ready to burst. At last he obtained his voice, and shouted, "Villain, begone!"

"Yes, I say that, too," said Seth Crane, screwing up his courage, "we don't want anybody but respectable folks here."

But this display of assurance would not avail. The Smiths had invested their last

dollar in the speculation at the Glen, and their high hopes were now suddenly overclouded by a horrible, and, as it finally appeared, an immovable suspicion of fraud. Therefore, Hezekiah interfered, saying, "Seth Crane, let's have fair play! I bought that ground of you in Wharton's Glen, and *paid* for it roundly, too. And now what do you mean by *this*?" pointing, as he spoke, to the lever on the table, which Gershom now seized, and stored in a side pocket.

Seth saw clearly that he had better look to himself, and replied that, "*That* matter belonged to Gershom."

Whereupon this injured individual turned and shook his fist in Seth's face, saying, "Take care, Seth Crane, I know *you*!"

Evidently Seth was in the power of his superior, for the warning thus conveyed had its due effect; and he sank into a chair speechless, while the Smith brothers glared alternately at Gershom and their host, waiting for some explanation.

Finally the Rector of Roxburgh, suddenly recovering himself again, rose and said, "I think we had better go."

"Yes," said the seer, "still choking with rage, "it is sacrilege thus to insult the blessed ones who have favored us with their presence to-night; let us go."

"You may go when you hand back the money you've swindled us out of, and not before," said Hezekiah, moving fiercely to secure the door. The other two brothers were equally resolute, and sprang to their feet, stung with desperation; but in their haste they overturned the table and dashed the lamp upon the floor, leaving the party in darkness and confusion. Before another light could be brought, Gershom Brewer quietly slipped up a sash, stepped out, and was *gone*.

Dr. Walton and Ezekiel followed, the moment Hezekiah Smith undid the door, and as they moved out towards the road, where the young farmer had left his horse, they exchanged their first words.

"Who *is* this Gershom Brewer?" said the Rector.

"Why, don't you know Gershom Brewer?"

"I never saw him before in my life."

"Don't you remember the man who used to keep the newspaper stand in Roxburgh?"

He was in St. Mark's last Sunday morning, and sat in front of the pulpit. He knew *you*, any way, and just what to rap and to write."

This was now very plain to the Rector, who now began to feel altogether disgusted with himself. Notwithstanding the exposure of Gershom's fraud, until this moment something had remained which he could not explain, namely the similarity of the medium and the man of his dreams. He now remembered having himself actually noticed Gershom in church the previous Sunday.

During an uneasy night, when his mind ranged wide and free, the image of the individual appeared. Of course there was nothing at all remarkable, notwithstanding he had been so powerfully impressed. All this quickly flashed through Dr. Walton's mind, and he saw at once that he had allowed himself to fall into a very weak device, though we need not assure the reader that he kept it to himself, so that Ezekiel never supposed that he had gone to the circle inspired by any other motives than those of ordinary curiosity. He afterwards found, by paying some attention to the literature and the philosophy

of dreams, that multitudes of what pass for remarkable dreams might be readily explained.

When they reached the buggy, Ezekiel insisted upon driving Dr. Walton home, and thus the latter was set down in good season at his own gate. As he entered the parlor, Mrs. Walton noticed that he was somewhat excited, and yet, on the whole, in better spirits than he had appeared for some time. In truth, while exceedingly annoyed with himself, he was greatly relieved. A load had passed from his mind. Yet he did not explain himself then, reserving that for a future occasion, when he gave Mrs. Walton a full and quite entertaining account of the whole adventure.

Nevertheless, that evening, when he had once more regained his study, he was glad, on the whole, that he had visited the circle. He was now able to comprehend the system which was daily gaining adherents; and though he had no doubt whatever, that among the mediums there were those who accomplished really wonderful things without the aid of machinery, he had no disposition to investigate the matter further, especially when

he remembered that among all the alleged revelations there was not to be found ten words of practical value to man. Moreover he had felt all along that the movement was one destined in the end to promote immorality. In the present case, however, its first fruits were open fraud ; and, as he meditated upon the subject, he considered what he could do about the case of the Smith brothers.

Early the next forenoon, however, he discovered that the brothers had taken the case into their own hands ; for having occasion to go to the express office, he reached that place, situated at the railroad depot, a few minutes after the train had left, where he was soon joined by the county sheriff, who came puffing into the depot with a formidable looking paper in his hand, and inquired if the train had gone.

"Left just three minutes ago," said the man in charge.

"Well, then, all I have to say is that I've lost Gersh Brewer."

"Ah, Mr. Robinson, is that you? How about this Brewer?"

"Why, he and Seth Crane have swindled

the Smith boys, of the Corner, out of about twenty-five hundred dollars, one time and another," replied that officer, mopping his face and forehead with a red bandana.

"Where has this Brewer lived?"

"Oh, he's lived everywhere. Has been agent for a circus, kept a grocery, run a pedlar's cart, and I don't know what, before he took up spiritualism."

"And yet he was a man of fine appearance."

"Yes, he *lived* on his looks."

Whereupon the Rector of Roxburgh took his way towards home, reflecting on the case of this individual, who had run such a curious career. It certainly contained a caution against the tendency to believe that the outward manifestation always revealed the true character of the man. Gershom Brewer may have been cast in the mould of a saint, but, nevertheless, he was a keen, slippery sinner. He had lived a roving life, and kept a great deal of bad company, but his one great vice of avarice saved him from the indulgence of others ; and having had a fair start, he was now, in his old age, though as full of deceit as Merlin,—a well-preserved

and fine-appearing man, whose tranquil eyes (looking out from beneath what, under the right training, might have been a bishop's brow,) seemed the windows of a beautiful soul. But as the telegraph at that time lacked five miles of its completion to Roxburgh, we are obliged to let poor "Gersh,"—the saintly seer and venerable fraud,—go, to repeat his depredations elsewhere in the wide world, which, being filled with an easily-duped humanity, ever affords fresh fields and pastures new.

As for the Rector of Roxburgh, he was a wiser, if not a sadder man. And the very next Sunday he began to prove his wisdom, by leaving all unprofitable mysticism out of his discourse, and presenting everything, as Ezekiel Cheever said, "clear as a bell."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### Roots and Fruits.

"But whan the erbe was growid and maad fruyt, than the taris aperiden."

WICKLIF, MATT. xiii.

"Thus the heartiest gratitude, as I have shown in the proper place, concerning the purest love, though bearing the fragrantest flowers, sprouts originally from the earthly principle of self-interest."

THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

"Holynes and honeste, out of holy churche springeth and spredeth and enspireth the peeple."

ANON.

HAVING disposed of one troublesome question, the Rector of Roxburgh found that he still had important duties to discharge with the parish. While he had been discussing inexplicable questions, no improvement had been made. Nevertheless, all the while he had felt the influence of his warden. But he entertained no thought of shunning the issue to which the action of that official led. Though he had been in no haste about proceeding, he now realized that the time for fresh action had come. Indeed, if he

had been more active and aggressive, immediately after the vestry meeting in which he gained such a decided advantage, the presentation of a bold front would have scattered opposition, and, ere this, have set him far on the road to success. But one thing he now resolved upon, namely, that no more time should be lost. He would, for one thing, preach a sermon, specially designed to meet the exigency. The majority of the people were already with him, but there was a minority, more or less under the influence of Mr. Dorsey, that might prove troublesome. He accordingly aimed, in his personal intercourse, to promote unity of action. He was warmly seconded by Mrs. Lawyer Mason. The junior warden and Vestryman Flint were also very favorably inclined, particularly the latter, as appeared at the outset; while Ezekiel Cheever, as a member of the congregation, was active in a variety of ways. In fact, his zeal and honest purpose had already made him favorably known to the congregation at large, while the sturdy independence shown in his argument with the autocratic rich man, to whom many were

obsequious, had given him something like a recognized status with the townspeople. And one day it became known that, on Sunday, the Rector of St Mark's would preach a discourse on the general uses of wealth. During the Friday and Saturday previous, Mr. Dorsey was made very uncomfortable by the reports, especially as he saw that the most of those upon whom he had depended, already inclined to follow their Rector, while Mr. Holdlock the treasurer, had completely changed ground.

The warden had hoped that Dr. Walton would retreat at the last moment, but he found that the latter was no such man. It was very mortifying. What, therefore, should he do? Repeat his former blunder in the face of the whole congregation? *That* certainly was not the thing, and yet he was resolved to have no part nor lot in the matter. He therefore would not appear in church, under *any* circumstances. After having arrived at this conclusion, he felt a great deal worse, on account of a piece of information given by the treasurer, to the effect that he had that very day astonished the Rector by



paying every cent of salary due, and that he still had a small balance in hand. The people, Mr. Holdlock said, were really getting waked up, and were handing in their dues without being asked. There was "nothing like a little agitation," he said.

If Mr. Dorsey had known this earlier, he perhaps would not have uttered his rash vow, but having positively announced it to one of the vestrymen, he made his word good. If he could not rule, he could abstain from public mortification.

Such was the interest excited by the intelligence spread among the people, that in St. Mark's Church, when Sunday morning arrived, where there was usually a painful account of empty benches, every pew was packed. There was also present the reporter of the *Roxburgh County Gazette*, to whom we are indebted for a condensed sketch of the sermon, which was devoted, according to the notice, to "the uses of wealth." But we can here clip only an extract from the report: "Now," he said, "he had no exclusive message to either the rich or the poor. What he had to say applied no more to the wealth

of the rich man than to the wealth of the poor; all of which, on every Christian principle, must be devoted to God. Here," he continued, "was where most men failed, in this matter of stewardship, which was hedged about by strict rules. How much a man should give, was left for him to decide, only so as he was concerned *in the application of the law of giving*; for it was not for any *individual* to lay down a rule, nor to create a law, but simply, with a strict integrity of purpose, to administer his substance in accordance with the law already laid down. And what was the law? On this point there was not a little obscurity. Some have told us that the law is a tenth, in accordance with the Jewish economy. But, very much to the discredit of popular Bible reading, I have to declare," said the preacher, "that this is not the Old Testament rule. If we look a little closer, we shall find that the *real* standard was *two tenths*, instead of *one*. I give, said the Pharisee, not a *tithe*, but, "*tithes*" of all I possess. The falsity of the stress was not laid upon *tithes*, in opposition to *tithe*, but upon the word 'all.' He was *bound* to give

'tithes,' but not tithes of *all*, including the herbs and the seeds. The old system required *two* tithes every year, and on every third year an *additional* tithe, besides large outlays of time."

Here followed what the preacher quoted from Josephus and the Book of Tobit, in proof of his interpretation of Scripture, the Rector feeling bound to let the people know that he had not been made a Doctor of Divinity for nothing. Then he went on again, saying: "If, therefore, any one desires to cling to the old system, let him adhere to it in its integrity. But when the veil of the temple was rent, an additional, if not a *new* commandment was signified; and, soon after, the great missionary apostle, Paul, taught every one to lay in store regularly, not in accordance with *the* system of tithes, which was more particularly adapted to the even condition of society so well represented, at times, by the Jews—but according as they had *prospered*. To-day individuals are often so abundantly prospered that they could easily give *nine* tenths, instead of two, and be *the better* off for the consecration of such

a portion of the year's profits. Let us not be deceived. The great office of man is not to hoard, but to *give*. This is taught throughout all the realms of Nature and Providence, and is illustrated alike by the humblest flower flinging its perfume to the wind. The world, indeed, says, get, and *then* give; but the Divine economy reverses the world's faint-hearted rule, and tells us that the first thing to do is to possess a *liberal soul*. Here we find the real source of prosperity; for it is true to-day, and has been true in every age that has left a record, that the liberal soul stands by liberality."

And with many similar words did the Rector of Roxburgh on that Sunday morning exhort the congregation of St. Mark's. The reporter could not find space to set down an abstract of all; but the burden of the preacher's remarks went to show that the really great necessity of every religious corporation was a liberal soul. Under the influence of such a spirit, the direst poverty could never prevail, and means would always abound for the maintenance of every good work. What the people wanted was large hearts full of sym-  
 pa-

thy for the great moral and religious movements of the age. Whenever a parish came into the possession of such a spirit it would never have any difficulty in taking care of itself.

On coming out of the pulpit, Dr. Walton handed the plates. The senior warden was absent, but there was no pause, for Lawyer Mason, whom we have before referred to as being a vestryman, came forward at once and took his place. And when Lawyer Mason did a thing, people knew that he *meant* it. Hitherto Mr. Mason, notwithstanding the interest taken by his wife, had said little. He was not present at the last meeting of the wardens and vestry, but he had noted the progress of things since. And now, when he came forward and took the place of the absent warden, the congregation, which now absorbed nearly all of the previously indifferent element, felt that the question of the opposition was practically settled. Dr. Walton felt so too, and was astonished beyond measure when he saw the amount contributed by the people. It was clear enough that the trouble with St. Mark's did not lie in the

direction of its purse, which was ample. Therefore he hoped that he had reached the real source of the difficulty at last; while Mrs. Walton thought with herself, that if the people could give such a sum for missions at the West, there was certainly a fair prospect of getting the rectory shingled, which, it will be remembered, she had at one time considered a doubtful proposition. She now believed that a new era had dawned in Roxburgh.

Of course the congregation did not put in even the amount of its pin-money, and yet it *was* a great thing for Roxburgh, where, in most men's eyes, the periphery of a dime was often as large as that of a dollar. As for Warden Dorsey, when he had heard what had come of his vaticinations, his spirit was more deeply stirred than ever. But, happily, this was the last load, and one which broke the rich camel's back. He had covered up the great question, which was the one at issue in his own mind, by a financial issue, wherein he had suffered a defeat; and now he felt that, however, he might appear, it would ere long be necessary for him to accept the situation. In the mean while the Rector

was reaping the reward of his manly independence, for the lack of which so many American clergymen, of all schools of theological opinion, are to-day suffering a life of miserable oppression and want, not daring to assert in the face of autocratic millionaires,—whose narcotic indulgence costs more than their religious zeal,—one great message that they are specially bound to proclaim, namely, that the whole earth belongs to God, with the fulness thereof; a truth that has never failed to advance the *personal* prosperity of the minister by whom it has been wisely and persistently taught. He that waters others is abundantly watered.

But here we may notice the fact that while the events, recorded in the previous pages, had transpired, about two years had rapidly flown by. They had proved years of trial to the Rector, but, as he looked back upon the past, notwithstanding the trials and mortifications, he felt deeply thankful. He had begun to have a deeper faith both in himself and in the principles which he taught. He now more fully comprehended the nature

of true parochial administration, and was putting the spirit of his address to the Roxburgh farmers into his sermons. He now saw a hopeful prospect before him, and was greatly encouraged in his work. Already there was a growing spirit of liberality. This possessed a significance. He accepted it as an outward and visible sign of an inward grace, trusting that ere long there would appear still stronger indications of improvement on the part of the people.

And, emboldened by the success of the past, he began to inquire if he should not proceed in a still more aggressive spirit. Why not have Sunday-school down in the mill district, where the *heathenism* was as dense and gross as any in China or Japan, and which, nevertheless, was almost within sound of the St. Mark's bell? Where could he find a better field? Certainly nowhere, so far as regarded its necessitous condition. It would take some money to start the enterprise, and afterwards to sustain it; but, nevertheless, he would suggest it to the wardens and vestry, and ascertain what they were willing to do.

When the time for the regular monthly vestry meeting came, the full board was present, Mr. Dorsey among the rest. This individual was a person who found it equally difficult to persevere in or to confess a fault. He now saw that his course had been a very mistaken one, in every sense of the term; yet he had not the slightest idea of *saying* so. He simply digested his mortification as well as he was able, and went about his parish duties in his accustomed way, though it was clear to all that he no longer cherished his former degree of self-importance. On this evening, therefore, when he came to the meeting, he was unusually mild in his bearing; and, moreover, had no "policy" to propose. Not so with the treasurer. He *had* a policy, and when the right time came he expressed his mind. He said that he had been thinking for some time past of Mr. Dorsey's proposition, made at a previous meeting, "as you remember," he said, nodding to the senior warden, "to lift the church debts." That individual remembered the proposition only too well. He had thrown it out, confident that no one would seriously consider it, for the

purpose of diverting attention from the issue then before the meeting. He had not even dreamed that the proposition would assume anything like a practical shape. Nevertheless, his invention had now come home to plague him. Inwardly, therefore, he felt exceedingly uncomfortable; even over a suggestion to carry out his own "policy," and as we have seen, his "policy," whatever it may have concerned, was an institution.

Still Mr. Holdlock went on serenely to say, that "for himself, he would like to see the parish free from all liability, just for once, to see how it would seem." He thought that it might be done by the next Easter, if the people were to go about it in the right way. In the mean time, they could also carry on the contributions to the other church enterprises, as already proposed. The entire amount of the mortgage was only twenty-nine hundred dollars, while the floating debt had already been reduced to a very inconsiderable sum.

Lawyer Mason thought it was an excellent suggestion, and believed that the money could be raised without difficulty. He there-

fore moved at once that the two wardens and the treasurer be a committee to draw up a paper to be presented for personal subscriptions to liquidate the debt.

The proposition fairly made Mr. Dorsey wince ; but what could he do ? Had he not himself proposed the measure on the occasion of his memorable defeat ? Should he now add another blunder to the catalogue, by opposing his own policy ? He was too wise for that ; and consequently, after the subject had been fully considered, it passed by an unanimous vote. Moreover, he now saw an opportunity to retrieve himself in a measure, at least, in the eyes of the people, some of whom had flatly declared, with reference to the missionary collection, that the rich man was "positively mean." Therefore he now resolved that this should go no further. He would nail the aspersion without delay. Accordingly, when the vote was passed, he got his voice, after several preliminary hems, and observed that perhaps "we might as well make a beginning here," for "if we who have passed the resolution are not ready to carry it out, it will be of no use to go to the

people," and ended by saying that he would give "five hundred dollars ;" all of which formed a most remarkable surprise.

This proposition cost the rich man a severe effort, but it was a stroke of munificence that he was proud of. And he *looked* his thought, as he sat there in the vestry, as much as to say, "Who now declares that John Dorsey is *mean* ?" In fact, he thought that no one would follow his example with an equal contribution, and that he should at least enjoy a certain kind of triumph. But soon, to his great surprise, it appeared that he was not destined to enjoy any exclusive glory, for Lawyer Mason said that he would subscribe an equal sum ; and before the meeting adjourned more than half the amount needed was pledged, and the duty of the committee promised to be light : while Dr. Walton began to think there would be no end of wonders.

These matters being thus unexpectedly concluded, the clerk asked if there was anything else to be considered, when Dr. Walton said that he had thought of bringing one matter before the vestry, but, as the business had taken an unexpected turn, he thought

that he perhaps would do well to defer it to another occasion.

Lawyer Mason hoped that it might be attended to now, as it was not late ; and Mr. Flint said, "Oh, yes ; by all means."

Thus encouraged, the Rector laid out his plan for a Sunday-school down by the factories, speaking of the needs of the people there, and ending with the observation that it "would require a little money."

"Then by all means let us vote it," said the treasurer, who had grown remarkably bold.

So said Warden Dorsey ; quite astonished at himself ; though he could not find it in his heart to express a regret for his former opposition, he *did* do the next thing to it, and moved that "the treasurer be authorized to supply the requisite funds for one year ;" all of which was unanimously agreed to, so that the warden began to feel like himself once more, leading off as he now did on an actual success. Thereupon the meeting adjourned ; and when Dr. Walton reached the Rectory, he told his wife that if he expected "to lead the advance in the parish" he would certainly "have to move on." As for that lady, she could hardly

find words to express her astonishment. "Mr. Dorsey," she exclaimed, "subscribes five hundred dollars ! The *idea* ! Why, Marmaduke, he must have read the report of your sermon in the paper," for Mrs. Walton insisted upon believing that if anything was done it could be referred to only one agency.

Marmaduke said that, "perhaps the pummelling Ezekiel Cheever gave him was not thrown away."

As for Ezekiel himself, he gave her a fresh cause for amazement, when, a few days after, he called at the Rectory to see Dr. Walton about an excellent room that he had found for the Sunday-school, and informed her that the treasurer reported funds enough already in hand to pay the mortgage and repair the roof of both church and rectory.

"Thirty-five hundred dollars, did you say ?" exclaimed Mrs. Walton, well-nigh out of breath.

"'Zactly as I *said*, thirty-five hundred. It ain't such great shakes after all for Roxburgh ; sence one might remark," he continued, with the utmost gravity, "as the 'postle observed

respectin' the loaves and fishes, What are them among so many?"

And Ezekiel was right. This sum was small, on the whole, for the solid men of St. Mark's; and it would prove a small sum to-day for many a parish in the land that is now dragging out a miserable life on account of the niggardly spirit of the people, if there were more rectors, like Dr. Walton, who dared to teach the rich as well as the poor what is required in the use of money.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *Down by the Mills.*

"Ill fares the land, to hastening spoil a prey  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

GOLDSMITH.

"What, man! more water glideth by the mill  
Than wots the miller of."

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

"There was no claim upon the employer to regard the condition of the operative; that if any one engaged in the work broke down under it, the company looked upon it as an accident which might happen to any of their machines, and replaced the unfortunate with another."

A NEW ENGLAND OVERSEER. 1871.

NEW ENGLAND life has not only its warm sunny lights, but its depressing shades. And where do we find the shadows deeper than under the shaky old mill's blank wall? Roxburgh had its due proportion, for that was a murky moral atmosphere which prevailed down in the region of the workshops and factories. This noisome region was everywhere untidy and pestilential. The people believed implicitly in the great mission of water, and above all things feared a drouth,



yet, while holding it as an excellent thing for mechanical purposes, they scouted it as a promoter of health. And the grimy exterior thus perpetuated formed a true index to multitudes of thoroughly smirched minds. The reader may therefore conclude that this mill district was characterized by extreme squalor. At the end of the narrow street (with its low wooden houses, standing behind narrow strips of what could hardly be called enclosed ground, for the reason that nearly all the palings were gone), rows of huge factory buildings towered high against the sky, with their rickety stairs, doubtful fire escapes, and unwashed windows, through which, during work hours, one could occasionally distinguish the haggard faces of men and women, as well as mere boys and girls, whose days of severe toil had made them prematurely old. This region along the bank of the river which furnished the water power was originally one of wild, picturesque beauty, resonant with the music of the rapid and the chime of the fall. But the romantic beauty had now departed, and nature lay a dishevelled wreck, while the geologist, except in the time of the

freshet, could easily go about in the bed of the stream, and examine the anatomy of the "Roxburgh Falls;" whose water, instead of leaping swiftly in its primeval beauty over the shelving ledges, to be churned into fleecy foam, was now condemned to pass through an opening above the dam, into sluggish sluiceways, and thence through many a dark resounding chamber, to suffer unseen martyrdom by being broken on a hundred wheels, at last emerging dark, and foul, and stained with chemicals and dyes fatal to the constitution of the most obstinate fish.

All the wild beauty upon which in former times the red men gazed had now disappeared, and everything served to remind the visitor to this unkempt, noisome district, of the saying that God makes the country, but man makes the town. Many of the operatives who herded hereabouts in their unhealthy hives, came out of the factory districts of the Old World, from whence they had brought all the untidy habits which so often distinguish the class.

A large portion of these operatives had been more or less trained under the forms of

the English Church, in which they had been baptized; but having left their old homes, the ecclesiastical ties were severed with their social and political bonds, and now they were, for the greater part, entirely adrift in respect to religion, and seldom saw the inside of any place of worship, except in the case of a funeral, though some were still particular about having their children baptized. The inhabitants of the district were, on the whole, reckless and improvident, and sadly in need of some positive religious influence. Of course there were notable exceptions to be found, but such was the general character of the operatives. A thorough examination of the situation, revealed a greater degree of moral deficiency than Doctor Walton had anticipated. This led him to enter upon his school project with considerable zeal. The place was quickly selected, as there was little choice. The accommodations consisted of a couple of large rooms, situated over a grocery, whose receipts for the necessities of life bore an inverse proportion to those derived from the sale of destructive compounds only calculated to take it away. The partition separating

the rooms was removed, thus throwing the two into one; suitable seats were introduced, a neat desk, placed on a platform, was arranged at one end, and on the wall illuminated texts and mottoes and several appropriate pictures. When all this was done, the place presented a very neat and comfortable appearance, in strange contrast with everything without.

The arrangements being completed, Dr. Walton was particular to announce the fact; and also to state the precise character of the undertaking. It was not intended to be what is known as a Mission Chapel, which is an institution, that, under its present conduct, generally goes so far to create false distinctions between the rich and the poor. The Church for eighteen hundred years had managed to do without such things, which were essentially different from chapels of ease. Dr. Walton was opposed to the too-prevalent custom on the part of the richer portion of the community of providing accommodations in the shape of chapels for the working-classes, with the tacit understanding that they were to be confined by themselves, as in a

sort of moral and social infirmity. This attempt to patronize the poor but proud spirited sons of toil, he believed to be equally unadvised and futile. In all ages the true church had been, substantially, a parish church, where the rich and poor met together, recognizing the same bond of religious brotherhood. "Why can't Christians be as Christian as the *Mahometans*?" Dr. Walton used to ask, when this question was brought forward. Hence his aim was to bring all into the common fold, as he had ever done with the people from this neighborhood. As soon as a disposition to attend the public worship was apparent, an effort was made by those who looked after this department to bring the individual to St. Mark's, a work that was abundantly successful. As regards the children, there was the same effort to lead them to church with their parents, and, so to speak, *graduate* them from the mission to the parish school, where they would enjoy higher advantages.

At one time it was suggested that there might be a short service ordinarily at the close of the Sunday-school in the afternoon.

But on this point the Rector had made up his mind in advance. He would listen to nothing of the kind. There was St. Mark's Church, within easy walking distance, open morning and evening every Sunday. Let them come to the parish church. The Rector's views on this point actually shocked some of the more exclusive of St. Mark's. Even Mrs. Lawyer Mason opened her eyes when she heard her Rector condemn the ordinary mission chapel as a "pauper provision," which, in the present thoughtful and sensitive condition of the mind of the average mechanic, was highly inexpedient and indefensible. What was needed at the present time for the unification and safety of society was a practical recognition of the great doctrine of the human brotherhood and the Communion of Saints. If the alienation of classes was allowed to go on, and the doctrine of exclusiveness permitted to entrench itself in the house of God, then farewell to the great hopes of Christianity and the peace and stability of society.

"But," said Mrs. Mason, "was not the chapel system approved by many of our leading minds, especially in the large cities?"

This the Rector readily granted. "Yet you know," he continued, "the leading minds are not always the greatest minds. It was, also, one thing to sympathize with a necessity and another to meet it wisely. He believed that, as regarded Christian brotherhood, the church of the Present was inferior to the church of the Past. For his own part, he held that the example set by eighteen hundred years was not to be thrown away. The mission chapel, as now generally managed, was notoriously a modern device, founded on the prejudices of a class. It was a scheme of phlebotomy that served to relieve rose-water parishes of all base, plebeian blood."

This was very new, and altogether surprising to Mrs. Mason, yet she was not accustomed to play the part of a teacher with respect to those by whom she expected to be taught; besides, she hardly knew what to say.

Not so, however, with Miss Lydia Languish, who had been educated at a fashionable boarding-school in New York, and, with the rest of the pupils, had attended St. Softphrosius' Church, where, in midsummer, when, the regular attendants being out of town, the

commoners were welcome to come, and listen to the curate, who, at that season, eloquently harangued those empty pews, sacred for ten months in the year to the favored circle of the *ton*. These republican and revolutionary sentiments actually fired her heart, and under the inspiration of the moment she felt her lymphatic temperament immensely braced up. In fact, Miss Lydia was quite shocked. She believed that "a mission chapel was just the place for common folks, who should, indeed, be thankful that genteel people were willing to pay for their religion. She supposed, of course, that this was going to be a *mission*, otherwise she should not have favored it at all. Common people ought to be kept in their place. Indeed, they would not be *comfortable* at St. Mark's; besides those dreadful factory people actually—smell," said this graduate of the Fifth Avenue Boarding-school, expressing ineffable disgust with a toss of her delicate, aristocratic nose. "Really, Dr. Walton, really, I couldn't, in conscience, encourage such people to come to St. Mark's Church, and I did not anticipate such a thing when I agreed to take a class.

At our church we have been *somewhat* select heretofore, and I should be sorry to see any change. Of course, Dr. Walton, you know that I approve of being kind to the poor, and I am willing to make sacrifices for their good; but as for *associating* with them, why, that is *quite* another thing;" and here Miss Lydia, notwithstanding the deference that she generally expressed for the cloth, gave another toss of her little eloquent nose.

Now Miss Lydia Languish was an unconscious, though really efficient, artist; therefore, by her words, and much more by her gestures, she pictured her opinions very effectively, and set them altogether in a true light; which was precisely the thing needed to secure their prompt repudiation on the part of Mrs. Mason; and therefore it was not necessary, in that lady's case, for the Rector of Roxburgh to go into a full exposition of the subject, which he did on the spot, showing that the growing intelligence of what were called the working-classes rendered it impolitic for wise men to favor the maintenance of false relations between the rich and the poor. The working-classes were making

rapid progress in knowledge, and could not be treated as serfs. Capital, in a great measure, depended upon labor, and therefore a genuine sympathy should exist between those who represented the different interests.

Whatever some persons of exclusive views might hold, the safety of the common interests depended upon the maintenance of a kindly spirit between all classes. The Church, therefore, would prove false to her mission, if she undertook to reverse the policy of the past, and thus, even in the house of God, maintain distinctions between the rich and the poor. We must look not only to our personal feelings and prejudices, but to the future welfare of society, which was now already far overshadowed by portentous evils.

"But then, with a certain class of persons near you, it destroys *devotion*," was the reply.

"And yet," said Dr. Walton, "the proximity of a certain class, as you style them, did not destroy the devotion of the great company of holy men and women of the past, who were reared under the system which prevailed

during those long centuries when not so much as a pew was known in the parish church."

But Dr. Walton might have spared his words, so far as Miss Lydia was concerned; for, with her, the present was everything, the future nothing. Nevertheless Mrs. Mason entered upon a pretty vigorous train of thought, which assumed the form of conversations at home, where, as was the case in many social circles, this view of missionary chapels gradually found acceptance.

In the mean while the Sunday-school down by the mills went on. It is true that some of the members of the parish whom he invited to take part were afraid that, if this enterprise was fairly taken in hand, there would be a lack of interest in their *own* Sunday-school. The Rector, however, was of the contrary opinion, believing that the more they were interested abroad, the greater would be the activity at home. He therefore enlisted a full corps of teachers, who agreed to attend at the school every Sunday afternoon, as the parish-school held its sessions in the morning. A conspicuous sign over the door, indicated clearly that "St. Mark's Sunday-school" had

acquired both a local habitation and a name, and the time was appointed for the first session. A paragraph was also written for the local paper, by the editor, commending the enterprise; and the Rector himself and several of the newly-enlisted teachers went through the district, visiting the people, and inviting them to bring their children.

But here it may be of interest to note the effect all this had upon Mr. Dorsey. As it will appear, the effect was different from what he expected it would be, when, by his motion to make an appropriation for the Sunday-school, he put himself at the head of the movement. Even at the outset, under the influences of the school, Mr. Dorsey quite thawed out. He even attended to see how it prospered; and cheerily asked from time to time what particular thing was needed in connection with the work, thus hinting his willingness to give, and conveying the impression anew that he, John Dorsey, was "not so mean as some folks had tried to make out." Of course all this cost him an effort, if not a pang, for in the long years of the past he had neglected his functions as a giver; and when

the subject was squarely pressed upon him, he found himself as stiff as Stylites, who so long stood upon his pillar. Mr. Dorsey was, nevertheless, beginning to get a little limber in the joints; and was rapidly moving towards a better position, though even now, when he thought of that five hundred dollars so ruthlessly subscribed to liquidate the church debt, the recollection was often accompanied by an inward groan. Men who would find generosity easy, should begin young.

Moreover, if the whole truth were told, the warden's conscience was getting aroused. For these five-and-twenty years past Mr. John Dorsey had been gradually growing wealthy through the labors of the operatives, and had ceiled his rich chambers with their toil and moil. All the while he had been unmindful of their condition, though their long hours in the factories had brought them little hire. It is true that the present state of things had crept in by degrees. The original operatives were, as was generally the case in New England, of a superior class, and mainly composed of the sons and daughters of re-

spectable farmers and others, many of whom came from a distance to work a little while in the mills, and then return home with their savings. But by degrees their places were filled by emigrants from abroad, and a new moral condition was the result. Mr. Dorsey had noted with regret the change in the *personnel* of the factory villages, but he did not trouble himself with the consequences, though occasionally he complained to the superintendents of the unclean habits of the people, whose homes were generally characterized by miserable poverty and squalor. And it was not until Dr. Walton undertook this Sunday-school, which he afterwards supplemented by a night department for secular instruction, that he began to realize the peculiar claims which the most of them had upon him, not only as a Christian man, but as a leading capitalist.

And let no one here imagine that this is a piece of mere imagination. The writer could point to many districts in New England to-day where this identical state of things exists among factory operatives. And almost, if not quite within the sound of the church-going

bell, multitudes exist in moral degradation, while Christian men who live in luxury on the proceeds of their toil, make no provision for their religious wants, nor seem to care for their souls, thinking oftener, perhaps, of the claim of the degraded ones in lands beyond the sea, than of the heathen hard by their own doors.

On this, and other points, let one who recently appeared before the Massachusetts' Bureau of Statistics testify. Says this witness :

"I have stood where I could see the rustling throng issue from a mill as the bell rang and the gates were thrown open ; and what I saw were no longer manly men, but men of stooping forms and hopeless faces ; women dispirited, slovenly, and aimless ; and children, 'the hope of the country,' only such forlorn hope as those whose elasticity was early gone, whose childish merriment was collapsed, whose eyes were dull and whose cheeks were pale—the embryos of an emasculated adulthood—the whole crowd, where once were seen fine specimens of manhood, now a sorry spectacle of overtasked, exhausted, and de-

spondent humanity—veritable 'mud-sills of society.' Such is now the sight where I have looked. The improvements have been of machinery, and not of humanity. They have benefited the capitalist, and not the laborer. The operatives' houses, also, which have fallen under my observation, and of which I have read loud praises, do not merit the commendation, being ill-contrived, cramped for room, unventilated, uncomfortable, and no fit resting-place for persons fatigued by long hours spent over exacting machinery. They seem to be managed with almost no regard for the comfort or health of those who live in them, and whose labor is measured out to them by steam or water power unremittedly, day after day, through the continuous year. One hardly wonders at it when he hears instances of intentional hurt to some limb as a cheap purchase for relaxation from work. Humanity must be cheap, with men made for machinery and not machinery for men, where such a system is fostered, and fostered at the expense of manhood, which itself should be of the very noblest, if the State would preserve its own nobility."



This is not a beautiful picture for New England to contemplate, yet it is the representation of things as they exist to-day, and have existed for some years past. The Bureau itself also says, speaking of the result of all this upon the rising generation and its education: "Now we know, indeed, that there is a compulsory statute of the Commonwealth in relation to the schooling of its children, but, like a great many other statutes on the books, it is paralytic, effete, dead—killed by sheer neglect. It was never enforced, and never was supposed to be anybody's duty to enforce it. In fact, we are inclined to believe that it is not generally known that such a law was ever enacted. Nobody looks after it, neither town authorities, nor school committees, nor local police; and the large cities and many of the towns of the State are swarming with unschooled children, vagabondizing about the streets, and growing up in ignorance and to a heritage of sin. The mills all over the State, the shops in city and town, are full of children deprived of their right to such education as will fit them for the possibilities of their after-life."

From these, and a multitude of other testimonies, we learn what is the condition of the human species under the shadow of the New England mill, which was substantially the condition in Mr. Dorsey's day. But never did the rich mill owner reflect upon it as now; for he was beginning to realize the extent of his duties and opportunities. Then sometimes his thoughts took a still more serious turn.

"Some day," he said with himself, "John Dorsey is going to die; then what would become of John Dorsey's money—the money which John Dorsey had labored so long to heap together? It was not comfortable to think of having all scattered by that spendthrift son! Yet, John Dorsey," he continued with himself, "you are getting on in years." As the result, he concluded that he had better take a little more interest in the schools, and in the mean while see what he could do about improving the houses of the poor. "This thing might lead to expense, but then whose should these things be when he was gone?" This movement, therefore, was fast pressing upon the most serious questions that a capitalist is called to consider; while he felt a

growing desire to do something that would in a measure make up for his former niggardly economy. He would really like, among other things, to improve the homes of those to whose industry he was largely indebted for his present fortune, and yet he could not bring himself up to the act. Often in going to and from the factories he would pause in front of the poorly constructed tenements, crowded with a number of families, and reeking with foul odors—tenements, too, for which the corporations were receiving unrighteous sums in the shape of rent—and consider how he could institute a reform, and thus use some portion of his income in benefitting his fellows. But, with all his cogitations, nothing came of it, and he went on paving his way with resolutions, which he had not the strength to perform. In this state of mind he found himself when the time rolled around for a special collection for the night-school. He had really made up his mind to give something extra for this object, but then how much? He would “be liberal,” and let the people see that he had *never* been opposed to collections for extra purposes, so much as to the time

and manner insisted upon, in opposition to his wishes. Yes, he would be liberal. John Dorsey “would do something handsome.” But then again came the thought of those five hundred dollars which he gave to liquidate the debt, in addition to two hundred and fifty for repairs on the church. Really, on the whole, he did not know. “Mrs. Dorsey, of course, would give; but—well, he would see when the time came.” And he *did* see, and put so little in the plate at last that he went home feeling ashamed and troubled.

And now things went on for some time as usual until, one Saturday night, he fell into what he thought was a dream. Suddenly he heard a cry like that given for fire; but, in his state of unrest, it made no deep impression. Then came the sound of an alarm-bell, in concert with what appeared to be the bell of St. Mark's. Yet, in his heavily curtained room, he perceived no signs of a conflagration. “It was only a dream,” and he would dismiss the illusion. Still the bells continued to ring with desperation, and human voices joined in the alarm. Now there came the sound of hurrying feet, and the noise of

engines rumbling on their way. "Only a dream," thought the weary sleeper. Suddenly a voice, apparently under his window, shouted, "The Roxburgh mills on fire!" The rich man sprang from his bed at a bound, and now, being in the full possession of his senses, realized that it was *no* dream. Rushing to the window, he frantically tore aside the damask folds, and saw a sight that filled him with terror. Yes, the Roxburgh mills *were* on fire; for there was nothing else in that direction capable of making such a conflagration. He knew the spot, and often on retiring at night had he cast uneasy glances in that direction. Now he knew by the flames which rose from the direction of the river, casting up a deep lurid glare, and threatening to be the incendiary of the skies, that all must be wrapped in the devouring element. And as he saw the clouds of ascending smoke, smitten through and through by the intense light and raining showers of cinders that sparkled like golden grain, and also remembered that a large part of the insurance expired only twelve hours before, the rich man dropped the curtain, and, stepping back,

hurled himself upon the bed, overcome with pain and despair. Then there seemed to come a mocking voice, attended by a fiendish laugh, and shouting in his ear, "Whose shall these things be?"

The next morning Mr. John Dorsey found that he had been stripped of one half of all his wealth. Yet the tempest of feeling had swept by, and he was now calm and resolved. In church, when at the offertory for the poor, the Rector recited the words, "*While we have time*, let us do good," Mr. Dorsey felt then as never before. Opportunities were going! What then? Act! From that moment the spirit of covetousness in the man fairly began to depart. The proof of the assertion is found in the fact that the morning's collection, notwithstanding the disastrous fire, which affected the community in general, was five times as large as ever before. And the rich man knew how it came about.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *Out of the Ashes.*

"Beauty for ashes."

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

"For whan ye may not don, than wel we speken,  
Yet in our ashen cold is fire yrecken."

CHAUCER.

THE manufacturing interests of the town found the conflagration in many respects a heavy blow, yet Roxburgh was purified by the fire. Phoenix-like, prosperity rose out of the ashes, and when spring came the season opened joyously. In fact the whole town had recovered from the depressing influences which followed the destructive fire, and hope and vigor were mounting up in all hearts, even as the sap rose in all trees, from the cedar of Libanus to the poor hyssop which springs out of the wall. The loss of the great Roxburgh mills heavily touched others in the congregation besides the senior warden of St. Mark's, and yet the parish was as strong as ever before, and every way hopeful. Between

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the Rector and Mr. Dorsey there had long been a return of the former confidence and cordiality; and, as regards the latter, everybody agreed that he had wonderfully changed. Personally, the fire had done him a great deal of good. It had somewhat purified his dross, and now he realized more fully that he had something to live for. Those who had known him in former years could at times hardly recognize him. He was now a zealous promoter of all good works, and notwithstanding his heavy losses, he dealt constantly with a liberal hand. The schools in the mill district had proved a wonderful success, and had been the means of reinforcing the parish church with valuable recruits; while many families of more or less social influence that formerly seldom attended any place of worship, now came regularly to St. Mark's. The place was, therefore, crowded, and, at the Easter meeting, plans were discussed for enlargement this season, which was at once decided upon, as, with the increased numbers and open-handed generosity which was now coming to distinguish the parish, the cost of the enterprise, though considerable, could not embar-

rass any one. Mr. Dorsey set the example for the others, when the measure was finally decided on, by pledging a thousand dollars. He further astonished his associates by moving that the sum of one thousand dollars be added to the salary of the Rector.

Dr. Walton having been detained from the meeting by the sickness of a parishioner, Mr. Dorsey took advantage of his absence to say that the Rector had borne "the burden and heat of the day," and it was time to show a little appreciation. He had opposed the Rector in some things, it was true. But that was past, and he was glad to testify to the wisdom of his administration, which had brought them into their present prosperous condition. Everybody said that the fire had done the warden a world of good. His associates unanimously voted the increase of salary, and, when the meeting adjourned, the warden called at the Rectory, and gave Mrs. Walton a fresh surprise by mentioning the action of the vestry.

"A thousand dollars!" exclaimed that lady.

"Too little, too little, Mrs. Walton; we must do better by-and-by."

On Dr. Walton's return, somewhat late in the evening, Mrs. Walton said, "Well, Marmaduke, what do you suppose the vestry have done?"

"Adopted my plan, for the enlargement of the church?" was his reply, catching something of animation from his wife's tone.

"Yes, and voted a thousand dollars additional salary to the Rector, besides."

The Rector of Roxburgh felt more gratification than surprise over the latter item. He knew the ability of the parish, and comprehended what was just. All the interests of the parish were growing, and why should not the Rector share in the general prosperity. Too many parishes forget this, and hence the support of the clergyman does not always grow with their growth. It was just, the Rector said, but when he thought of the burden that it would remove from the department presided over by his wife, his heart warmed, and he gratefully viewed the action of the Vestry as not only just but generous. As for Mrs. Walton, *her* first consideration was that "Marmaduke could *now have those new books.*" And a great many clergymen

who now need books would have them pretty soon, if they would only manage to pluck up a spirit of independence.

But this was not all that came out of the ashes ; for a few days later, the Rector said to his wife, "I think we shall have a large class for confirmation."

"When does the bishop come?"

"He has appointed Whitsunday," was his reply, holding up an envelope stamped with a mitre.

"How many will there be?"

"That I cannot exactly say."

"I do not remember the number of candidates presented since we have been here," observed Mrs. Walton, as if musing with herself.

"Let me see," was the reply of the Rector, taking down the record book from its shelf and running over the pages: "first year, a sort of interregnum, no visitation; second, five; third, eight; and last year, nine—twenty-two in all. Few indeed. I shall have more than that this year from the mill district alone."

"Indeed!" was Mrs. Walton's exclamation,

for the good lady was perpetually being surprised.

"Yes, but I have almost been surprised myself to see how wonderful has been the result. I should not be surprised if as many as twenty-five came forward from the parish. If I had followed in the course with which I began, then, like several of my predecessors, I should finally have felt obliged to leave Roxburgh in self-defence. Now, however, we have an illustration of what can be accomplished by pursuing in faith the system of broad beneficence which is illustrated in the entire history of the church."

The Rector of Roxburgh, as it will be seen, felt himself fairly on his feet; and it was with great zeal, but not without the feeling of anxiety which attends upon such deep responsibility, that he set about the work of preparing candidates for confirmation.

And when Whitsunday came, the number exceeded his most sanguine expectations, forming a notable feature in the congregation. The sermon of the Bishop on this occasion was unusually impressive, and in his allusion to the day, which was to be rendered doubly

a festival, he said, in substance, that the old monks were accustomed to set doves flying in the church, to remind the people of the great gifts which, at the original Pentecost, were graciously bestowed. But we needed no such symbol to-day to tell of that Spirit now hovering over us as it were on "softest wing," ready to alight on every breast. When the candidates went forward to the chancel, sixty-nine persons bowed to receive the rite. Among them was Ezekiel Cheever's widowed mother, and on one side of her was his brother (who was to enter Harvard in the fall), and on the other was a person in whom Ezekiel was said to take quite as much interest as in the other two. This year, Whitsunday was a reality to all. The active Christianity of the people had healed all differences, and left the parish in prosperity and peace.

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We will now pass over the two years that followed the Whitsunday confirmation, and view the condition of Roxburgh, as it appeared at the end of that time.

As we cross the Green and approach St.

Mark's, we find the edifice changed. The contemplated improvements have long since been completed, and the building presents a gem of ecclesiastical architecture. The added aisles render the symmetry complete. It is a cathedral on a small scale, satisfying in its appointments and proportions every requirement of a genuine religious taste. Near by is an elegant little structure, built in the same style, devoted to the Sunday and Parish schools. Everything about the Rectory at this beautiful spring-time shows the utmost elegance, being in perfect order and repair; within we will not go at once, but let us look around the town, as we should have done at the outset, and view the many evidences of prosperity.

The great Roxburgh mills have been rebuilt, and are once more in operation; but where are the rows of squalid houses that used to stand near by? Happily, all things considered, the great fire swept them and their corruption away, and in their place comfortable and tasteful dwellings are seen, built and maintained with due regard to the health of the occupants. In this matter Mr. Dorsey

recovered all his old self-assertion, and, feeling that there was no question about the policy, positively insisted that it should be so, whether it lessened the income of the company or not. He had also stirred up others to improve their property, with reference to the health and morals of their tenants; and now, in a well-built hall, the operatives have their Lyceum, library, and reading-room, which accomplish their destined ends. The mill district, like St. Mark's Parish, has a new atmosphere. Mr. Dorsey is often seen there, as well as in other parts of the district, quietly doing the right thing at the right time, though, of course, no one must suppose that his liberality and activity are at all confined. Mr. Dorsey, though rapidly growing old, is a new man. He has found out the uses of wealth, and has identified himself with that progressive class of capitalists who find their own interests advanced by advancing the interests of others. To him, more than any other single individual, Roxburgh is to-day indebted for its salutary reforms; reforms which now demand instant inauguration in hundreds of the mill districts of other Rox-

burghs, where, notwithstanding the high reputation for enlightenment which New England has achieved and deserves, the ignorance is at times as startling as the vice is profound.

But we are now speaking of Mr. Dorsey, concerning whom we may also say that the people do not hear of all his good works. In fact, his right hand does not always know now what the left is about. He has quite forgotten the pang occasioned by the gift of that memorable five hundred dollars, and now regrets that he had not founded a working man's college with that hundred and fifty thousand dollars which the fire swept away. Vain regrets these; but he has, nevertheless, given the workingmen of his factory a library for their exclusive use. Being human, he is, of course, a little proud of it all, and sometimes gives a hint of the good works done in private, saying on a convenient occasion that "John Dorsey don't care to sound his own praise," yet when he gave the library he was greatly delighted by the local editor's complimentary puff.

Then also we might speak of what was accomplished during the same period for



Millville, formerly a dark spot on the county map. This thriving village now has a neat and tasteful church of its own, presided over by the young assistant minister of St. Mark's; for Dr. Walton has now attained to new dignities. Ezekiel Cheever is one of the pillars of the new church, his home being only a mile distant from Millville. Mr. Dorsey knows whence a good part of the church building fund came, and also how the salary is raised. On our way back to Roxburgh we will stop at Ezekiel's home, shared by a new occupant who came here to live, after having first walked up to the chancel of St. Mark's. Happy, and we may say fortunate, was the daughter of Farmer Flint. Under her influence, Ezekiel has very materially amended his orthoepy, and he has grown so popular that they have elected him a member of the Legislature, where his strong good sense and incorruptible integrity are, they say, beginning to be needed for the purpose of withstanding the unscrupulous who are trying to impose upon the people with their "jobs." As for Mrs. Cheever, in her old age, she is every day finding life pleasanter. Neither

she nor Ezekiel, have trouble with "the decrees" any more; while Samuel (we must not, with his mother, say "Sam,") is at college, and will soon be a candidate for Orders. It will be a great day for Ezekiel when he sees the hero of the hay-stack delighting the congregation at Millville with his pulpit oratory, as "the Reverend Samuel Cheever, A.M.;" while he, a warden of the church, at the close of the sermon, moves down the "broad aisle,"—so many in and out of New England call the central passage,—to carry the plate. Ezekiel, too, is himself a man of substance, having, as he expresses it, "got out of the woods." On the whole, the Cheevers are looking up.

But one more little matter that we have to mention must be reserved for a separate chapter.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *The Call at Last.*

"True preferment shall tender itself."

CYMBELINE.

"There is a call upon mankind to value and esteem those who set a moderate opinion upon their own merits."

THE SPECTATOR.

AND now, how about our friends at the Rectory? Going thither, we find the incumbent is snugly domiciled in the familiar place. Few things are changed in any appreciable degree. The Rector himself is perhaps the least changed of all, with the exception that he now has firmer health, which came when the traces of deep anxiety fled from his brow. To-day he sits in the old chair, poring over one of his favorite books. Some even think that he has grown young. Hard problems of finance never torture him now. The liberal and annually increasing salary provided by the parish alone relieves both himself and his wife from anything approaching the nature

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of care. And since Mrs. Walton is not present, we may say as regards her that she has found her position one of increasing happiness, though at times called to endure pain. Since we last stopped at the rectory, grumpy Uncle Morton has passed away, going on, let us trust, to that place where well meaning uncles are never grumpy any more. But we must do him the justice to say that before this event transpired he recovered his early cordiality, and resumed the old feeling of favoritism which he had felt for Mrs. Walton. He never felt comfortable when anything occurred to remind him of what he once said about "my unfortunate niece." The last time he was up to make her a visit, he was particularly cordial in his bearing toward the Rector, saying, in his own way, "Walton, you're a very lucky fellow." And when his will was opened, it was found that he had rewarded the disobedience of the quondam "unfortunate niece," who "*would* marry a poor minister," with a legacy of thirty thousand dollars.

But while we are gossiping about private matters with which we have no business, the

door of the study opens, and Mrs. Walton herself enters. But this time, however, her brow is not flushed with righteous indignation. With this exception, we have before us substantially the same person whom we introduced at the beginning. Perhaps we should say that the Rector's wife is even more beautiful, for while the violet eyes have not grown dim, and her natural vivacity and strength have not abated, there is an additional refinement which comes of sorrow, thrown over her features; this is unusually noticeable at those times when she may be dwelling upon Eva, her translated child, whose memory was a charm and whose recollection was a sigh. But now her countenance is lighted up with animation, and as she enters the study, her first words are :

"Marmaduke, here are some letters."

"Indeed, I thought we should have an unbroken day," replies the Rector, whose interest in such matters has now visibly declined.

"But you don't want to give up all your friends?"

"Then I suppose, Mary, that I had better see what these people have to say," he re-

plied, at the same time lazily stirring up the missives lying on the table with the point of his pearl paper-cutter. At last he breaks the seals in succession, while Mrs. Walton seats herself on an ottoman close by his chair, occasionally taking up an envelope, apparently no more interested than her husband.

As he glances at the last one, however, he gives a slight start, and then with a flushed face rapidly read it through.

"Well, Marmaduke?"

"Yes, Mary, it has come at last."

"What has come?"

"The 'call,'" is his reply, placing the letter in her hands.

Yes, the call had come at last; but it was not from St. Softphronosius' Church; for the Dashaways, a very influential family, who had spent another summer in Roxburgh, eventually came to the conclusion that the Rector of St. Mark's was not exactly the man to succeed the Rev. Pluto Plush, D.D., and had thrown their influence in favor of another candidate. The Dashaways, who were earnest enough about the things of the present world,

were not over zealous about the affairs of the next ; and while ready to endure any amount of hardship in the prosecution of a fashionable career at Newport or Saratoga, they inclined, on the whole, to go to *heaven* on flowery beds of ease. Therefore, it appeared, that Dr. Walton would not answer for St. Soft-phronosius. The call came from New York, but from a very different parish, composed chiefly of persons of wealth, some of whom had inherited their money, a fact of which they were not proud ; and of others who by their own exertions had accumulated wealth for themselves, of which fact they were not ashamed : while both classes were in earnest about carrying forward the interests of religion, in connection with which they indulged in no cant or parade. Dr. Walton, judged by his record, was the man they wanted. Therefore, as Mrs. Walton ran through the letter, she found that the invitation was unanimous, mentioning a most liberal salary, and a rectory in one of the best localities.

For a moment Mrs. Walton does not look up, but when at last she raises her head, her face well-nigh conveys the expression of a

frightened fawn. And then, with tears gathering in her eyes, she speaks :

"Dear Marmaduke, we shall not *go*?"

"Why *should* we, Mary?"

There is a world of assurance in this reply, which gives instant relief. "Why should we?" The old *mirage* has fled. The distant city has lost its charm. No sense of duty points to another field. The position is no longer craved. A city pulpit may appear more conspicuous, but that is a consideration to be urged by those who thirst for fame. In quiet old Roxburgh he has work enough for his strength. Mr. Mountfort accepted his city call because all assured him that no other man could so usefully fill the laborious place. But scores are standing ready to do the work to which he is called. Besides, his present home has become very dear. They have no desire to leave the old rectory. It was safe to say that the step would be deeply regretted by the people, who were, if possible, daily growing kinder. The tide of usefulness maintained its deep, steady flow. The old friends were better than the new ; and there, on the hill-side, not far away, was Eva's little grave.

All this Mrs. Walton read in her husband's sympathizing eye, and at once became strangely happy and at rest.

"Yes, Mary," is the conclusion of the Rector of Roxburgh, his voice deep with emotion, "let us stay."

Here, then, we leave the Rector of Roxburgh and his wife, sitting hand in hand, animated by the love of old friends and old scenes, and with hearts now too full for either word or tears; while Mr. Warden Dorsey, alarmed by the news which he had thus soon received from a friend in New York, rushes across the lawn towards the Rectory porch, with a throbbing heart, a choking sensation in his throat, and with great beads of perspiration on his brow, happily, however, to learn that his deep anxiety is unfounded, and that his friend the Rector of Roxburgh would undoubtedly decline the "Call."