

and bodies, to the unreal, phantom-like necessities of their circumstances.”

“Have I not heard you remark, father,” said Gilbert, “that the change you describe has been very marked among the ministers of our church?”

“Too marked and too striking,” replied the old man; “and, in affecting the respectability and usefulness of so important a class, it has educed a cause of deterioration distinct from itself, and hardly less formidable. There is an old proverb of our country, ‘Better the head of the commonalty than the tail of the gentry.’ I have heard you quote it, Robert, oftener than once, and admire its homely wisdom. Now, it bears directly on what I have to remark: the ministers of our church have moved but one step during the last sixty years; but that step has been an all-important one. It has been from the best place in relation to the people, to the worst in relation to the aristocracy.”

“Undoubtedly, worthy Mr. Burns,” said Mr. Murdoch. “There is great truth, according to mine own experience, in that which you affirm. I may state, I trust without over-boasting or conceit, my respected friend, that my learning is not inferior to that of our neighbor the clergyman;—it is not inferior in Latin, nor in Greek, nor yet in French literature, Mr. Burns, and probable it is he would not much court a competition; and yet, when I last waited at the Manse regarding a necessary and essential certificate, Mr. Burns, he did not as much as ask me to sit down.”

“Ah,” said Gilbert, who seemed the wit of the family, “he is a highly respectable man, Mr. Murdoch. He has a fine house, fine furniture, fine carpets,—all that constitutes respectability, you know; and his family is on visit-