

yourself to convert me, I'll brak your face ;” and I have known another of them remark, with a patronizing air, that “kirks were nae very bad things, after a’ ;” that he “aye liked to be in a kirk, for the sake of decency, once a twelvemonth ;” and that, as he “hadna been kirked for the last ten months, he was just only waiting for a rainy Sabbath to lay in his stock o’ divinity for the year.” Our new lodger, aware how little any interference with the religious concerns of others was tolerated in the place, seemed unable for some time to muster up resolution enough to broach in the family his favorite subject. He retired every night, before going to bed, to his closet,—the blue vault, with all its stars,—often the only closet of the devout lodger in a south-country cottage ; but I saw that each evening, ere he went out, he used to look uneasily at the landlord and me, as if there lay some weight on his mind regarding us, of which he was afraid to rid himself, and which yet rendered him very uncomfortable. “Well, John,” I asked one evening, speaking direct, to his evident embarrassment ; “what is it ?” John looked at old William the landlord, and then at me. “Did we not think it right,” he said, “that there should be evening worship in the family ?” Old William had not idea enough for conversation : he either signified acquiescence in whatever was said that pleased him, by an ever-recurring ay, ay, ay ; or he grumbled out his dissent in a few explosive sounds, that conveyed his meaning rather in their character as tones than as vocables. But there now mingled with the ordinary explosions the distinct enunciation, given with, for him, unwonted emphasis, that he “wasna for *that*.” I struck in, however, on the other side, and appealed to Peggy. “I was sure,” I said, “that Mrs. Russel would see the propriety of John’s proposal.” And Mrs. Russel, as most women would have done in the circumstances, unless, indeed, very bad ones, did see the propriety of it ; and from that evening forward the cottage had its family worship. John’s prayers were always very earnest and excellent, but sometimes just a little too long ; and old William, who, I fear, did not greatly profit by them, used not unfrequently to fall asleep on