

among my people?" "I doubt it much," I replied. "Well," he rejoined, "one may fall short of being a poet, and yet gain by exercising one's tastes and talents in the poetic walk. The accomplishment of verse is at least not a vulgar one." The conversation went on as we passed together along the street; and he stood for a time opposite the manse door. "I am forming," he said, "a small library for our Sabbath-school scholars and teachers: most of the books are simple enough little things; but it contains a few works of the intellectual class. Call upon me this evening, that we may look over them, and you may perhaps find among them some volumes you would wish to read." I accordingly waited upon him in the evening; and we had a long conversation together. He was, I saw, curiously sounding me, and taking my measure in all directions; or, as he himself afterwards used to express it in his characteristic way, he was like a traveller who, having come unexpectedly on a dark pool in a ford, was dipping down his staff, to ascertain the depth of the water and the nature of the bottom. He inquired regarding my reading, and found that in the belles lettres, especially in English literature, it was about as extensive as his own. He next inquired respecting my acquaintance with the metaphysicians. "Had I read Reid?" "Yes." "Brown?" "Yes." "*Hume*?" "Yes." "Ah! ha! Hume!! By the way, has he not something very ingenious about miracles? Do you remember his argument?" I stated the argument. "Ah, very ingenious,—most ingenious. And how would you answer that?" I said, "I thought I could give an abstract of the reply of Campbell," and sketched in outline the reverend Doctor's argument. "And do you deem that satisfactory?" said the minister. "No, not at all," I replied, "No! no!! *that's* not satisfactory." "But perfectly satisfactory," I rejoined, "that such is the general partiality for the better side, that the worse argument has been received as perfectly adequate for the last sixty years." The minister's face gleamed with the broad fun that entered so largely into his composition, and the conversation shifted into other channels.

From that night forward I enjoyed perhaps more of his con-