

ing to Solomon, the "gift" had to a certain extent "destroyed the heart;" and so they were prepared to take up merely a half-way position, which their predecessors, the old popular divines, would have liked exceedingly ill. I could not avoid seeing that, fixed in a sort of overtopped hollow, if I may so speak, between the claims of patronage on the one hand and the rights of the people on the other, it was a most perilous position, singularly open to misconception and misrepresentation on both sides; and as it virtually stripped the patrons of half their power, and extended to the people only half their rights, I was not a little afraid that the patrons might be greatly more indignant than the people grateful, and that the Church might, in consequence, find herself exposed to the wrath of very potent enemies, and backed by the support of only lukewarm friends. But, however perilous and difficult as a post of occupation, it was, I could not avoid believing, a position conscientiously taken up; nor could I doubt that its grounds were strictly constitutional. The Church, in a case of disputed settlement, might, I believed, have to forfeit the temporalities, if her decision differed from that of the law courts, but only the temporalities connected with the case at issue; and these I deemed worth risking in the popular behalf, seeing that they might be regarded as already lost to the country in every case in which a parish was assigned to a minister whom the parishioners refused to hear. It rejoiced me, too, to see the revival of the old spirit in the Church; and so I looked with an interest on the earlier stages of her struggle with the law courts, greatly more intense than that with which any mere political contest had ever inspired me. I saw with great anxiety decision after decision go against her; first that of the Court of Session in March 1838, and next that of the House of Lords in May 1839; and then with the original Auchterarder case of collision I saw that of Lethendy and Marnoch mixed up; and, as one entanglement succeeded another, confusion becoming worse confounded. It was only when the Church's hour of peril came that I learned to know how much I really valued her, and how