

to him by a succession of mothers ; for it might have been said of him, as of someone else, that he was "gey extravagant in the matter of wives." His dinner hour was five, as in the days of my youth, and at the early breakfast the host indulged in a long extempore prayer, invariably bringing in our meeting of the night before, as well as various topical subjects. Happily, he was prevented by tightly closed lids from seeing the somewhat irreverent behaviour of the rising generation who clustered round the paternal hearth.

The appearance on the platform of the worthy old laird was the signal for a bit of good-humoured chaff, and occasional passages of arms with his and my excellent friend and occasional enemy, M'Combie of Milton, who sometimes became slightly inebriated with the excitement of his own verbosity, and said a great deal more, I am sure, than he intended. Once when my host and I were walking home on a wintry night our umbrellas were battered with snowballs, flung more out of mischief than malice, for he was really popular. All respected his vices, if he had any ; but certainly his eccentricity leaned to the side of virtue, and he was very thoroughly appreciated by his tenants. He was devoted to preaching, and had a regular church of his own in the village, wherein he held forth to interested congregations twice a week. He wrote a most entertaining account of a voyage to Norway, during which he spent all his spare time in discussing theology with the able and ingenious Dr Danson ; and when he got on shore he started a series of *al fresco* religious meetings, at which his eloquent utterances were translated by an interpreter to the congregation, sentence by sentence, as they flowed out of his mouth. He was equally fluent with his pen as with his tongue, and readers of the *Aberdeen Free Press* will remember the letters on a vast variety of subjects, and full of knowledge and