

**THE PARISH OF
TAXWOOD AND SOME
OF ITS OLDER MEMORIES**

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The Parish of Taxwood and Some of Its Older Memories by J. R. Macduff

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"In company with one of the lowlier 'members of Session,' the Laird, with a tie (and in summer a waistcoat) of immaculate white, stood sentry over the pewter plate."—See page 48.

THE
PARISH OF TAXWOOD

And some of its older Memories

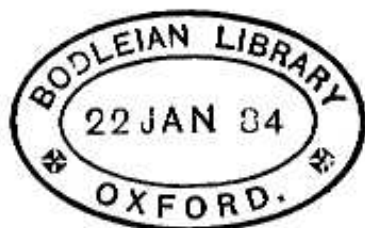
BY
J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. ROWAN

EDINBURGH: DAVID DOUGLAS

1883

270. e. 517.



"Excuse me, sir, for making the remark on so short an acquaintance; but a gentleman like yourself cannot fail, I should think, to have observed many scenes and incidents worth recording, in the course of your experience as a Minister of the Gospel."

"I have witnessed some certainly," replied the old gentleman; "but the incidents and characters have been of a homely and ordinary nature."

CHARLES DICKENS.

"You are a Scotchman, are you not?" I asked. "I'm from the Isle of Skye, sir; I'm a M'Gregor." I said something about his religious faith. "Ye'll know I was bred in the Church of Scotland, sir," he said, "and I love it as I love my own soul."

RUSKIN'S *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix.

TO
THE MEMORY OF
"The Laird,"
AND ALL LAIRDS WHO WERE LIKE HIM;
ALSO TO THAT OF
MANY BELOVED AND HONOURED FRIENDS
IN THE MINISTRY OF
THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
WHO BELONGED TO THE BYGONE GENERATION
DESCRIBED IN THESE PAGES
BUT HAVE NOW ENTERED INTO REST:
SPECIALLY TO THAT OF MY OLDEST FRIEND
THE REV. JAMES CRAIK, D.D.,
FORMERLY MINISTER OF ST. GEORGE'S, GLASGOW,
AND ONE OF THE MODERATORS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
I DEDICATE
THIS VOLUME.

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PREFACE.

IT has been the object of the Writer, in the following pages, to present a tolerably faithful photograph of the parochial life of Scotland in a bygone, and, he ventures to think, an often misunderstood generation.

To avoid misapprehension, he may perhaps be permitted to say, that in first excogitating the series,¹ he had the full design of adhering as closely as possible to a plain and prosaic narrative of fact. He soon found, however, the necessity of a partial departure at least from this intention. While there are very few of the character-pictures or incidents described but have in some shape or form come under his personal cognisance (many as literal transcripts as may be,—very distinct and pronounced studies from the life, without so much as one

¹ The papers appeared originally in *Life and Work*. They are here reproduced with additional material, both in text, notes, etc.

line or feature altered), he must honestly plead guilty, for the deepening and strengthening of his lights and shadows, to occasional artistic liberties; in one or two cases, indeed, to the introduction of "ideal creations," where the purely realistic portraiture would, on many accounts, have been impossible or inexpedient. For similar cogent reasons, which the Reader will quite understand, he deemed it not infrequently desirable alike to transpose localities and to veil personalities by a change either of name or surname, sometimes of both; also, here and there to credit one character with borrowed features which were strictly the property of others. He need scarcely add that what may be called the central (clerical) figure in the Taxwood group is purely and entirely ideal. Despite, however, these acknowledged dovetailings and adaptations, the whole sketches, severally and collectively, may be accepted as accurate and life-like replicas of his own treasured mental picture gallery. Having had the advantage of more than one sphere of ministerial labour, he has been enabled to broaden his canvas, and enlarge the material for anecdote and illustration.