PARSON-OGRAPHY; OR, THE BOOK OF PARSONS

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BY

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TO

THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON DENISON,

AND

THE REVEREND CORNELIUS GORHAM,

TWO FEARLESS MEN WHO WISH WELL TO

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

These Pages

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

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INTRODUCTION.

Good-humoured ridicule never did any harm. The ridicule to be found in the following descriptions is perfectly good-humoured.

It is also free from all party bias, and is intended to be serviceable.

Very likely it will be found of too unpretending and too unmeritorious a kind to be very effective.

But if performance is at all equal to intention and wish, its influence would be friendly to the clergy.

As a body, the clergy abound in what is good; but some of them are almost the reverse: or at least are exceedingly unfit for their office.

Caution in the Bishops, and reformation in the body, is the desideratum. Requirements for ordination must be more strict, and the examinations more searching. And such men as have already gained an entrance without proper fitness, must be made to amend themselves, and supply their own deficiencies.

There are some Parsons, whose peculiarities are merely the result of party feeling. These deserve a gentler handling. Still, say what the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol chooses, party is an evil, not a good.

For every instance in which it may do a little good, there are a thousand others in which it does irremediable mischief. Take the diocese of Lichfield as a single example:

Party is a tyrant over the actions, and makes machines of us. The question with party men is, "What course does my party take?" Out upon such slavery!

"The Cambridge Man," and other college sketches must be viewed differently, being mere delineations of character. A University man need get no harm from his educational mater. But there are good, bad, and indifferent peculiarities frequently imbibed.

Some people are shocked at everything which is not very abstracted, and very unworldly. This little affair of a book, intended for a quiet evening, or a railway ride, is not for any doleful individuals who cannot relax, or who look coldly upon a pleasant face, or who won't hear one word against "our minister;" always provided said minister be civil to said dolefuls.

The world is bad enough, and sad enough of itself. Let cheerfulness and benevolence be the badges of those who wish to reform it.

L. L.

May, 1857.