THE

Carrespondence of Clandins Cleai

TWIXT THE LAND AND THE MOSS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH WEEKLY.

SIR, -"'Twixt the Land and the Moss" is the story of the United Presbyterian Church in Keith from 1773-1897. It is written by the present minister, the Rev. W. H. Macfarlane, and is published by Mr. Elliot, of Edinburgh, at the price of one-and-sixpence. The dedication runs:

> To All to whom The Little Church is dear; And to The Old Town, 'Twixt the Land and the Moss, for which It has done what it could.

This is very graceful, and the book is worthy of its beginning. In fact, I have not read anything of the kind so excellent since David Gilmour's book on the Penfolk. Of course Mr. Macfarlane does not compete with Mr. Gilmour. He tells a plain, straightforward narrative, but he tells it with so much heart, and insight, and literary skill that his book may be read even with Gilmour's masterpiece. A brilliant Scotch minister told me lately that he once spent a day with Robertson Smith. Ascertaining that he came from Paisley, Smith immediately asked, "Are there any Penfolk there now?" This showed less than Smith's usual scholarship, for Gilmour tells us at the beginning that William Dickie was the last of the Penfolk. But it is significant that for Smith as for many other people Paisley is interesting mainly because it was the home of these Christians. And Mr. Macfarlane has made the little Banffshire town of Keith permanently attractive to many by this history of a religious community, a history which no one will regret buying and reading, and which ought to pass far beyond the circle of those immediately concerned. One of the first figures introduced to us is Mr. William Brown, the minister of Craigdam, the first secession congregation in the North-East of Scotland. Mr. Brown was ordained on the 22nd of July, 1752, on a stipend of £15 a year. As a rule he had but one text in a year, which was announced on the morning of the annual communion, and under which was embraced an entire system of doctrine. The solemnity and tenderness of his appeals held his hearers spellbound, and so great was his unction that in setting up his sermon, "What think ye of Christ?" the publication was delayed because the printer ran short of capital O's. His energy was irrepressible. He would not take time to walk. He was called by some "the rinnin' minister," and by others "the weeping minister," and both were right. He continued his service for nearly fifty years, and among his successors was the famous Patrick Robertson commemorated in the verse:

"Mr. Patrick Robertson,

Who long did serve the Lamb

In that department of His church, At Tarves near Craigdam."

We get an other beginning of the secession in the lonely and stormy parish of Cabrach, famous for its hill, which is mentioned in Scott's "Antiquary." Mr. Macfarlane tells us that Mr. Troup visited the place in 1761, F. Henderson who has since become well and preached his first sermon on the banks known as a good writer, and who coof the Deveron, from the text, "Like a operates with Mr. Henley in his edition crane or a swallow, so did I chatter," to of Burns. Mr. Henley has declared that an audience gathered from seventeen there is perfect identity of feeling and parishes. I had thought this was the text | conviction between himself and his friend, preached from in the same place by Mr. I and that all the judgments in the book are James Morison, who afterwards became to be taken as coming from two hearts the founder of the Evangelical Union that beat as one. This union of hearts is Church, but no doubt Mr. Macfarlane is touchingly exemplified in a recent article

Cowie, about whom a book should be "H. and H." There is a weird story about written. He was a born evangelist, and an interviewer who waited upon Messrs. a preacher of remarkable force. Like Henley and Henderson to discuss with George Whitefield and other famous them their new edition of Burns. Both preachers, he had his favourite themes. One of them was Elisha's multiplying of the cil in the widow's cruse, which some rhymester has commemorated thus:-

"" Up by Tough and down by Towie, 'Twas age the wifie and her bowie; And roon by Keig and Tullynessle, "Twas still the wifie and her vessel."

Church Courts for allowing laymen to Henley's accent and Mr. Henderson's, the from 13 to seven years old: the next morning preach, and had passed upon him the latter having in it some trace of the sentence of deposition and the lesser native Doric. But they kept time and excommunication. He gave a great tune admirably, and, as I said, even in impulse, which still lasts, to the whole their longest addresses never diverged in religious life of the district.

is Mr. Robert Moffat. Mr. Moffat got into record, and I am told that the interviewer trouble with some of his people and has never been quite the same man since. resigned. In preaching his farewell I find it somewhat difficult to think that

and stirred its unreasoning superstitious prejudices to their deepest depths. On the day appointed for the funeral a great crowd, armed with sticks and stones, assembled at the churchyard, determined to | ful volume, and I shall be glad if many of prevent its desecration by the admission | your readers secure a copy. I should add of a suicide's remains. In the end the | that it is abundantly, and not too abuncoffin was laid down under one of the dantly, illustrated. walls, partly within and partly without the hallowed enclosure.

What has struck me most in reading the book is the way in which a little dissenting congregation may be connected with the great world. The country minister can never tell what may come of the young men and women who sit in his pews. Mr. Macfarlane rightly quotes as a motto Carlyle's famous words about the seceder clergy, and it is well known what obligations he confessed to the priestliest man he ever knew, Mr. Johnston, of Ecclefechan. I find here several names known beyond Keith, and even beyond the United Presbyterian Church. We are told, for example, that the Rev. Alexander Millar, one of the ministers of the church at Keith for three or four years, during his theological course successfully conducted a school in his native town of Huntly, and had George Macdonald as one of his pupils. Dr. Macdonald has told us in his books much about the religious history of that region, and I hope he will be induced to tell us more, and in a more direct form. It is wonderful that the pale gold blossom and consummate flower of Macdonald's genius should have grown in such a strath, and yet perhaps not so strange when you come to think of it. Another name that strikes me is that of Madame Paul Bert, the widow of the eminent French statesman and writer. Madame Bert was a daughter of Joseph Clayton, one of the United Presbyterian elders in Keith, and she still takes a warm interest in the old church. Of her father we are told that he was a man of refined, artistic, and sometimes fastidious tastes. "The order and beauty of his garden were a fair reflex of the qualities of his mind. Uniformly upright in character, judicious in counsel, and dignified but kindly in manner, he early won, and to the last retained, the respect and esteem of all who were associated with him in the work of the congregation; and in times of trouble and bereavement his words of comfort and encouragement, which were always wisely, tenderly, and seasonably spoken, soothed many a sorrowful heart." He was an elder for twenty-five years, and for the same period superintendent of the Sabbath-school. On the Sabbath before his death he was in his place at the Lord's Supper, so that his labours ended only with his life. A third name is that of Thomas Finlay-

son Henderson, probationer, Lathomes, who was called to be minister of the church in 1873. I am not perfectly certain, but I think that this is the Mr. T. right. | in the New Review on Highland Mary We have next an account of George | which is simply and pathetically signed gentlemen were punctual to the tryst, and the interviewer, with natural diffidence, after seeing that his pencil was well sharpened, began with a question. To his astonishment, Messrs. Henley and Henderson answered simultaneously, and in the very same words. Another question was asked, and with a similar recult. It a single word. This is thought to have Another minister who comes before us been the most remarkable interview on

sermon, he made certain statements which | Mr. Henley would ever have had a chance | firmed by the fact that one morning, when so greatly excited one of the elders, of being elected United Presbyterian the Count comes unexpectedly to his William Matheson by name, that he rose minister of Keith. I also find it difficult | bedroom and stands looking over his in his seat, and in an incoherent to think that he would have ever written shoulder, there is no reflection of him in manner said, "I am sorry you Mr. Henderson's article in the British and the small shaving glass Harker has brought have made so many charges against a Foreign Evangelical Review against from London, and which covers the whole people that has done so much for you;" | Matthew Arnold's theology, though when | room behind. The adventures of Jonathan upon which the minister savagely retorted, I remember how kindly he once wrote Harker will be read again and again; "If that man die a natural death, I am not about Mrs. Henry Wood's novels, all the most powerful part of the book a servant of the Lord." The same night | things seem possible. Perhaps, however, | after this is the description of the the misguided man, whose mind had it is not unfair to say that if Mr. T. F. voyage of the Demeter from Varna to previously become unhinged, took his own | Henderson be the former minister- | Whitby. A supernatural terror haunts the life. This tragic occurrence sent a thrill elect of Keith U.P. Church, he has crew from the moment that they leave the of horror through the whole community, changed more in becoming identified with Dardanelles, and as time goes on one man Mr. Henley than Mr. Henley has changed by becoming identified with him.

the many points of interest in this delight-

I am, sir, yours, etc., CLAUDIUS CLEAR. Basil Regis, Middlesex, Tuesday.

MR. BRAM STOKER. A CHAT WITH THE AUTHOR OF "DRACULA."

One of the most interesting and exciting of recent novels is Mr. Bram Stoker's Stoker, who, as most people know, is Sir "Dracula." It deals with the ancient Henry Irving's manager at the Lyceum mediæval vampire legend, and in no Theatre. He told me, in reply to a ques-English work of fiction has this legend been so brilliantly treated. The scene is laid partly in Transylvania and partly in England. The first fifty-four pages, which give the Journal of Jonathan Harker after leaving Vienna until he makes up his mind to escape from Castle Dracula, are in their weird power altogether unrivalled in recent fiction. The only book which to my knowledge at all compares with them is "The Waters of Hercules," by E. D. Gerard, which also treats of a wild and little known portion of Eastern Europe. Without revealing the plot of the story, I may say that Jonathan Harker, whose diary first introduces the vampire was about. The more hysterical, vampire Count, is a young solicitor sent | through excess of fear, might themselves | by his employer to Castle Dracula to arrange for the purchase of a house and estate in England.

From the first day of his starting, signs and wonders follow him. At the warns him not to go to Castle Dracula, and, finding that his purpose is unalterable, places a rosary with a crucifix round his neck. For this gift he has good cause to be grateful afterwards. Harker's fellowpassengers on the stage-coach grow more and more alarmed about his safety as they come nearer to the dominions of the Count. Kindly gifts are pressed upon him: wild rose, garlic, and mountain ash. These are meant to be a protection | many authorities?" against the evil eye. The author seems to know every corner of Transylvania and of vampire superstitions shown in "Draall its superstitions. Presently in the miscellaneous reading. Borgo Pass a carriage with four horses were driven by a tall man with a long brown beard, and a great black hat which seemed to hide his face from us. I could only see the gleam of a pair of very bright eyes, which seemed red in the lamplight as he turned to us: . . . As he spoke he smiled, and the lamplight fell on a hardlooking mouth, with very red lips and Todten reiten schnell' ('For the dead

travel fast')." This is the famous king vampire, Count Dracula, in ancient times a warlike Tranconscious from the first that he is among ghostly and terrible surroundings. Even on the night journey to the Castle, wolves which have gathered round the carriage disappear when the terrible driver lifts his hand. On his arrival the guest is left waiting, and presently a tall old man, whom he suspects from the beginning to be none other than the driver himself, bids him welcome to his house. The Count never eats with his guest. During the day he is absent, but during the night he converses, the dawn breaking up the interview. There are no mirrors to be and the young solicitor's fears are con-

IN ELLIMAN'S SAFETY. the victims were not a penny the worse.— Healthy Persons, Sore Threat from Cold, Chest Colds, Neuralgia from Cold, Chilblains before broken, Corns when painful, Tired Feet, Stiffness from severe exercise, etc., are pains all relieved by a prompt and free use of Elliman's Universal Embrocation. Bottles,

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Elliman, Sons, and Co., Slough, England.

after another disappears. It is whispered that at night a man, tall, thin, and ghastly I have only touched on a very few of pale, is seen moving about the ship. The mate, a Roumanian, who probably knows the vampire legend, searches during the day in a number of old boxes, and in one he finds Count Dracula asleep. His own suicide and the death of the captain follow, and when the ship arrives at Whitby, the vampire escapes in the form of a huge dog. The strange thing is that, although in some respects this is a gruesome book, it leaves on the mind an entirely wholesome impression. The events which happen are so far removed from ordinary experience that they do not haunt the imagination unpleasantly. It is certain that no other writer of our day could have produced so marvellous a

On Monday morning I had the pleasure of a short conversation with Mr. Bram tion, that the plot of the story had been a long time in his mind, and that he spent about three years in writing it. He had always been interested in the vampire legend. "It is undoubtedly," he remarked, "a very fascinating theme, since it touches both on mystery and fact. In the Middle Ages the terror of the vampire depopulated whole villages."

"Is there any historical basis for the

"It rested, I imagine, on some such case as this. A person may have fallen into a death-like trance and been buried before the time. Afterwards the body may have been dug up and found alive, and from this a horror seized upon the people, and in their ignorance they imagined that a fall into trances in the same way; and so the story grew that one vampire might enslave many others and make them like himself. Even in the single villages it was believed that there might be many such creatures. When once the panic "Golden Krone" at Bistritz the landlady seized the population, their only thought was to escape."

"In what parts of Europe has this belief been most prevalent?"

"In certain parts of Styria it has survived longest and with most intensity, but the legend is common to many countries, to China, Iceland, Germany, Saxony, Turkey, the Chersonese, Russia, Poland,

Tartar communities." "In order to understand the legend, I suppose it would be necessary to consult

Italy, France, and England, besides all the

Mr. Stoker told me that the knowledge cula" was gathered from a great deal of

"No one book that I know of will give drives up beside the coach. "The horses | you all the facts. I learned a good deal from E. Gerard's 'Essays on Roumanian Superstitions,' which first appeared in the Nineteenth Century, and were afterwards published in a couple of volumes. I also learned something from Mr. Baring-Gould's 'Were-Wolves.' Mr. Gould has promised a book on vampires, but I do not know whether he has made any progress

Readers of "Dracula" will remember sharp-looking teeth as white as ivory. | that the most famous character in it is Dr. One of my companions whispered the line | van Helsing, the Dutch physician, who, by from Burger's 'Lenore': 'Denn die extraordinary skill, self-devotion, and labour, finally outwits and destroys the vampire. Mr. Stoker told me that van i Helsing is founded on a real character. In a recent leader on "Dracula," published in a provincial newspaper, it is sugsylvanian noble. Jonathan Harker is gested that high moral lessons might be gathered from the book. I asked Mr. Stoker whether he had written with a purpose, but on this point he would give no definite answer. "I suppose that every book of the kind must contain some lesson," he remarked; "but I prefer that readers should find it out for themselves.

In reply to further questions, Mr. Stoker said that he was born in Dublin, and that his work had lain for thirteen years in the Civil Service. He is an M.A. of Trinity College, Dublin. His brother-in-law is Mr. Franklort Moore, one of the most popular young writers of the day. began his literary work early. The first thing he published was a book on "The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions." seen in any part of the ancient building, Next came a series of children's stories, "Under the Sunset," published by Sampson Low, Then followed the book by which he has hitherto been "I was called in a great hurry to a family | best known, "The Snake's Pass." Messrs. Mr. Cowie came into collision with the was possible to distinguish between Mr. where the mother had administered Elliman's Constable have published in their this, with "The Shoulder of Shasta," com-M.R.C.S., Oct. 28, 1896."—Rheumatic Pains, pletes Mr. Stoker's list of novels. He has Lumbago, Sprains, Bruises, Slight Cuts in been in London for some nineteen years, and believes that London is the best done, the sense of the immense variety of possible place for a literary man. "A writer | the Queen's dominions." will find a chance here if he is good for anything; and recognition is only a matter generosity shown by literary men to one

ANNIE S. SWAN'S WEEKLY PENNY STORIES.

On Thursday, July 15th, Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton will publish the first of

ANNIE S. SWAN'S PENNY STORIES.

The title of the first number will be ..

SECRET DUNSTAN MERE."

By ANNIE S. SWAN.

These will be pub-

lished EVERY THURSDAY,

be written by Annie S. Swan, other popular novelists. As the demand for fiction becomes greater and greater, it is imperatively necessary that the supply should be kept pure and whole= some.

The "Spectator," of March 13th, 1897, says:

"The author who still writes under her maiden name of 'Annie S. Swan' deserves all respect, for the influence she has exercised over present=day fiction by her strenuous example, and to some extent by her precept, has been wholly for good."

It is hoped that the public will in very large numbers accept the guarantee of Annie S. Swan's name for a series of weekly stories which may be introduced unhesita= tingly into every home.

These stories will be Christian in tone, and suitable alike for Sun= day and week = day reading. They will be real stories and not sermons, thoroughly interesting and dra= matic.

Great pains have been spent on the get-up of the stories, which will be especially novel and attractive, far surpassing that of any similar series in the market. The tales will be beautifully illus= trated. It is hoped that all readers of "The British Weekly" will order the first number from their newsagents.

The Stories will appear regularly every week.

least, is not disposed to quarrel with the Mr. Stoker does not find it necessary to publish through a literary agent. It always seems to him, he says, that an author with an ordinary business capacity can do

better for himself than through any agent. Some men now-a-days are making ten thousand a year by their novels, and it seems hardly fair that they should pay ten or five per cent. of this great sum to a middleman. By a dozen letters or so in the course of the year they could settle all their literary business on their own account." Though Mr. Stoker did not say so, I am inclined to think that the literary agent is to him a nineteenth century

No interview during this week would be complete without a reference to the Jubilee, so I asked Mr. Stoker, as a Londoner of nearly twenty years' standing, what he thought of the celebrations. Everyone," he said, "has been proud that the great day went off so successfully. We have had a magnificent survey of the Empire, and last week's procession brought home, as nothing else could have LORNA.

HIGH-CLASS IRISH BUTTER. Made on modern principles-fresh churned. Weekly of time." Mr. Stoker speaks of the Supplies to Private Families, per post paid-"Silvercross Dairy," 21 lbs. 28. 8d., 5 lbs. 5s., 8 lbs. another in a tone which shows that he, at | 75. od., 93 lbs. 95.—A. R. Jacob, Creamery, Lismore,