

**RECOLLECTIONS OF  
A COUNTRY  
CLERGYMAN**

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Recollections of a Country Clergyman by Anonymous

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**ANONYMOUS**

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OF A

COUNTRY CLERGYMAN

*[Lutheran pastor in Germany]*



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I.

**I**T was on a Saturday evening before the eighth Sunday after Trinity, that I, a young man of four-and-twenty, stood on a hill before the village of P——. A boy, who carried my small possessions, some books and linen, sat on a stone at a little distance. I stood long gazing at the large village with its tower and church which lay beneath me. This was to be my new home. My past life—three pleasant years spent at the University—a happy youth—all the peace and joy of family life in my father's house, lay behind me. I was now going to assist the old pastor of P—— in his parish duties. It was a warm day; all round were fertile fields in



which reapers busily cut the golden ears of corn, and toiled in the sweat of their brow. The sun set; fear and anxiety, desire and hope, struggled in my breast. The Bible calls the pastor's office a precious one; but how difficult it is! Man's life is only valuable when it is laborious. The people who were dwelling under the roofs of the village were to be my field of labour, and I must answer for the fruits of my work to the Lord of the Church. My heart was so oppressed I could bear my feelings no longer. I sent the boy forward, and, when I felt sure I could kneel down on the stones unobserved, poured out my heart to the Lord in silent prayer.

My thoughts were divided between praise for God's gracious guidance hitherto, and prayer for an attentive ear to the Lord's voice, with a humble and obedient heart. Prayer and praise are always powerful to touch the Christian's heart. He who can rightly give thanks can also rightly pray.

Near the village I overtook the boy. The first inhabitant of the village with whom I shook hands was a child seven years old; I would gladly have pressed it to my heart in reality, as I did spiritually. The pastor came kindly and affectionately to meet me. I was shown my room, which looked on to the churchyard and the graves. The old clerk soon came for the hymns which were to be sung to-morrow, and I felt pleased when the old man heartily spoke his wishes, which, however, con-

tained a warning, as he added, "God giveth grace to the humble." When the heart is touched at any turning-point of life it is always peculiarly susceptible of impressions from Scripture. There streams into the disquieted heart a breath of peace from the words of the living God. Their authority is a prop to which the weak plant clings. The old clerk was dismissed with hearty thanks, and a request for sympathy and assistance. In the parsonage all was soon quiet. The harvest work had wearied every one, and the pastor had several fields which he cultivated. It was not possible for the pastor's assistant to think of sleep. I gently opened the door, and a few steps took me to the churchyard, whence I could see the whole of the large and beautiful village. The moon shone full on the opposite side of the church. From a tombstone, beneath which slept a former clergyman, one could distinctly see the pulpit in the moonlight. The whole village seemed to sleep; from one solitary cottage gleamed a feeble light. "To-morrow wilt thou stand in that pulpit, and the inhabitants of the village will sit before thee: wilt thou awaken the sleepers?" This question made me fall on my knees. The first evening prayer was deep and fervent. "The sins of the pastor hinder the course of God's word," said an old clergyman, at the end of his life; therefore my prayer for the congregation changed at last to a prayer for my own soul, for I felt how difficult it was for a pastor to be holy.

The next morning I was up early. The carefully prepared sermon had once more to be fixed in my memory. About seven o'clock the old clerk came to fetch me to the Chapel of Ease. The pastor's old servant, who had served him thirty years, led his horse out of the stable for me. We both rode together through the village, and it pleased me to see that old and young greeted the clerk in a friendly manner. He did not take off his hat to any one, but replied to the courtesies by waving his hand, and warned me not to spoil the people, when he saw me take off my hat. In half an hour the hamlet lay before us. The schoolmaster, a man in the prime of life, took my horse and led it into the stable. The clerk went directly into the church, rang the bells and wrote down the hymns. The churchyard was desolate, the church dirty, and out of the whole large parish only four men came to the service—no child and no woman. The schoolmaster, who had taken my horse, was so busy with household work that he did not even think of going to church. After the clerk had sung some verses, almost alone, I went up into the pulpit and began my sermon. It was a severe humiliation for the old Adam. Curiosity had not induced any one to come to church. My sermon was not prepared for such circumstances, and I was obliged to leave out a great deal, and spoke nervously. That was the beginning. I felt very unhappy. I rode silently by the old clerk, who told me he had often gone back with the pastor