Rev. Gulielmum Allan,
Hoc libro,
Ego ejus auctor,
Alexander Thomond
Grato animo adductus,
Donavi.

Dabziel Kal. Jan
MDCCCLXI

CHAPTERS

FROM

THE LIFE

OF

JAMES TACKET.

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PREFACE.

THESE Chapters were originally written for publication in a periodical, and it is with some misgivings that the author presents them to the world in a collected form. Almost all the events actually happened, though not exactly in the order in which they are related. One or two of them may seem somewhat extravagant, but there has really been very little exaggeration. The reader of this book will not find in it much of what is called fine writing, but a plain, humorous account of such things as take place in the early life of many a lowly born, but aspiring Scotsman. The author's principal aim has been to give a true picture of a life which might afford some instruction, combined with innocent amusement; and if his readers give him credit for having succeeded in this, he will be satisfied.

BIBLOSON COTTAGE,
31st August, 1860.

CHAPTERS

FROM THE

LIFE OF JAMES TACKET.

CHAPTER I.

MY BIRTH.

I HAVE no recollection of it myself; but my auntie Tibbie, who is a very matter-of-fact person, and possessed of a very tenacious memory, has related to me a few particulars regarding it, which, for the sake of completeness, I shall incorporate into my narrative.

It was on a Sunday morning, in the year 18—, that an express message was sent to my auntie Tibbie, who lived in a small village about half-a-mile from my father's, requesting her to make haste and come awa' yont to Eskbank, "for," said the messenger, a wee herd lassie, "Mrs Tacket's no weel, an' there's naebody i' the hoose but Chirstie Cummins, for Tammas's awa' for the doctor." My auntie needed no second bidding—she started up, gave her face a rub with the corner of a wet towel, put on a clean mutch, flung her tartan shawl over her shoulders, and set out immediately. The doctor had arrived at a quarter before eight o'clock; my auntie arrived exactly fifteen minutes later, for

just as she crossed the threshold of my father's door, the first stroke of the Sabbath morning bell, and the first evidence that I had begun to suffer the miseries of this life, reached her ear at the same moment. "O Tibbie," said Chirstie, "come awa', how hae ye been sae lang? but, gude be thanket, the warst's bye, an' its a bonny laddie. Gae but the hoose and bring some water." My auntie was a novice at an occasion of this kind, and somewhat agitated. The kettle was on the fire, but she thought not of it. She took some cold water from a pitcher, and brought it in a pewter basin to Chirstie, who meant to give me a gentle bath with what she supposed was, of course, warm water. I have no recollection of it, but I must have felt it keenly. I uttered a sharp cry of dissatisfaction, clenched my little fists, and my very red wee face became still redder. Chirstie scolded Tibbie, the doctor blamed Christie for being so hasty, and I expressed my disapprobation of the conduct of all three, in the most determined manner. I suspect this incident, trifling as it may appear, had a bad effect on me afterwards, for it was long before I could bear cold water, applied even to my face, with anything like pleasure.

I have sometimes thought that this application of cold water to my person, on my first coming into the world, was a foreshadowing of much that was to happen to me in after life. Figuratively speaking, cold water has been the bane of my existence. Many a fine scheme have I formed for the purpose

of advancing my worldly prospects, but it has always been abandoned on account of some one throwing cold water on it. In love, my heart has been warm, and my hopes high, but just when I trusted that the object of my affection was about to be mine, the cold hearted selfishness (the world called it prudence) of a mother, threw cold water on my hopes, and put them out for a time, though it could not quench my love. Tibbie says the expression of my face was very pitiful, and painful to behold. She cannot yet understand how they called me bonny, for with my funny, wee undeveloped nose, my toothless gums, and my wretchedly miserable expression of face, I was an ugly creature. My father, Thomas Tacket, after going for the doctor, was in no haste home. He loitered about among the neighbours' houses until it was near kirk time. He was a staid steady man, about forty, and had been married about six years. Though my father was a kind, warm-hearted man, he had, in general, very little to say, and the good qualities of his heart were manifested more by deeds than by words. He loved my mother dearly, but a stranger would have thought the opposite. When he spoke to her, he never called her by her name; and when he spoke of her to other people, he always used the pronouns *she* and *her*. I was his third child. My elder brother was five, and my sister two years of age. It was remarked that on the occasion of each successive addition to his family, my father manifested his pleasure in a less and less lively man-

ner. When his first child was born he got out his bottle, and went among the neighbours, giving them drams, and asking them to drink the health of his little son. When my sister was born, he seemed pleased enough, but his joy did not lead him to act so foolishly. When I was born, he looked very grave, and spoke of joining the teetotal, a resolution which he soon put in practice. The business of a shoemaker, which my father followed, is not a very lucrative one; trade was dull at that time, and leather was dear, and it is probable, that the thought of how he was to provide properly for the wants of his growing family, caused him a good deal of anxiety.

After my energetic outcry against the cold reception I had met with, a much milder course of treatment was had recourse to, and by means of coaxing and fondling, I was so far pacified by the time my father came home, that I was quite quiet and resigned to my fate. When my father came in he said to Tibbie, "Hoo is she?" Tibbie told him she was doing fine, and said, "It's a laddie." "Is't a laddie?" said my father, and going ben the house he stood before my mother's bed, and said, "Hoo are ye noo woman?" "Better," replied my mother; "hae ye gotten ony breakfast? I'm feared they've been negleckin ye i' the hurry." "Ye may believe I've gotten my breakfast," said my father; "dinna disturb yoursel' aboot that." This was a slight equivocation, for my father had not tasted food that

morning; but I am sure, kind reader, you will not blame him much. My father was a great lover of truth. He could not bear to hear a lie told, even in jest. My auntie Tibbie remembers that he came into the kitchen to take some breakfast, Chirstie Cummins and another gossip were with my mother; she took little Johnny and Mary out, and sat down on a stone seat opposite the kitchen window, which was open, and began to tell them of their new brither, the wee baby that their mother had gotten that morning. "Whele did she get it, auntie?" said Johnny, looking up in her face with childish wonder; "did the doctol bling'd?" "Ou ay," said Tibbie, "the doctor brocht it; but never fash yer head aboot that, laddies sudna speer sae mony quastions." "But whele did he get it, auntie?" continued the young philosopher, eager in the pursuit of knowledge. "He got it where a' the weans are gotten," said my auntie, "in a cabbage stock." My father overheard this conversation through the open window—he came to the door with a very severe expression of face, and said—"Tibbie, I'm sorry to hear ye tellin' the bairn lees; I ken you dinna mean nae ill, but you'r doin' ill. Whenever you dinna like to tell the truth, say naething." My father took Johnny on his knee, and began to teach him Willison's "Mother's Catechism." I was, meanwhile, sleeping in my mother's bosom, a frail and helpless thing. My existence has begun, it cannot end. Many trials and much suffering are

before me, but there will also be gleams of happiness, and curious sources of enjoyment. It is the same with thousands. The events of a lowly life, such as mine, have seldom been recorded ; but to the thoughtful, for whom everything connected with humanity possesses an interest, they may be instructive, and to others amusing.

CHAPTER II.

MY FIRST OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS.

Can it be as the poet has said, that

> "Our life is but a dream and a forgetting—
> Our life's star hath had elsewhere its setting?"

Is there any truth in the doctrine taught by Socrates, that we bring into the world with us innate ideas, which we possess, and which grow within us independently of experience, and which are what he calls a *reminiscence* of a former state of existence?

Were there any truth in these notions, it might form a curious subject of reflection, to consider what ideas first came to us, as it were, by intuition, as a reminiscence of our former state. We might thus form a sort of conjecture as to what kind of a life we led, and what passions most strongly possessed us in that *elsewhere*, in which our life's star set before its latest rising.

To me, reflecting on such things, it appears that I must have been much given to the pleasures of sense; for one of my earliest reminiscences was that milk is very nourishing. Anterior to all experience, I knew that it would do me good, I clamoured for it continually, night and day, and without the least teaching, became an adept in the art of sucking. I have no remembrance of this myself, but am sure no one will doubt its truth. The

first recollection I have of my own feelings, proves that they were very sensual.

There was a drowsy rocking motion, and an exquisite sensation of sweetness, caused by the gradual dissolution in my mouth of a bit of sugar-stick, which I had some difficulty in keeping steady there, on account of the aforesaid motion, which was produced by my auntie Tibbie trying to rock me asleep. It was at the same time that I made my first effort to comprehend a material object. My auntie was bending over me as I lay in the cradle enjoying my sugar-stick. Though her face was beaming down on mine, from its meridian position, I have no remembrance of its expression, or what it was like; for my whole attention was engrossed by two hairs, about half an inch in length, which were growing close together on the point of her chin. Whether the thought was really clear and well defined at the time or not, I cannot say, but it seems to me now, that from that moment to this, I have always had a clear conviction that my auntie had a beard.

If this idea of a beard, which then flashed in upon my consciousness, was really a reminiscence of my former state of existence, the probability is, that I had been a barber, or, perhaps, at the setting of my life's star, a young *exquisite*, whose whole energies were devoted to barbaculture. As the discussion of this point would interrupt the course of my narrative, I shall proceed with my history, and leave its settlement to those who are fond of metaphysical

speculations. After this commencement, my recollections of observations and impressions begin to be more numerous; but many of them are hazy and ill-defined, only a few are clear and distinct.

The first passion I am conscious of having indulged was jealousy. It must have happened when my younger brother Davie was born, and when I was about two years of age. I experienced a feeling of desolation and loneliness, and an inclination to quarrel with everybody. I was confined in a small chair, in such a way that I could not get out of it; and all my efforts to tumble it and myself were unavailing. My mother sat before me with a wee baby in her lap, which I felt to be the cause of all my misery, and so strong was my indignation at its usurpation of my place, that I could have struck it. An attempt was made to pacify me by giving me a wooden horse, with a woolly mane, and a spotted skin, mounted on a board with wheels underneath. My attention was a little diverted from my misery, not because I felt interested in this unique specimen of natural history, but because I thonght it was something to be eaten. I put its head in my mouth and sucked off all the paint, which was the cause of the very severe pains in my stomach that I experienced soon after.

I now began to feel that there was a sort of antagonism between me and the world, and that I must look out for myself, if I expected anything like a fair share of its good things.

As my powers of locomotion improved, the sphere of my operations became wider and wider. My father kept a cow, and my mother kept the milk in broad basins, on low shelves, in a clean, cool, out-house. My *penchant* for milk was as strong as ever. One day in the course of my wanderings, I found myself in the milk-house alone. There were the broad basins within my reach, full of delicious milk, and covered with rich yellow cream. I had a dim notion that it would be wrong to take it, but the idea that I could do it without discovery overcame my moral sense, and impelled me to make the attempt. I went close to the dish and bent my head over it, intending to insert my lips merely, and suck up the milk without leaving any visible marks of the depredation. My mother had given me a few days before a fine new straw hat, which I was very proud of, but which was entirely forgotten in presence of the cream. This hat, which I loved so dearly, was the cause of my discovery, for, on bending forward, I did not calculate that its broad brim would enter the cream several inches, before my lips could touch it. When I made the discovery, I jerked my head quickly backward, and, horrible to tell, my hat fell off altogether and floated among the cream. I now, for the first time, felt the sting of a guilty conscience. A sweat broke out all over me; but I did not not yet despair of concealment, for I commenced to lick my hat all over; but, O, horror! the cream was dropping from my hat on my pinafore, and even on

my shoes, and my brow, nose, cheeks, and chin, were covered with it. I heard a step, the door opened, and my mother appeared. I do not distinctly know what followed, but have a keen remembrance of hearing a quick succession of claps, accompanied by a nipping sensation in the posterior region of my body. This discipline, though very disagreeable, was, I am persuaded, eminently beneficial, for this association of suffering with wrong doing, often deterred me from ill-deeds afterwards. Let it not be inferred from this that my mother was unkind to me. The very contrary was the case. She always gratified my desires when they were legitimate and reasonable. Most of my pleasantest and dearest recollections of this early time are connected with my mother. How she used to fondle me and make fun to me, during the long winter evenings, and teach me to repeat, after her, nonsense rhymes, which then seemed to me to be very meritorious compositions. I do not think I ever enjoyed any literary treat more, than when, lying in my mother's lap, I felt her soft fingers on my brow, eyclids, nose, &c., as she repeated—

"This is broo brenty,
This is e'e winky,
This is nose nappy,
This is cheek cherry,
This is mou' merry,
This is chin chumpy,
Craigie wirrie, craigie wirrie," &c.

The last line was accompanied by a violent tickling

below the chin, which made me laugh heartily. At other times she would take my feet, and make them move quickly up and down, while she said—

"Twa doggies gaed tae the mill,
This way and that way, this way and that way;
They took a lick out o' this wife's pock,
And a lick out o' that wife's pock,
And a loup i' the lead, a bite i' the brae,
And a dip i' the dam;
And they gaed hame wallopin, wallopin," &c.

When she came to the last line, she tossed my legs over and over each other to my intense delight. As far as I can remember, these rude lines were the earliest pieces of poetical composition that were impressed on my memory.

Let it not, however, be supposed, that my mother taught me nothing better than this harmless nonsense. Every night after I was wrapped in my warm blanket, she carried me to bed, and there, bending over me, taught me say, "Our Father which art in Heaven," &c. Nor did she merely teach me the words by rote, for she sought to instil into my mind the idea, that, besides my earthly father, I had a heavenly Father, whose love I should seek to obtain; and in her own simple but impressive way she told me of Jesus the Redeemer, and what he had done for me. This habit of prayer, which my mother taught me, has been a blessing to me, more precious than aught else that has ever been done for me. Once only, for a short period, as will be related hereafter, did I lay it aside. Irre-

ligious companions, and false reasoning for a time smothered, but did not extinguish the simple faith of my childhood. Mothers, think of this. The seeds you sow in the minds of your children have a tenaciousness of life about them which cannot be annihilated. Sow perseveringly the heavenly seed, and you will be sure to reap a blessed harvest. Accustom your children to habits of holding intercourse with their heavenly Father, and assuredly He will lead them safely through all the troubles of life.

CHAPTER III.

MY FIRST SCHOOLS.

When I was about five years of age my father sent me for six months to a dame's school, of which I retain a lively recollection. It was an old thatched hut, whose walls were composed of alternate layers of round stone boulders and turf. There were only two apartments, the *but* and the *ben*. The former served for our school-room, and the latter was the mistress's bedroom, pantry, scullery, and wardrobe. There was no chimney; but the smoke, when it did escape, went out by a hole in the roof, or else by the door. The fire burned on a broad flat stone, and behind it was placed another stone, called the *back-stone*, placed there to prevent the turf gable from taking fire. The window consisted of four small panes and two "*window brods.*" As two of the panes were broken and stuffed with rags, the light that entered by the window was small; but as the smoke hole or *lum* was of considerable width, we could see very well to read beneath it—but this was only practicable when the weather was fair. Nanny, the mistress, was a little old woman, who had taken to teaching when unable to gain a living in any other way. In addition to what we were pleased to give her as fees—for she made no charge—she earned a little by spinning wool and weaving stockings. She

generally had about twenty scholars, boys and girls, whom she taught reading. The girls got also lessons in sewing and knitting. Well do I remember the day I first went to school. My father had taken a piece of wood, and cut it narrow and slightly round at one end for a handle, leaving the other end broad and flat. On this was pasted the first leaf of the Shorter Catechism containing the Alphabet. This was my first book, and a very serviceable one it was. After I was introduced she called me to her side, stopped her spinning wheel, and made me repeat after her, *muckle awe, little awe, bay, &c.*, to the last letter of the alphabet, which she called *izzit*. On mastering the alphabet we were put into the *Carritches*, as she called the Catechism, which we spelled through at the rate of a *question* or two a-day. The Proverbs followed the Catechism, and then the Testament, which was her highest book. When a long word, or a difficult proper name occurred, we were directed to miss it as it was Latin, which nobody could read, she said, but the minister. Her only attempt at simultaneous teaching was, when she gathered a few of us round her and told us short Scripture narratives or *stories*. After the story she sometimes asked us a few questions. On one occasion, after she had told us of the whale swallowing Jonah, she asked if we could think of anything more wonderful. "Ay," said Davie Smith, a half-witted original, "it wad hae been mair wonnerfu' if Jonah had swallowed the whale." The last time I saw her, she was wash-

ing a few potatoes opposite her own door. As I approached she raised herself and said in a shrill voice, "The kingdom o' heavin, the kingdom o' heavin." On my asking what she meant, she said, "It's ane o' the laddies spellin' in there, I dinna hear weel, but I think it's the kingdom o' heavin; it's aboot that he's readin' at ony rate."

After attending Old Nanny's school for the space of six months, and acquiring all the learning that she could give me; my father, who was well pleased with the progress I had made, resolved to give me the advantage of a *quarter* at a more advanced seminary in a neighbouring town. I believe I ought to call it a city, for though not very populous, it was the seat of a bishop, and is so still. My father had a sister, who resided in the Nether Wynd, and it was settled that I should board with her while attending Mr Strap, who practised the trade of a weaver, while he exercised the profession of a schoolmaster. The cost of my board was one half-boll of oatmeal, and my school-fees amounted to the sum of eighteenpence. It was expected that my aunt, who had long resided in the city, would see to the improvement of my manners, while Mr Strap superintended my education. I do not think I have ever been in such a state of agitation as on that morning when my aunt, after washing my face and drying it with her apron, led me away to Mr Strap's school. By the way she instructed me to be sure and take off my bonnet when I went in, and not to say *fat* (anglicé, *what*)

when I did not hear, but, *what's yer wull*, and not to call the master Jamie Strap, but, Maister Strap. The school-room was in an old-fashioned two storied house, in the gable of which was the school-door. On approaching, I could not help admiring it, and thinking to myself what a difference there was between this grand stone building and old Nanny's turf hut. We entered without ceremony, and I was introduced as a new scholar from the country. In the farther end of the room sat the master at his loom, and in front of him sat the scholars on forms, arranged the one behind the other. In another corner was his daughter, a stout red-haired girl, hearing lessons and filling *pirns* (anglicè *bobbins*) at the same time. The master was a little wiry looking man, with a broad blue bonnet which he always wore. He did not wear a coat, but had a sleeved-vest, long in the body, and striped horizontally. His *knee-breeks* were of good corduroy, and beautiful rig-and-fur blue stockings adorned his legs. At his right hand were two nails projecting from the wall, on which hung two whips, called the *lang whups* and the *short whups*. When he wished to punish those that were on the nearest form, he used the *short whups;* those on the other forms were corrected with the *lang whups*. On a shelf were a number of dried rhubarb stalks—these were the school prizes, and very proud was the boy who, for diligence or good conduct, got one of them to make a *lootin horn*. As soon as my aunt left me, he called

me up to the side of the loom to let him hear what I could do. When I had read a few verses he said, "Verra weel, my man, ye're no that ill a reader, but yer *pronounshiashun's* no verra guid." I was then sent to my seat to make room for another. All the lessons were given individually in the same manner. The fear of the *whups* kept us busy in our seats. Correct pronounciation was what he most prided himself in. His leading principle was, that all words should be pronounced as they are spelled. The Rev. Mr Wh——n of the Old Kirk came one day to examine the school, and corrected one of the boys for mispronouncing the word *through*. "The laddie's richt, sir," said Mr Strap, "throo may do, but throch's the thing, it spells that at any rate." He was quite disgusted with the new-fangled mode of pronouncing Israel and Capernaum. "It is a great sin," he said, "to chip the words o' Scripture. *Issrale* and *Caperrnim* dinna soond near sae weel as *Izzerawl* and *Capirnawm*."

After finishing my *quarter*, I returned home highly accomplished, as was supposed, in manners, and well prepared for going to the parish school, which was an institution of a very different stamp from those already described.

CHAPTER IV.

MY GRANNIE.—DIABLERIE.

I was not, however, sent to the Parish School immediately thereafter. It was about three weeks before the birth of my youngest brother when I came home from Mr Strap's school; and, as I was a *steerin* wean, it was thought proper to send me away for a few months to live with my grannie. She dwelt in a small thatched cottage at the edge of a wood, about three miles from my father's. The tall Scotch fir trees formed a kind of semi-circle round the place, sheltering it from the cold north winds. A country road went past the door, leading to the little hamlet of Waterha, about half-a-mile off, where there was a meal mill and a smithy, with a few cottages nestling around them.

I had seen my grannie several times before I went to live with her. She was a tall, spare, sharp-featured, auld Scotch wife, between seventy and eighty years of age. Had she not stooped considerably, she would have been very tall. When she turned a corner, her head appeared some time before the rest of her body, and a very remarkable head it was, both in regard to its external appearance, and its internal peculiarities. It was all covered, except the face, with a closely-fitting white mutch, which terminated in a high peak opposite

her organ of self-esteem. A very small portion of her grey hair was visible in front, on the top of her forehead, which was high, but narrow. Her nose was decidedly Roman, but thin, harmonising well with the narrowness of her forehead. Her eyes were deeply sunk, small, and grey. Her chin was peaked and narrow, and turned upward, so as to come within half-an-inch of her nose. She wore a printed cotton short-gown, a wincey apron, and a black woollen petticoat. At her side, slightly over-lapped by her short-gown, hung a large pouch. It was narrow towards the top, wide and rounded at the bottom, with a perpendicular slit or mouth about six inches long in the upper half of it. I have described my grannie's every-day appearance as it was when I lived with her. I have said I saw her several times before that, but this assertion requires a little qualification. I must have seen her whole person on the occasion of her occasional visits to my father's, but when I try to figure her in my mind's eye as she appeared to me at those times, I see only a part of her clearly ; the rest of her figure is dim and hazy in its outline ; but a small portion of the woollen petticoat, a bit of the wincey apron, and the over-lapping part of the short-gown, and especially the pouch present themselves to my recollection with great vividness. So clear is my remembrance of that pouch that I could draw it, had I the practical skill. I can still see every spot on it, every patch, and every stich. Whenever my

grannie entered our house my eye was rivetted on the pouch. There was a fascination about it which I could not resist. If she sat down, I stared at it. If she moved about, I moved after it. If her hand moved to it, I must have looked like one spell-bound, so intense did my attention become. But it was really a wonderful pouch! The variety and excellence of the things that came out of it were amazing, and suited my taste most exactly. So great was my affection for the gilded ladies, the horses and other animals, that came out of it, that I snapped their heads off, and eat them up with great relish, and so sensual was my nature then, that I must confess, I received more pleasure, and less pain, from these gingerbread beings, than I have since done from living ones. That pouch was a perfect store of sweetmeats, and at times it contained apples, pears, oranges, and raisins. When I think of the relish I had for these things at that time, I do not wonder why I loved it. It was after I went to live with her, that I began to know and comprehend my grannie herself. The pouch, somehow or other, then lost its charms, and my attention became more and more concentrated on its wearer. She was a very strange woman. I never knew such a compound of good sense and silliness. She earned her living principally by weaving and spinning. I never knew any one so expert at stocking weaving as she was. When once her stocking was begun, she never seemed to pay any more attention to it, her

fingers moved like a piece of machinery, and she would talk to any of her acquaintances for half-an-hour at a time, the click of the wires keeping pace with the clack of her tongue, without ever looking at her work. In the long winter evenings, she employed herself in spinning, and she was very seldom without visitors, for she was a very popular woman, my grannie, though some thought her *no canny.* She had a minute acquaintance with the contents of her Bible, and yet she was a thorough believer in witches. "Satan's invisible world displayed," was one of her favourite books, and her tales in regard to that world and the doings of its inhabitants seemed inexhaustable. The miller of Waterha was one of her most frequent visitors. I think I see him now, with one or two more rustics, sitting round the fire listening with open mouth and staring eyes to her fearful stories, glancing now and then over their shoulders with a feeling of dread, lest some fearful spirit should be playing pranks behind them. These stories took a very strong hold on my own imagination, and for a time, I believed them firmly. Let me see if I can recall a few portions of that gloomy creed. The principal figure amid the multitude of spiritual creatures with which the earth and air seemed to be peopled, was the Devil. When he was spoken of familiarly, we called him Auld Nick; when we had a feeling of awe on us, we spoke of him with bated breath, and called him Clootie. I had a clear conception of

his appearance, formed from a supposed likeness of him, engaged in mortal combat with Christian, in an old copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress." He was a large, ill-shaped, hairy looking animal, with dragon's wings, a long tail, and cloven feet. He seemed to be full of fire, for it shone out at his eyes, and issued from his mouth. But I knew that he had the power of assuming various shapes, being able to transform every part of his body except his feet and his tail, which, however, he was very clever at concealing. Sometimes he appeared as a young gentleman with his tail carefully concealed, and long trousers to cover his feet. Sometimes he made love to young ladies, and stole away their hearts; sometimes he got drunk and swore dreadfully. The miller firmly believed that, on more than one occasion, when he was coming home late from Chance Inn, he had laid his tail across the road and tripped him. And he had told his wife this, for a fact, several times when he came home covered with mud and almost speechless. We believed he had a great partiality for assuming the shape of a drake. Burns appears to have been of the same opinion, for he describes an interview he had with him in these terms—

"The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch stour! quaick! quaick!
Amang the springs.
Awa' ye squattered like a drake
On whistling wings."

The number of Clootie's followers was supposed to be immense. Witches, broonies, fairies, and water kelpies, were all supposed to be in some way related to him. My grannie had, on several occasions, seen Auld Nick. The miller had several times been accosted by the kelpie, who was supposed to reside in a large black pool, a little above the mill-dam—and how could I doubt the word of these authorities? Two circumstances, however, occurred before I left my grannie's, which made me hesitate in my belief a little; but I must reserve my narration of them to another chapter.

Strange! that superstition so fruitful of horror and cruelty, should be founded on that sublime hope we entertain of immortality, which is the chief comfort and noblest triumph of our reason.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEVIL.—THE KELPIE.

"Things are often merely phantoms,
Which realities we deem;
And the real things of nature
Ofttimes are not what they seem."
ROGER BACON.

The truth contained in the above quotation from an unpublished poem of my worthy old friend, will be exemplified in what follows.

The miller of Waterha was a queer compound of contradiction, kindheartedness, and superstition. Whether from an idea that it was witty, or from a crook in his disposition, he seldom gave his assent to anything that was said to him, however apparent its truth. If any one accosted him with, "A fine day, miller," he would look up to the sky and say, "I think it will be rain." If one should say to him, "It's very warm," he would reply, "I think it'll be snaw." If asked to do a thing for any one, he almost invariably refused. But, if the doing of a kind action were indirectly suggested to him, he did it with a hearty goodwill, and a delicacy that added greatly to its value. Almost the only assertions that he did not contradict, were those made in reference to ghosts, witches, fairies, brownies, kelpies, &c., but however wonderful a story any one

told him of these beings, he was always sure to know of something far more marvellous. The hero of most of my grannie's stories was *Auld Nick*, while the kelpie was the principal actor in most of the awful tales told by the miller. While listening to their stories on a winter evening, I have often thought that the miller was jealous of *clootie*, and endeavoured to depreciate his deeds; my grannie, on the other hand, spoke contemptuously of the kelpie, whose doings she thought inferior in many respects to those of her *favourite*, and much less interesting.

"What ha'e ye been at the day, grannie," said the miller, one evening, as he set himself down by the fireside. "Deed, miller," said my grannie," "I've been up by at the Milton a' day fillin' a bed fu' o' chaff, for the like o' me canna afford feathers, ye ken, an' I dinna ken hoo I'll be able to carry't hame mysel', but I'll maybe gae up the morn's nicht, i' the gloamin', an' get some o' the lads to help me doon wi't." "Aye, woman," replied the miller, "what a pity I didna ken sooner, for I micht a gotten the kelpie to bring'd doon for ye, he was makin' an awfu' noise i' the ark o' the mill the day whan I was pickin' the stane." "The kelpie!" said my grannie, with an incredulous sneer, "he cudna; an' I'm sure he wadna do a body sic a guid turn, I wad as shune expect the deil himsel' to turn weel-doer!" The miller proceeded to prove to her by well-authenticated examples, that the kelpie was a

well-disposed sprite, and that when kindly treated he was not indisposed to be useful. Among other instances he mentioned the well-known case of the miller of Morphie, who, when building his mill, induced the kelpie to assist him for one day in drawing stones. The kelpie allowed himself to be harnessed and did more work in one day than two pairs of horses. But the miller of Morphie was greedy; and, instead of letting him go free at night, confined him in the stable, intending to yoke him again on the morrow. His wife, however, unwittingly let him out, and he ran away to the black pool in the river, screaming as he went—

> "I've sair back, an' sair banes,
> Carrying the miller o' Morphie's stanes;
> The miller o' Morphie 'll never thrive,
> As lang's the kelpie is alive."

Though the miller mentioned many other cases besides, he went away without convincing my grannie that the kelpie might bring home her bed full of chaff.

On the morrow at dusk she took me by the hand, and we went away to the Milton to get some one to bring home the chaff. When we came to a part where the road was narrow and steep, with a row of large trees on each side, which added greatly to the rapidly increasing darkness, we perceived a huge mis-shapen something, leaning against a tree, at a short distance from us. "What's that, grannie?" said I, pointing to it with my finger, and

clinging close to her. "Guid kens, laddie," said she, in a hoarse whisper; "whisht, stop a wee, did ye see it movin'?" I tried to speak, but the words stuck in my throat, and my hair stood on end, for the mysterious-looking object seemed to move away from the tree, and it took up a position in the very middle of the road. I saw at a glance that it had legs like a man's, but the body of it was four times as broad as a man's, and it had no head. There was a bright spark of fire near the top of it, and a volume of smoke was issuing from it. My grannie stood for a moment irresolute and began to tremble; all at once the spark of fire disappeared, and it cried, "boo hroo, boo hroo, boo hroo!" My grannie could stand it no longer. She turned and took to her heels, and old and frail though she was, I could not keep up with her. For some time she kept hold of my hand and dragged me after her, but something caught my foot, when we were in sight of the cottage, and I fell. She stopped not a moment but went on with undiminished speed until turning the corner near her own door, she came against some one with all the force of a battering ram, and the two rolled together on the ground. I recovered my feet as quickly as I could, and when I came up, found the two struggling together, but my grannie was uppermost. "O mither," cried a voice that I thought I knew, "are ye mad? Tell her, Jamie, not to kill auntie Tibbie." We had much difficulty in getting grannie pacified, but when she perceived who

it was, she was vexed. "Hoo cud I think it was you, Tibbie," she said, "when I thought the Diel was clutchin at my claes ahint. Come in baith o' ye for there he comes," she cried, bursting open the door, which, as soon as we were in, she closed and bolted. We stood close together, and a cold sweat broke over us, for we distinctly heard the heavy tramp of a foot come up to the door. We heard something heavy but apparently soft fall beside the door, and a hand was placed on the latch to open it, but we all pressed against it with all our might, in the utmost extremity of mortal terror. "Open that door will ye," cried a voice, which I at once knew to be the miller's. It was a great relief to us all. "What gard ye rin grannie," said the miller, "I thocht ye wad hae kent me. I had just put a licht in my pipe, an' was comin' stappin' down the brae wi' yer chaff bed on my back when I saw ye stannin' i' the road, an' I jist cried yon, thinkin' tae gar ye believe I was the kelpie comin' wi' yer chaff. Hoo did ye rin?" "Hoo did I rin," said my grannie, looking very much chagrined, "I cudna see ye i' the dark, and I thocht ye was the devil, wi' fire in his mou' an' smoke comin' oot at it." The miller roared with laughter, but my grannie was so vexed that she did not even thank him for bringing the chaff. Tibbie, too, was in very ill humour, for there was a large lump rising on her forehead caused by the collision when my grannie came against her. The miller seemed highly amused at the idea of grannie taking

him for the Deil, and even seemed to insinuate, that she had never really seen a worse deil than himself. Had she taken him for the kelpie, he said, he could have forgiven her, as there could be no doubt of the reality of his sometimes appearing after dark, but it was doubtful if ever any one had actually seen the deil. Seeing that she was in no humour for arguing the point he went away laughing. Little did he think, honest man, as he went whistling along the road how soon he himself would get as great a fright as he had given to poor old grannie.

This little incident did me good; for I became more and more incredulous regarding supernatural appearances, and was more inclined to believe that He whose protection my mother had taught me to invoke, did not permit evil spirits capriciously to interfere with His creatures.

The hamlet of Waterha was situated on the banks of a beautiful stream, not far from its junction with the Esk. A good many salmon found their way up this stream, and one of the most exciting amusements of the place, was the catching of the fish in the dark evenings, by means of torches and *three-taed-leisters*. This sport was called blackfishing. As a fish was now and then sent to my grannie, she took a considerable degree of interest in the success of the sportsmen, and though she knew that their doings were scarcely legal, she occasionally allowed me to accompany them under the protection of the miller. I was rather young, but very willing to

make myself useful, and sometimes carried a torch, sometimes a bag of fish. On the night after the adventure with the chaff, the miller called at our cottage and mentioned that he and a few others were going that evening to the blackfishing, and hinted that I might accompany them if I liked. I had been with them several times before, and, having been highly delighted, was eager to go again. We assembled at eight o'clock at night in the *kilnogie.* Besides the miller and myself, there were two ploughmen, a shoemaker, a tailor, and a blacksmith. After examining our *leisters*, and preparing our torches we set out, and walked about two miles up the stream, before we commenced operations. The night was very dark and still. On our way up, as we crossed the level haughs, the conversation turned on things supernatural, and the miller told some of his most fearful stories. The ploughmen said little, but hoped they wadna see onything awfu' the nicht at onyrate. The shoemaker doubted the reality of supernatural appearances, and said that were it not for the mention of witches and wizards in the Bible, he would be inclined to be entirely sceptical in regard to them. The tailor said, he believed in them, but wasn't a bit afraid; he had a clear conscience, and wad face without fear the biggest kelpie on a' the water. The smith said, "Come, come, lads, nae mair aboot it, it's a' meer havers, an' at onyrate it'll be time eneuch tae fash yer head aboot thae things when ye see them." The

subject was then dropped, and it was soon forgotten in the excitement of the sport. Over every dark pool the flaming torches were held, and in almost every one we found fish. Though many a blow was aimed, without any other effect than jarring the arms of him who aimed it, as the *leister* struck against the stones, yet, in less than two hours we bagged more than a dozen fine salmon. The scene was very picturesque—the red glare of light reflected from the dark pools—the momentary lighting up of trees and rocks as we passed—the wild, demonlike figures of the men, bronzed by the glare of the torches, as they stood on the brink with leisters poised ready to strike—the splash when the blow was given—the short struggle—the eager looks, the waving of torches, the sudden rush together and bending down of heads, to examine the fish as it expired in the convulsive movements of its death struggle—all formed a scene such as Rembrant would have delighted to contemplate. When we were within half-a-mile of Waterha, we crossed a level haugh, formed by a bend of the stream, and were drawing near the last deep pool before reaching the mill. Having stopped a moment to trim our torches, we heard an eerie sound as of something trampling on the gravel. The tailor gave a wild look towards the miller, and said, "What's that?" The miller said, "It's maybe the water kelpie.'' Presently the trampling became more rapid, and the creature seemed to be coming quickly towards

us. The tailor flung his torch in the water, and took to his heels; the ploughmen followed his example, leaving us in darkness; the shoemaker said, "Pshaw!" the smith said, "Havers;" and the miller, in a shaky voice, said, "Coo-oo-arts," when a shrill high-keyed laugh, something like the neighing of a horse, close beside them, and the continued trampling startled them, so that all of a sudden they bolted off across the field, leaving me, loaded with fish as I was, to the tender mercies of the kelpie. The creature galloped past me, but stopped not far off. The branch of a broom bush had caught the miller's foot, and he fell flat on his face. Before he was able to rise he became conscious that the creature was standing over him. He felt its hot breath on his ear. He screened his head as well as he could, with his arms, and pressed his face among the grass, but he felt it snuff-snuffing all over him. I had advanced a little, and was standing irresolute within ten yards of them, when the miller gave utterance to something between a groan and a roar, for the creature had taken hold of his coat-neck with its teeth, and was pulling him up. At that moment a black cloud passed from the face of the moon, which had risen about an hour ago, and showed me the prostrate miller with his own pony standing over him, and evidently trying to attract his attention, little conscious, poor beast, of the terror he was causing his master. I could scarcely believe my own eyes at first, but when the animal

turned and came towards me, I saw I was not mistaken. I cried "Dinna be feared, miller, it's only Dobbin." The miller sprang to his feet, rubbed his eyes, looked, and said, "Soh-soh-soh-hit is! Come here, Jamie," he said, "I'll gie ye a saxpence, and the best saumon i' yer bag, no tae tell yer grannie about this; ed man, she wad never hae dune lauchin at me, if she kent that we hae gotten sic a fricht wi' the kelpie, and it only my ain horse." I promised not to tell, and pocketed the sixpence. Though I kept my promise not to tell grannie, I did not scruple to tell others who told her, and the laugh was turned against the miller, who took it so much to heart, that he was never afterwards heard to mention the kelpie. My grannie and he, by tacit consent, avoided supernatural subjects ever after in their conversation.

CHAPTER VI.

"He that spareth his road hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes."—PROV. xiii. 24.

I have now reached the age of seven years, and am still residing with my grannie. One of the greatest grievances I had to complain of at this period was a deficiency of what I considered solid nourishment. I was certainly not stinted in my allowance of oatmeal porridge, green kail, and potatoes, but I thought it very unfair that I should be allowed no share of the beef that was boiled among the greens. My grannie had a theory very convenient for her, but most unsuitable for me, that flesh-food was very bad for boys. I had been well grounded in the eighth commandment and its requirements, so that I never thought of satisfying my longing for flesh by stealing; but I suppose I had not been so well instructed in the principles of the ninth, for I resolved to try a little deception. I must have been a precocious young Jesuit, for when meditating the falsehood which I afterwards told, it did come into my mind that the "ninth commandment requireth the maintaining of truth between man and man;" but then, I thought it does not require the maintaining of truth between man and woman, therefore I might tell a lie to my grannie. She had a great reverence for the Bible, but her eyes were now become dim, so that she could not see to

read it herself, but for her own edification and my instruction, she caused me to read a chapter to her morning and evening. These readings were always accompanied by explanations and practical applications intended for my benefit. These expositions were rude, but graphic, and admirably suited to my capacity. I have since heard many eloquent descriptions of Scripture scenes from famous preachers, but none of them have left such a life-like impression on my mind, as those of my grannie. I am sorry to confess that my practice has not always corresponded to her good precepts; yet, I feel constrained, gratefully to acknowledge my obligations to her for laying the foundation of principles, which have been as bulwarks of defence to me against temptations in after life.

The plan I took to obtain a share of my grannie's beef and mutton, is so little creditable to me, that I am almost ashamed to relate it; but as as this is a truthful history, I feel it a duty to relate faults as well as good qualities. I had thought of the plan for several days, and felt sure it would succeed, but could not, for some time summon up courage to put it in execution. At length, one Saturday evening I took up the Book at the usual time of reading, and in as confident a tone as I could assume, began to read as follows, from Exodus—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 'Let him that suppeth of the broth partake of the flesh also.'" "Stop," said my grannie; "read that verse again, laddie." I

read again, in a slower and more emphatic tone: "Let him that suppeth of the broth partake of the flesh also." "So it is," said my grannie; "I dinna mind o' seein' that afore." She said no more but went on with her knitting, and I proceeded with the rest of the chapter, without making any more additions to the original. On the following day, which was Sunday, I found that my scheme had succeeded, for without saying anything, grannie quietly gave me a share of the beef; but I cannot say that I enjoyed it; for, notwithstanding my Jesuitical casuistry, I felt conscious of having done wrong, and the fear of discovery, perhaps a presentiment of what did soon happen, disquieted me. Next Sunday my father came to see us. During dinner I felt very uneasy, for I knew that his sentiments in regard to juvenile beef-eating were the same as those of my grannie. When I was helped to my share of the beef, my father looked surprised and said, "Laddies sudna get beef, it's no guid for them." "I thocht that mysel'," said grannie, "but ye ken the Scripture says, 'Let him that suppeth of the broth partake of the flesh also.'" "What pairt o' Scripture says that?" said my father, looking very surprised. "The laddie read it himsel' some nichts syne; gae wa' Jamie, an' let yer father see the place." I felt a rush of blood flow to my face, and my cheeks grew burning hot. I could not look up, and showed so much confusion, that my father saw at once there was something wrong.

My father spoke very sternly, and told me to do what I was bid. I burst into tears, and cried, "O! father, dinna lick me, an' I'll never do the like again. It's no i' the book. I cheated grannie, but dinna lick me father; O! dinna!" My father took me by the arm and said, "I must lick you, Jamie, for ye have told a lie, and on God's Holy Book." My father did punish me, and severely too; but he looked so sorrowful while he did it, that I believe he suffered as much as I did, perhaps more. That same night I was taken home, for my father felt he could not trust me longer with grannie. My father's beating did not make me feel so keenly as my mother's tears. She took me to her arms, she wept over me, she tried to make me comprehend the nature of my sin. That night I learned to appreciate the value of a mother's prayers.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR PARISH SCHOOL.—COCK FIGHTING.

My father, though a poor man, was like many of his class in Scotland, very desirous to give his son a good education. Though not highly educated himself, he was a shrewd sensible man, and knew that the education I had received from Old Nanny and Mr Strap, was not of a very high character. He had a notion that I was rather clever, and thought that by self-denial on his part, and perseverance on mine, he might one day have the pleasure of seeing me *wag my pow in a poopit.* With this end in view he resolved to send me for a few years to the parish school, where all the branches of what was then thought a liberal education were taught. These branches were reading, writing, arithmetic, and Latin. This seems a very meagre course of instruction when compared with what has to be gone through now-a-days; and yet many men, well grounded in these branches only, rose to situations of dignity and respectability, not a few became famous men in their day, and some of them are still admired for the solidity, variety, and extent of their acquirements. Our parish schoolmaster was a very intelligent man, and was considered an excellent teacher. He had been a bursar at Aberdeen, and was famed as a teacher of Latin. On this account

the school was attended by the sons of the gentry and wealthy farmers, as well as by the children of the poor. The improvements introduced into education by Lancaster, Bell, and others, were beginning to be talked about; but our master could never bring his mind to approve of them, or attempt to put them in practice. He was a strict disciplinarian, and had great faith in the efficacy of the taws as a quickener of mental energy. He believed that physical force was a far more powerful stimulant to the mind of a boy than moral suasion. His opinion on this subject was accurately expressed by one of the wildest lads in the school, who, one morning, wrote on the black board the following distich :—

> "Moral persuasion's a humbug,
> There's nae persuasion like a crack i' the lug."

There was very little teaching of the merely elementary branches in the parish school. The dame's school relieved the schoolmaster of most of this drudgery. He, nevertheless, had a thorough contempt for dame's school teaching, which he often expressed by some sarcastic remark on the style of reading acquired there, as exhibited by some new scholar. When I went I was put into the Bible. I shall never forget the derisive manner in which he mocked my reading. I began my lesson thus—"The foorty-aught chapter o' Jirrameeah and verse furst." "Well done, Nanny Doig," said he, and then mimicked my tones in such a ridiculous way, that all the scholars laughed, and I cried with vex-

ation. This was a hard beginning, but it did me more good, than if he had made use of either the taws or *a crack i' the lug*. My pride was hurt, and I determined to do my best to improve the defects of my pronunciation, which I found Mr Strap, with all his pretensions, had rather aggravated than removed. My wounded feelings were healed before evening, for I got to the top of the class, during an exercise in spelling big words from the dictionary, by spelling *butterclabber*. The readers were divided into three classes. The books were the Testament, the Bible, and Barrie's Collection. There was very little explanatory teaching, except in tracing the derivation of words, which he was very fond of. What a look of horror he gave me, one day, when he asked me what the word Bible was derived from, and I replied, as Nanny had taught me, that it was so called, because, once when it had been long lost, it was found in a *by bole* of the temple by one of the kings, hence, it was called Bybole, which was gradually corrupted into Bible.

Great improvements have taken place in the art of teaching since I was a boy. I often hear the little children at our village school talking quite familiarly about subjects that were then only known to a few of the wisest men in our parish, who happened to possess such books as Goldsmith's Natural History and Guthrie's Grammar. There is nothing which gives to my mind so vivid an idea of the changes that have taken place in my time, as the

talk of our children about their studies at school. I was lately at an examination of a school in our neighbourhood, and the amount of information displayed by the children was perfectly astounding. I could not help wondering how heads so small could hold so much. The reading, writing, and arithmetic were not better than I had often seen before, but when it came to history and the sciences, I was quite dumfoundered. I felt perfectly ashamed, for these little children of eight and ten years knew more than I, who have lived more than forty, and have been a reader all my days. I daresay, when I was young, I knew the Shorter Catechism, the narrative portions of the Old Testament, and the life and teaching of Jesus, as well as they; but what of that, I could not tell then, nor could I now, the ages of each of the antediluvian fathers at the beginning and at the end of paternity, and at death—the names of Abraham's second wife and the six sons she bore to him. These little boys did this and more. They asked and answered each other quite readily, such questions as—Who was David's mother? Nahash. Who was Keren-happuch's father? Job. Who was Noah the daughter of? Zelophehad. I thought that I had acquired, by long and careful study, a fair knowledge of the Scriptures, hut this showed me how much I had been mistaken. It was some set off to my mortification, that not one of the clerical examiners knew the answer to the latter question, and that the last chapter of Numbers had

to be shown to some of them, before they would believe it. How pleased the parents of some of these children were. What a clever man they thought the master must be. Verily, the children of this generation are, in some things, wonderfully taught. Are they not? Then, in science, they talked of ponderable and imponderable bodies, of strata primary and secondary, of forces centripetal and centrifugal; they spoke as glibly of the revolutions of the sun, as we were won't to do of the spinning of a peerie; they knew more about the planets, than we were won't to know about our balls and marbles. They could tell the rapidity of their motion without seeing them move, their distances without measuring them, and their weight without weighing them. If the things these children talked about were to themselves intelligible, modern education must be a wonderful thing indeed. Notwithstanding a considerable amount of quackery in modern education, the improvements that have been introduced into it since my youth are great and numerous. Teaching was then thought to be a very simple process. Take a boy five or six years of age, give him tasks, and beat him well when he does not learn them, repeat this process almost every day for six or seven years, and he will then be educated. This was almost the only recipe for educating boys forty years ago. And yet, defective as it seems, boys were then educated, and well educated too. During two centuries, while this system was

generally practised, Scotland's sons obtained a name among the nations of Europe for their intellectual acquirements. From among the poorest of her people sprang many of those men of talent and genius of whom we are justly proud. Wherever the poor Scotsman went he obtained situations of trust, and he often rose in foreign lands to offices of the highest dignity and honour. A consideration of the circumstances and manners of the people may partly account for this. Our forefathers, trained up in the school of hardship and persecution, were mostly grave, thoughtful, and God-fearing men. They established a system of schools, the best the world had ever seen, and which, had there been a principle of growth in it, enabling it to adapt itself to the change of circumstances, and the increasing wants of the country, would still be the best in existence. These schools were well adapted to the wants of the people at that time. The branches taught in them were few, but they were the keys by which all the stores of learning might be unlocked, and being few, they were the more easily taught by the rude method, or rather no method, which was then employed. The fathers of families were mostly serious men, and almost all were thoroughly alive to the advantages of education. They knew also that school instruction, unless supplemented by home study and careful preparation, would produce little effect on the mind, and be soon forgotten. More work was often done in the long

winter evenings by the light of the peat fire, than in the school during the day. Young lads continued at school, during the winter season at least, till they were, in many instances, upwards of twenty years of age. They were thus, in a great measure, able to educate themselves, and they only applied to the master in cases of more than ordinary difficulty. One of these lads would sometimes attend school for a whole week without once applying to the master. The schoolmaster was more a superintendent of home instruction than a teacher in the modern sense of the word. He apportioned and examined each one's work, not much of which, in many cases, was done in the school; but it was carried home at night, and the fathers and elder brothers of families acted as monitors in assisting them, or when incapable of that, compelling them to perform it. It was a principle among the old schoolmasters, that the more work done without their aid, the better for the pupil. I remember working a question in arithmetic six times. On going up with it to the master he merely said, in his Aberdeen tongue, "*It's wrang, try't again*," and blotted it out. At the sixth failure I was quite disheartened, and my head was aching. There was a pin in a hole beside the outer door which we took out with us when we wanted *leave*, and which we had to replace when we returned, by this means only one could go out at a time. Seeing the pin in the door, I took it and went out, and wandered down by the river side which flowed near the

school. I spent about ten minutes in making the pebbles skip across the surface of the water, and then returned. I tried the question once more, and went up with it the seventh time. "It's richt noo," said the master, "ye'l never do gueed unless ye try hard. He's aye best helpit 'it helps himsel'." It might be worth while to inquire how far this old system was superior to the modern plan of smoothing all difficulties, and it might be interesting to know whether our countrymen were in any degree indebted to this system for the strength of mind, steady perseverance, and fertility of resource by which they were generally distinguished, wherever they went, or in whatever circumstances they were placed. Reserving this inquiry till another time, I shall now relate what took place in our school on Fastern's-e'en.

Fastern's-e'en was a holiday which we all looked forward to with pleasure, although the scenes that were then enacted were of a savage and barbarous character, and little fitted for a school. The master himself taught us a rude rhyme of his own to keep us in mind of the right day—

> "First comes Candlemas and then the new meen,
> An' the Tiesday after that is Fastern's-e'en."

A few days before, all our conversation was about cocks, and where we would get one for the fight on Fastern's-e'en. On the day before, all the boys who were to bring forward cocks gave in their names to the master, who counted the number of names.

Suppose there were twenty, he then wrote the figures from one to twenty on slips of paper, and put them in a bonnet, we then drew the figures, and the number we got determined the order in which we were to bring out our cocks next day. No. 1 fought with No. 2, No. 3 with No. 4, and so on. If No. 1 beat No. 2, and No. 3 beat No. 4, then No. 1 had to fight with No. 3, and so on with all the cocks until the last two, who were declared—the victor, king, and the last vanquished, queen. A little bell about the size of a thimble was hung round the king's neck, and a red ribbon was put round the queen's, but *she*, or rather I should say *he* (for the queen was a cock), got no bell. If we had not a cock of our own, we set out to the different farm-houses in search of one, and there was not a farmer's wife in the parish who would have refused us one, if it was not previously bespoke by some of our school-fellows. The first year I was at school my cock was king. I had some difficulty in procuring one, for I was too late in seeking for it. I had been at the head of Glen Ogil for a cock, but found Sandy Burns had been there before me. Sandy was inclined to laugh at me for my want of success, and advised me to "gae yon't to auld Nell Tosh" who had a reputation for being *no canny*. Though much afraid, I went to Nell, and was received very kindly—"Deed laddie, ye'se get the cock, weel I wat," said she, "an' gin ye bring him back king the morn, I'se gie ye butter an' breed." Next day all

the scholars, and many of their parents, assembled in the school. A large circle was made, and each boy, as he put down his cock, gave the master a small sum of money. When a cock would not fight, we all shouted, "A Fugie, a Fugie," and the poor fugie was given to the master. My cock beat the whole, killed the queen, and bore away the bell. I conveyed him home that night in triumph to Old Nell, who gave me the promised reward, which, had I been fastidious, I would not have relished, for she spread the butter with her thumb, which she first moistened with her spittle. I have not given a minute description of the fight, which was too disgusting to bear recital.

Our parish schoolmaster was a fair specimen of his class. In point of learning he was perhaps rather above the average. His college education gave him a higher status, and procured him a greater amount of consideration among the country folks, than he could have acquired from either his position or his worldly circumstances. There was a mysterious virtue connected with *college lear*, which, now-a-days, we can scarcely understand. It was a common belief that all who attended college learned the *black airt*, and that it *wasna canny to conter them*. Our *maister* was supposed to know everything, and it was alleged by some, that on one occasion he had *blaiket* the minister. Whenever a dispute arose on any subject, it was ended by one of the parties saying, "Weel, weel, juste wait till

I see the maister, I'll speer at him aboot it, an' ye'l fin' it am richt." The village blacksmith was a good living, serious minded man, but there was a queer perversity about him, which led him always to adopt the most absurd view of anything that was in the smallest degree ambiguous. He came into the school one day with a serious face and said, "Maister, am sorra for trublin ye, but I wad like to hear ye'r opinion on a verse o' Scripture I cam upon last nicht i' the readin'. I aye thocht we sudd believe the prophets, but it seems we're fules and slow of heart, if we do any sic thing." The master expressed his surprise, and his disbelief in the existence of such a passage. The smith, however, opened a Testament and read as follows—Luke xxiv. 25, "O fools and slow of heart; to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" The master took the book and read the passage, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken," showing him that he should have made a pause after fools, and not after heart. "I see it noo," said John, "it's a grand thing college lear; they're weel aff it has grammar. We're fules because we're slow of heart to believe the prophets. I see it noo as plain's A. B. C." I said before that the master was a strict disciplinarian; but the mode of punishment was, on some occasions, so indecent, that we wonder now how it was tolerated. In cases of greater delinquency than usual, he would say, "There's no respect of bairns with me—though

you were the king's son, turn down." We were then mounted on a strong fellow's back, and carried round the school, the Dominie following and making a vigorous application of the taws to the *end* of our back. When we could not repeat our Catechism we had to stand on the fire-shovel until we learned it. That such barbarities were practised in our schools less than forty years ago, would not be credible, were there not hundreds still living who can bear testimony to the fact. Though our master was generally grave and severe, he could, at times, unbend and make jokes, and whenever he laughed we were allowed the same liberty, but woe to anyone who dared to laugh at anything, however comical, unless the master set the example. Very comical circumstances did occur in our school, such as I believe do still, at times, happen in every school. Our master possessed, in general, complete control over his risible faculties; but, on one occasion, which I well remember, he completely lost it. When *Daft Davie*, whom I formerly mentioned, came to the parish school, he was a big uncouth-looking boy, six or seven years of age; he had a narrow forehead, small eyes, fat projecting cheeks, a wide mouth, with two rows of teeth, which his lips scarcely ever covered, and a narrow retreating chin. He had been but a few weeks at Nanny's school, and had never learned anything. Being a big boy, he went into an advanced class of his own accord, though he could not read one word. He went up

with the rest to the master to say Catechism, and the master asked him, "What is the chief end of man?" Davie, after considering a little, bawled out, "His head." The master looked at him and seemed to doubt whether he was more rogue or fool, and was about to make Davie feel the taws, when his little sister stepped forward and said, "He disna ken them, he never learnt them." When we were dismissed at night, we had to fold our hands, shut our eyes, and repeat the Lord's Prayer simultaneously. The master told Davie to shut his eyes. Davie did so, but drew apart his lips in such a manner as to show all his teeth, and made such a peculiar grin, that there was a general titter among the scholars, and there was a twitching movement about the corners of the master's own mouth, which showed that he was practising great self-restraint. The master told him to shut his lips. Davie did so, but opened his eyes, and it soon appeared that he could not keep both shut at once. Having obtained silence, we began our repetition of the prayer in a subdued tone. When we were about the middle of it, the master opened his eyes to see if we were all behaving, and Davie, who had been standing with lips compressed and eyes open, and fixed upon the master, roared out, at the highest pitch of his voice, "Ha, min, ye're openin' yir een yirsel." The master's gravity was fairly upset. He sank back into his chair in a fit of laughter. An indescribable scene of confusion followed, in the midst of which,

we rushed to the door, and scampered home in the highest glee, eager to tell the events of Davie's first day at school.

There is in the office of a schoolmaster such an amount of irksome drudgery, and so manny petty annoyances, that it requires a peculiarly well constituted mind, and a genial happy temper, to enable a man to take a real heartfelt pleasure in the discharge of its duties. Circumstances will occur, even in the best regulated schools, of such a nature as to render the employment of severity absolutely necessary; but, in general, a mild and firm discipline, a kindly sympathy with the children in their joys and sorrows, and affectionate treatment, with now and then a few words of encouragement, will secure to the teacher, their love and respect, and will enable him to steer clear of many of those harrassing cares and vexations, which are generally believed to be inseparable, form the life of a schoolmaster. If he be a bit of a philosopher, the exhibition of human nature, as displayed among the little men and women intrusted to his care, will be to him a source of never-failing interest. Ebullitions of temper, a disposition to trickery, or even inveterate indolence, will be looked upon, rather as curious phenomena requiring the exercise of skillful management, than as causes of annoyance, which can only be removed by *striking* appeals to their physical *feelings*.

The philosophy of teaching is much more studied now-a-days, than it was forty years ago, and teachers

are, we believe, a much happier, and a more intelligent set of men. So evil an influence was supposed to be exercised on the minds of teachers, by the irksomeness of their duties, that they were all said to become either *drucken* or *daft*. We have even heard of Sir Walter Scott having asked somebody whether he had even known a *dominie* who was not a fool. Whatever of pertinence there may have been in the asking of sucn a question in Sir Walter's day, we are sure that in our time there would be nothing seen in it, but the highest impertinence.

Our teacher, with all his college *lear*, was supposed to become at times scarcely *compos mentis*, which the people expressed by saying that he was a little *skeir* or *hirl*, or that he wanted tippance o' the shillin'. He was certainly liable to a great variety of moods of mind: at one time very depressed, at another, very elevated. At one time we were thrashed for the smallest faults, at another we might make considerable transgressions with impunity. He was, however, so much more frequently in the thrashing humour than in the forgiving one, that the latter might be looked upon as exceptional. One day when he was in an angry mood, we got a very severe punishment for a very little fault. We had observed the cloud on his brow all the morning, and not knowing on whom the storm might burst, we were all so quiet, that you might have heard a pin fall. The Bible Class were reading, and one of the boys had got a *crack i' the lug* for

mispronouncing the word dumb. The boy tried again, and in a loud blubbering voice, said, "The dumb ass speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness." We were immediately startled with a most tremendous roar which came in at the open window. On looking round we saw that it came from the open mouth of the blacksmith's cuddy, which had been feeding on the green behind the school. We all burst out into loud laughter, which was soon changed into wailing, for the master sprung from his seat and laid about him most unmercifully right and left, sparing neither young nor old. The poor donkey, ignorant of the mischief it was causing, continued to stand and bray in at the window, until it received a smart blow on the nose, which made it spring out of reach of the taws, where it stood for some time and brayed louder than before. I think the master was sorry soon after, for he became much more conciliatory in his manner to us, but we felt we had been ill-treated, and sobbed and sulked the whole forenoon.

By rare chance he was in a good humour on the morning that little Alick Steel came to school, otherwise it might have fared ill with him, and all of us. Alick was a very little old-fashioned-looking child. Brought up in the utmost seclusion by his grannie, he was altogether unacquainted with the ways of the world, and had no idea of any peculiar deference that was to be paid to schoolmasters. The neighbours said he was an auld-farrant bairn,

and had wiser thochts in his wee head than many aulder fouk. Alick went up to his lesson with an air of perfect unconcern. The master pointed to the first letter of the alphabet and said, "Well Alick, what do you call this?" Alick looked up in his face and said, "Me no ken; fat ca' oot oo sell?" The master, with a smile, told him, and then bade him repeat after him exactly what he said; the lesson then went on as follows:—

Master—"B."

Alick—"B."

Master—"C;" (to one of the boys) "John Addison, mind your work, sir."

Alick—"C; John Addison, mind ye'll wolk, sil."

Master—"You stupid fellow; just repeat the letters."

Alick—"You stupid fellow, just lepeat the letells."

Master—"Look on, sir, and say 'D.'"

Alick—"Look on, sill, and say 'D.'"

Master—(To one of the boys)—"Bring that peerie to me, William Wilkie."

Alick—"Bling that peelie to me, William Wilkie; I'll go an' bling'd."

There had been a general titter throughout the school while this was going on. Rows of white teeth and pairs of sparkling eyes were visible in all directions, and little outbursts of suppressed breath here and there, indicated that all was ready for explosion, if the least encouragement should be given.

At Alick's last sally, the master laughed out-right, and lifted him away to his seat. It would have done your heart good to have seen the scene that followed. It was not much to laugh at, to be sure, but it sufficed to make us all for the time quite merry. The master wasn't angry, and when order was restored, we wrought with cheerful hearts and increased vigour all the rest of the day. I need not say which had the best effect upon our youthful hearts—the frown or the smile.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR PRECENTOR.

By the old laws of the church the parish schoolmaster should be the parish precentor, and should instruct the youth in psalmody. Forty years ago this practice had fallen into desuetude. The singing in the kirk on Sundays was, in consequence, very rude and uncouth. In some instances it was very loud and hearty, and particularly so in a neighbouring parish, where the precentor could sing only one tune called Stilt. When he got a short metre psalm, he slurred a few notes to make the tune fit the line; and when he got a long metre psalm, he sung the two last syllables quickly on the final note of the measure. By this continual practice of one tune, the congregation acquired a vigorous style of singing, which I never heard equalled. I am not sure if it was want of confidence, or if he thought it *infra dig.;* but our schoolmaster employed a substitute at his own expense, instead of singing himself. James Skrake was our precentor, and all the salary he ever received, was the education of his bairns. James was a little man, with a large head, great projecting eyes, and buck teeth. He spoke with a strong Berwickshire burr, which gave a very peculiar richness to some of his tones, both when reading the lines and when singing. The practice

of reading the line was not then abolished in many parishes, and James was very tenacious in keeping up the old custom.

One cold winter day there were very few people in church. James was, however, in his place. He had on a snuffy brown great coat, much too large for his small body, and a large gray worsted cravat wound two or three times round his throat. His appearance was certainly somewhat odd, and no one with the smallest sense of the ridiculous about him, could forbear a smile; but when he stood up and read the line in a high key, "I like ane ool in desert am," it was too much for the gravity of the hearers; there was a general smile which nothing but the sacredness of the time and place could have prevented from becoming something much more demonstrative. James was but a poor vocalist, and his followers were, if possible, worse. We don't believe that even the famous Dalziel Psalms were nearly so bad. It is long since I was in our parish, and I cannot say whether any improvement has yet taken place there, but I can vouch for the Dalziel Psalms being now as well sung as in any parish in the country of similar size and circumstances.

Though James Skrake, our precentor, was a very inferior singer, he did not appear to think so himself. He never exhibited any of that timidity which is so frequently manifested by those who are somewhat doubtful of their own abilities. His manner in the desk was calm and collected. He had a pitch-

fork, which he sounded by jerking the ends of it quickly from between his teeth. He gave forth no audible sound in taking his key—indeed, it is very doubtful if he knew what a key was—but from the shape of his lips, and a slight whistle now and then escaping therefrom, one could judge that he was humming, or, to use his own words, *soufing it ower* before he began. His selection of tunes was very limited, which was, upon the whole, an advantage, for the congregation soon learned them all, and they gave him all the assistance they could; he was, consequently, never left to praise God alone, as sometimes happens to modern precentors, when they introduce what James would have called their *new fangled curly wurlies*, more for the purpose of showing the dexterous use they can make of their own vocal organs, than for guiding the voices of others to sing God's praise.

James had two favourite tunes, the Old Hundred and Coleshill. One day the minister gave out the Hundredth Psalm. James stood up intending to sing the Old Hundred, but unfortunately started Coleshill. After singing a note or two he shrugged up his shoulders, gave his left hand a jirk, and said *toots*. He tried again, but with no better success. It then appeared that he had more faith in his *soufing* than in his pitchfork, for he immediately began to *souf* so loud as to produce a quite audible whistle. The minister rose up and said, "Sing the second version." James began again with the second ver-

sion, but to the astonishment of himself and everybody else, he produced the Old Hundred. He immediately stopped, coolly turned round, and said to the minister, "Isn't that odd, sirr?" The schoolmaster, who was sitting in front of James, and seemed greatly annoyed at his failures, stood up and began Coleshill with the second version. James nodded to the schoolmaster, smiled slightly, and sung away as vigorously as if nothing had happened.

There was a young weaver in our village called Peter Treddles, to whom James had given lessons in Psalmody, with the view of getting him to assist at sacramental occasions. Peter was a gay, conceited young spark, with a pretty high notion of his own musical powers, but he was at first very grateful to James for his lessons. Peter, however, had gone to the town of Forfar to work for three months, and in the weaving shop there, he had for a companion the Relief Precentor, who was a regular *singin' maister*, and enjoyed an annual salary of £3 5s. From him Peter took lessons, and learned a few of the newest tunes, and among others, Devizes, if I remember rightly, which he was sure he could not stick, were he to go to the *lettrin* (the name given in Angus to the precentor's desk.) When Peter returned to his native village, instead of gratefully remembering his old instructor, he spoke of James and his singing with the greatest contempt, and on hearing James make such a failure, he resolved to try what he could do next Sunday himself.

Application was accordingly made to James early in the week, for a day's singing next Sunday, which James willingly granted. Expectation ran pretty high in the village, when it was known that Peter was to sing on Sunday. Peter himself was a good deal agitated about it, though he pretended to be quite cool on the subject. He did not practise much in the weaving shop, lest the rest should think he was anxious about it; but he was observed to rise from his work at intervals, and betake himself to his father's back-garden, where he walked up and down for half an hour at a time, and hummed Devizes. On Saturday evening Peter was lost sight of, and could not be found. His mother was somewhat alarmed at his protracted absence, and at length, with one or two more, went out to seek him. As they passed the door of his father's byre, they heard a strange sound inside, and his mother thinking that the cow had perhaps been taken ill, went in to see why she was moaning so, and found Peter at the head of the empty stall practising Devizes. Peter pretended to make a joke of it, by saying that he saw them coming, and wished to frighten them, but he was evidently a good deal annoyed, for he saw that they looked somewhat incredulous. The Sabbath morning came at length, and sometime before the bell rang Peter, with about half-a-dozen young fellows, started for the church. His companions assured him of their assistance, but Peter was quite confident. He was sure he could not

stick Devizes. He entered the desk very boldly and shut the door, but forgot to fasten it. He took out his blue white-spotted handkerchief to wipe his brow, which certainly looked as if dew drops had fallen on it, and then turning round to lean his arm on the side of the desk, with the air of a man who felt quite at home, the unfastened door burst open, Peter lost his balance and fell out. The few who were in the church could not help laughing, and Peter was evidently much discomposed. When the bell began to ring, and the people came flocking in, and long rows of faces seemed to be intently fixed on him, his trepidation was much increased. He again took out his handkerchief, blew his nose in a very sonorous and determined manner, looked his watch, and then began to turn over with great earnestness the leaves of his tune-book. He then put on as great an appearance of calmness as possible, and leaned back, trying to look quite unconcerned, but the large drops on his brow, and the paleness of his lips showed that the emotion could not be stifled. When the minister began to read the psalm, he struck the desk a desperate blow with his fork, but he had evidently struck much harder than he intended, for the noise of the stroke was much louder than the vibration of the fork, and he appeared to be a little startled by it; he then hurriedly applied the fork to his teeth and uttered a harsh creaking-like sound, by way of taking his key, made two or three applications of the blue handker-

chief, and ere the minister was quite finished, started to his feet. He gave a loud hem, and opened his mouth, but there came therefrom such a thin, quavering, shaky sound, that no one could discern one note of Devizes in it. James Skrake was sitting near, and knowing what tune was intended, struck boldly in to help, but as the tune was almost new to James, he soon went out of it and into Coleshill. Peter, when James began, got a note or two of the tune, and struck out in a tremendous voice, but not at all in tune; the schoolmaster tried to help, but Peter was in such a hurry that he soon left him far behind. Two shepherd dogs, that were lying at the foot of the pulpit stair, had their ears so painfully affected by the horrid discord, that they both started up, and uttered such a yell as startled the whole congregation. The minister calmly rose from his seat, touched Peter on the head, and motioned to the master and James to stop. He then raised the tune himself, and acted as precentor for that day. Peter never afterwards spoke about precenting, and whenever he began to boast of anything that he had done in too high terms, the surest way of stopping him was to ask him if he could sing Devizes.

CHAPTER IX.

MUIRTON FARM—HERDING COWS.

I had not been more than two years at the Parish School when an event happened that for a time dimmed my prospects. I was one of six whom the master had chosen to form an initiatory Latin class, but just when about to commence the study of that language my mother died, leaving my father with a family of six—the youngest not more than seven days old, and the oldest under twelve years. This was a heavy blow to my father, and a great calamity to us all. I shall not now renew the grief and anguish I felt on this occasion, by a minute recital of the particulars connected with this event. My father was a poor man, and though he had a good business, he felt that the profits of his trade were scarcely sufficient to enable him to keep us all at home, and pay for a nurse to his motherless infant.

A great many of the farms, especially those in the upper districts of the country, were at that time unenclosed by hedges or fences; there was, consequently, a great demand for herds. As soon as the spring-time came, all of us, who were able, were dispersed among the neighbouring farmers to act in that capacity. I was sent to a farm of considerable size, called Muirton. My wages for the half year were to consist of bed and board, and the magnificent

sum of 15s. Muirton was a high-lying, bare-looking place. The farm buildings formed three sides of a square. One side was occupied as the dwelling house. It was a long low thatched tenement, containing a *but* and a *ben*, with a middle apartment called the milk-house. The rest of the square was formed by the stable, the barn, the byre, and the cart-house. All the area of this square was occupied as a dunghill, except a narrow footpath, about three feet wide, round the edge of the houses, formed of round boulders set close together, like the causeways which may still be seen in some old towns. The farmer was an old widow lady, upwards of eighty years of age, but the most active woman of her years that I ever knew. She had a life-rent of her farm, the out-door-work of which was superintended by her son. She kept two servant maids, whose principal employment, in addition to the usual household work, was the carding and spinning of wool. The hired ploughman, a *haflin callan*, another herd, and myself, got our food in the house; but we slept in a hay-loft above the stable on the other side of the square. Having been now long accustomed to good lodging, I sometimes wonder how we managed to exist in that loft, for the gable of it was quite open, and with a ladder set against it, served us for both door and window. Yet, though on stormy nights the wind blew rather freshly about us as we were undressing, I do not remember that we ever murmured or thought our

lot was hard. Our breakfast generally consisted of oatmeal porridge, very hastily prepared, and so thick that it could not be poured, but had to be taken out of the pot with a wooden ladle, and milk. I have said milk, but I do not think the horrid compound, the very thought of which yet makes me shudder, deserves the name. I know the account I am to give of the abominable composition we had to sup with our porridge, under the name of milk, will scarcely be credited, but it is, nevertheless, true.

About thirteen years before my arrival at the farm, the guidwife had caused a large deep tub to be made, for the purpose of holding the skimmed milk, that was set apart for common use. This was called the skim'-milk bowie. Although nominally intended for skimmed milk, it became a receptacle for all sorts of milk refuse. Butter-milk, sour-milk, and whey were all poured into this reservoir, which had never been known to be empty since it was first set up; so that a small portion of what was served up to our porridge every day was thirteen years old. To be sure the portion that was of such an age must have been infinitesimally small; but nevertheless, homeopathically appreciable. It would appear that milk does not, like wine, improve with age.

Does it strike any of you, my aged friends, that the seasons have altered much since we were boys? It seems to me that the winters now are neither so cold nor the summers so warm as they were long ago. We who were herds had to rise in summer

and drive our cattle a-field before five o'clock, for so great was the heat on sunny days that they could not be kept out after ten in the forenoon. I have said there was another herd besides myself. Between seven and eight o'clock in the morning we drove our cattle into a corner that was protected on two sides by a ditch, and one of us watched them while the other went for the breakfast, which he carried to the field, the porridge in a large wooden *caup*, and the *milk* (?) in a tin pitcher. Boys are often ingenious, and light upon queer contrivances. We were, I suppose, like others of our age. We were often accompanied, on the lea, by a good natured, docile brown dog called Dash. We often amused ourselves while the cows were feeding quietly, by imitating on a small scale the labours of the farm. Out of a few old boards we had made a cart, and out of a few old ropes, a rude set of harness for Dash. Many a small cart-load of earth, or stones, or stubble we made him draw, but we thought we had performed a crowning feat when one day Geordie Jenkyns, for that was my companion's name, succeeded in making him bring the breakfast from the farm in the little cart. Next day it was my turn to go for the breakfast, and I set out with Dash and the cart. Jean Jilty, the servant, told me not to put the porridge, &c. in the cart, but Geordie had done it yesterday and I would do it to-day. Dash pulled away in fine style until we were about half-way, and I was calling him a good horse, and jee-

hupping and woaing with great pleasure and contentment, when all at once, a hare started out of a whinbush at the roadside close beside us, and in a twinkling, Dash dashed after her across the moor. At the first start the pitcher with the *milk* was pitched out among the heather and the spoons along with it. As the *caup* with the porridge fitted the front part of the cart and was held pretty tightly by the sides, it staid longer in ; but the cart soon played crack against a big stone, and the *caup* flew one way and the porridge, not unlike in shape to a soft cheese, flew another. The cart itself, soon flew all to flinders, and Dash having lost the hare, came back crouching and fawning with the look of a conscience-stricken criminal. Seeing him so evidently repentant I did not beat him, but went and gathered the porridge into the *caup*. That morning we supped our porridge dry, and though sorry for the breaking of our cart, we did not lament much over the loss of the milk.

Though a small servant, I suppose I must have been found to be a useful one, for at the expiry of my term of service, I was re-engaged at a small advance of wages for a whole year, to make myself generally useful in winter and herd the cows in summer. The winter was a severe one, and my labours were consequently very disagreeable. Yet, in the midst of a life that to many would have seemed intolerable, there were many sources of enjoyment. It is curious to remark the many com-

pensatory pleasures there are, in the lowest and poorest conditions of life, which make up, in some measure, for the want of those comforts which people in easy circumstances enjoy. My fare was plain and unsavoury; but I was accustomed to it, and when I did get a tit bit, it was eaten with a relish which none can understand, but those who have been similarly brought up. A bit of dry oaten cake was very good, a slice of loaf was a great dainty, and when covered with treacle, it seemed to be something like what I have since imagined ambrosia and nectar—the food of the gods—to be. As the pitch of my contentment was very low, the scale of my enjoyments, in an upward direction, was very extensive, though I had very few opportunities, at that time, of rising far in it. My clothes were plain, but comfortable enough. I was prouder that winter of a new moleskin jacket and a flaming red necktie, than I have ever since been of the most fashionable suit of the best West of England broadcloth. My shoes were cleaned but once a week, and instead of being covered with blacking, they were soaked with grease; but I got as great satisfaction from looking down on my greasy boots as I have ever derived from the most brilliant polish of Day and Martin. My little hands were hacked, my feet were frostbitten, and my bed in the hay-loft was cold on frosty nights; but then, young as I was, I was a dreamer of dreams, and a seer of visions, and oft in the cloudland of fancy, forgot my bodily

discomforts. Thanks to my mother's teaching, I could create a heaven of my own in that rude loft, on cold dark winter nights; and I believed, and am still persuaded of its truth, that He who dwells in heaven, was ever near me in an especial manner, and that, poor, illfed, dirty, and uncared for as I was, He listened to me with complacency, for the sake of him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me." I do not think I ever fully realised my condition as a "mitherless bairn;" for I had an idea my mother was always near me in the air. I was told, after she died, that she had gone to God, and I thought that, wherever He was, there also she was. This idea took so strong a hold of me, that it clung to me for years, and I cannot say that it is yet entirely effaced.

Our old mistress took some pains with our religious instruction, and though her teaching was very plain, and sometimes even absurd, it was not entirely valueless. On Sabbath nights she made us all repeat the Shorter Catechism, question about, and read a chapter in the Bible. She sometimes attempted an explanation, and her remarks, though not always true, were often interesting.

One night the ploughman, when reading of the badger's skins dyed red, mispronounced the words, and called them, "beggars skins dried red;" this the old lady gravely explained, by saying that most of the beggars in those days were skinned when they died, and that their skins were then employed

in the manner mentioned in the narrative. I remember I had a slight doubt at the time, regarding the correctness both of the reading and the exposition, but I never dared to contradict my mistress. She told us also in the course of her explanations, that a woman had a rib more than a man—that Jews could not beget children with Christians—that Hebrew was the first language, and that if children were left to themselves, they would grow up speaking that tongue—that there were no rainbows before the flood, and many other strange things which it took me many years to unlearn.

Peace be with the good old lady! if she erred, it was unconsciously, and with a good intention.

One of our most frequent visitors was old John Clippins, who lived about a mile from the farm. He was a little man, with small grey eyes, hollow sunken cheeks, a projecting chin, and a flat turned up nose, the nostrils of which seemed to be always pointed heavenward. He was a miserable body, always grumbling and discontented. He and his half-starved apprentice, Tammie Tape, would sometimes be with us a whole week, employed in making or mending clothes. This was called *whipping-the-cat*. Tammie told me he liked much better to whip the cat, than to stay at home, as he got a much better supply of rations from other folk than from his master. Johnnie, he said, allowed only a certain quantity of meal for porridge to himself and family, but, with great impartiality, and

that all might get an equal share, he made them all sit round the pot, which was placed in the middle of the floor, each with a small basin of milk in his hand. One spoon only was used, which was handed round to each successively, and thus sup after sup was taken until the pot was empty, when they had to stop whether they were satisfied or no. Johnnie had a strong Berwickshire burr in his speech. Tammie, the apprentice, had a lisp, so that it was very amusing to hear them conversing together, Though ignorant and superstitious, Jonnie would not acknowledge his belief in ghosts. One night he and Tammie were late in getting done with their work, and as the weather was very stormy, they were prevailed upon to stay all night—and were accommodated with a bed in the loft near us. The ploughman, who was a wag, and fond of practical jokes, thought it would be a fine thing to give the tailor a fright, so he told him when he was shewing him to bed, not to be surprised though he heard ghosts rattlin in the riggin thro' the nicht. "Kay, kay," said the tailor, "gae wa wi' yerr haverrs, I'se warrant I'll no see a waurr ghost nirr mysell at onyrrate." When we went to bed, the ploughman told us what he was to do, so we lay awake, eager to enjoy the sport. The ploughman made a bundle of straw, and climbed up with it among the couples of the roof; he then crept along until he was over the place where the tailor lay, when he made an eerie noise, like something between

the braying of a donkey and the squeaking of a pig. "Maithter, maithter," said Tammie, "Whath that;" "I dinna ken," said Johnnie, "lie still." The ploughman made a louder noise. "O, thay a prayer, maithter, thay a prayer," said Tammie. "I canna *prray* nane, said Johnnie. At that moment the ploughman let down the bundle of straw by a rope, and let it fall on the tailor. Johnnie being now very terrified, and again solicited by Tammie to *thay* a prayer, groaned out, "O Lorrd prreserrve's just this ae nicht, an' I'll neverr ask ye mairr." When the ploughman heard this, he could not control himself, and while trying to restrain his laughter, he lost his balance and fell down among the hay, at the foot of the tailor's bed. The tailor almost fainted with terror in the dark, but he did not discover the trick that had been played on him. He told us, next morning, that he slept none all night, and assured us, that he would never doubt the existence of ghosts any more.

CHAPTER X.

MY FIRST SWEETHEART.

Love is like a dizziness,
It winna lat a puir bodie
Gang aboot his bizziness.—*Old Song.*

Time which brings all things to an end, at length brought me to the end of a hard uncomfortable life, which I seldom look back upon with much pleasure. At the age of twelve, I found myself seated on a shoemaker's stool, in my father's workshop, and I was daily being initiated into the mysteries of Crispin's gentle craft. I considered this to be a great advance in life. From the time I donned the leather apron, I felt myself to be somebody. Had I not risen above the condition of a mere clodhopper? Was not I a shoemaker—a tradesman! A bonnie tradesman I must have been! I had shot up into a tall lanky laddie, with windlestrae looking legs, which were out of all proportion with the rest of my body. I generally wore a corduroy waistcoat with moleskin sleeves, which only reached a little below my elbows. My trousers were of the same materials, and owing to my rapid growth, they terminated where the calves of my legs should have been. My hair was kept close cut all round by my Auntie Tibbie, who was now my father's housekeeper, except a small tuft in front which she called a *beau tap*. I had at this time a great aversion to

soap and water, and, except on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings, I managed to escape from what I deemed the annoyance of these purifying agencies. I am conscious that this formed by no means a lovely or creditable trait in my character; but it was of short duration. A change came over me at this period which wrought a great alteration in my thoughts and feelings, and also in my personal appearance and habits.

Some may smile incredulously at the idea of a boy of twelve falling in love; but, as sure as this is a veritable history, such was the case in my experience. The lovely being, who, at that early period of my life, awoke within my bosom the first feelings of the tender passion, was the miller's servant, Betty, a tall dark-haired buxom lass, of four-and-twenty. She had spoken to me once or twice very kindly, and had made me feel two or three years older by calling me *soutor*. Moreover, she had one night said, in my hearing, to Tammas Taepiece, our journeyman, when he was bantering her about her sweethearts, "I'm sure, Tammas, I've nae sweethearts ava, except Jamie there." As she said this she cast a roguish look towards me. She was only joking, but I did not know that. I do not know if she had any notion of the feelings with which I regarded her, but my conduct towards her must have seemed, at times, rather mysterious. When in her company, I used to glower at her with the most tender expression possible, and once or

twice she did remark that I was a queer callan. If she passed me on the road, I would stand and gaze after her till she was out of sight, and in my eyes, every movement she made was the very perfection of gracefulness and beauty. But my infatuation reached its height one moonlight night, when Tammy Taepiece, Betty, myself, and several others, were playing at "barley bracks round the stacks," in the miller's corn yard. Betty was tackie. She caught me, gave me a kiss, and ran away laughing. It was a few minutes before I could recover from the confusion into which she threw me. I almost fainted with the delightful sensation. There came all over me a tremulous quivering of delight, and when I began to run again, I scarcely felt the ground beneath my feet. It seemed as if that kiss had in my case suspended the laws of gravity, to use a favourite expression of Auntie Tibbie's, "I scarcely knew which end of me was uppermost." I several times, during the continuance of the game, threw myself in Betty's way, but though she had several opportunities, to my great disappointment, she did not do it again. I took little supper that night, and went to bed in a kind of delightful delirium. It was long before I fell asleep. Faces very like Betty's seemed to hover over me in the dark, and I imagined that they came close to mine, and let fall soft warm kisses on my cheeks and forehead. I felt all night as if drops of honey were falling on my heart. When I got up in the morn-

ing, I wondered if I should see her that day, and, all at once, for the first time in my life, I became painfully conscious that my face and hands were not so clean and fair to look upon as they might be. To Tibbie's great surprise I sought a towel from her and then washed my face among the water in which floated our balls of rosin. I then took an old comb that lay in the shop window, and parted my hair in the only place where it was partable, viz., in the middle of my *beau tap*. After breakfast, I took up a position at the corner of our house, and as I knew that Betty would pass that way, at that time, driving the miller's cows to pasture, I expected that my improved appearance would produce a powerful impression on her. She was not long in making her appearance with the cows—and my heart began to thump against my breast in a strange manner. When the cows were about to pass, one of them turned suddenly aside, and was running down a pathway beside which was a dirty puddle of mud and water, and other filth. Betty cried "O Jamie haud again." Never did knight-errant spring more eagerly at the command of his lady love, to her assistance, than did I, to bring back Betty's errant cow; but, alas! my zeal did not produce the happy effect, or the favourable impression I intended, for, as I jumped down into the pathway, my foot slipped and I tumbled at full length into the puddle. On gathering myself up, I stood for a moment, not knowing what to do, for

my eyes, nostrils, and mouth were filled with mud, and all my front was covered with the same material. Though I could scarcely see, I got a glimmering blink of Betty standing holding her sides, and laughing heartily. I was mortified at this, and rushed to the house to Tibbie, who had much ado to get me cleaned and pacified; for tradesmen though I was, and an aspirant for the chief place in Betty's affections, I was greeting like a wean. This misfortune, though it moderated my passion for a time, did not eradicate it, and in a few days I was, if possible, more enamoured than ever. I thought several times of telling her of my love for her, but my courage always failed me when I had an opportunity. I at length resolved to write her a letter, but I had no paper and no money. Love, however, is proverbially fertile in expedients. In the little garret room, where I slept, lay a few of my old school books, and among them Barrie's collection, at the beginning of which was a fly leaf nearly clean; there was a similar leaf at the end clean on the one side, but on the other was written in my best round hand, the following beautiful effusion—

"James Tacket is my name,
And Scotland is my nation;
Eskbank is my dwelling place,
And holy habitation.
When I am dead and in my grave,
And all my bones are rotten,
This little book will tell my name,
When I am quite forgotten."

I thought this was very good poetry, and I determined to send it to Betty, as it would show that I had a taste for literature, which I was sure would raise me much in her esteem. I tore out both leaves from the Collection, and set about writing my love-letter on the clean one. It took me three nights to finish it. To be sure, I had not much time, as I had to do it by stealth after the shop was shut. I had never written an epistle before, and I only knew three ways of beginning a letter, none of which altogether pleased me. I thought that "Dear Betsy, I send you these few lines to let you know that I love you," was too commonplace; that "Dear Betty, I take this opportunity of letting you know that I love you," betrayed great poverty of expression; and that "Dear Betty, this comes hopping that you are well," was too cold a beginning. Owing to the fastidiousness of my literary taste, I had not got one word written that evening, when it grew dark, but I resolved to think of something before next night. I thought it would be much better if I could do it, in verse than in prose, and in the course of next day I succeeded in composing the following lines—

> "My dear, my charming, lovely Betty,
> I think that you are very pretty,
> This comes to tell you that I love you."

I racked my brains till my head ached, but I could not get a good rhyme for "love you." These three lines were all I could manage the second night; but

after I went to bed, I composed a fourth, which, though not very good, I thought might do—

"And I do hope that it will move you."

Finding originality so difficult to attain, I concluded with the following plagairism:—

"The rose is red, the violet's blue,
The honey's sweet, and so are you,
And so are they that sent you this,
And when we meet we'll have a kiss."

Thinking this quite enough, I folded the two leaves, as neatly as possible, in the form of a letter, and sealed it with a little bit of mashed potato. After dark I pushed it in beneath her door, assured that she would find it in the morning. I was in a state of great excitement all night, and slept but little. On going down stairs next morning I was surprised to hear shouts of laughter issuing from the shop door, and to see Betty standing reading my letter to Tammy Taepiece. I knew not how to look; my confusion was complete, and it was many a day before I was allowed to forget my first love-letter.

CHAPTER XI.

TAMMAS TAEPIECE.—AUNTIE TIBBIE.

Thou gazest on the stars on high;
My own bright star! O, would that I
Were yonder heaven, then mine t'would be
To gaze with all those eyes on thee.
—GREEK ANTHOLOGY.

Though Betty was the first for whom I felt the sweet emotion of the tender passion, I have never considered her as my first love, as there was no reciprocity on her part, and the effects of my infatuation were transitory. My first love! I fear to write about her. What an old fool I must be! The very recollection of her, even yet, makes my heart beat quicker, and the thought of her, even now, makes my hand shake in such a manner, that I fear the printer's devil may not be able to decipher my copy. Have patience with me for a little, gentle reader, and allow me to tell you of things that move me less deeply, until the agitated feelings I have raised become calm enough to enable me to do something like justice to the subject.

Tammas Taepiece, my father's journeyman, had two books that exercised a powerful influence on my character at this time; they were the Arabian Night's Entertainments and the Seven Champions of Christendom. By these two books I was kept, in a manner, spell bound for nearly a whole year;

and, in looking back on my past life, I feel inclined to think that this was the happiest period of it all. At no time did I experience so great a difference between the ideal and the real. Bodily, I sat before a fire, and mechanically stirred shoemaker's paste to keep it from burning. Mentally, I was Prince Camaralzaman reposing by the side of the beauteous Princess Badoura. Genii and fairies were obedient to my command, bearing me to whatever regions I pleased, and constructing for me buildings as magnificent as I could conceive. Bodily, I might be hammering a bit of hard bend leather. Mentally, I was slaying dragons in Egypt, rescuing king's daughter's from death, storming giant's castles, or with my single arm putting to flight vast armies. From the bright realms of fairy land, from the scenes of old romance and chivalry, I was brought back to contemplate the realities of life as exhibited in the persons of Tammas Taepiece and my Auntie Tibbie. Tammas was a great curiosity. He was a little man, upwards of thirty years of age. A cheery affectionate creature was Tammas. Hard and steadily did he work all the day long, and merrily did he sing as he plied the hammer or the awl. There was a contented expression in his face, and a merry twinkle in his eye that it did one's heart good merely to look at. He was a general favourite with the lasses ; but, as they sometimes took advantage of his good nature, and played tricks on him, he formed a rather unfavour-

able opinion of the sex in general—at least in so far as their suitability for domestic partnership was concerned. He was very tender-hearted withal, and liked to read novels, especially of the spooney order, and often have I seen him wiping the tears from his eyes as he perused some tale in which the woes of a hero or a heroine were pathetically related. My Auntie Tibbie was as nearly as possible the reverse of all this. She was now on the wintry side of forty, and one of the most matter-of-fact women I ever knew. With her a spoon was a spoon, and a spade a spade. The whole of her faculties were concentrated on what was about her. Visible and tangible objects alone occupied her thoughts, and there was not one spark of romance in all her composition. Faces that had a soft and dreamy expression of gentleness, she would have characterised as *thochtless lookin', daized an' doited.* Eyes, into whose deep blue some might think they could gaze for ever, and thence derive divinest influences, she would have called *muckle, glowrin', impident.* Tears of pity or of tenderness, which some would have called holy, pearly drops to be kissed away with rapture, she would have thought of as *draps o' saut water, an' the shunner dichtet aff wi' a pocket napkin the better.* What affinity there was between Tammas and Tibbie I never could discover; yet, sure enough, there was some occult influence that drew them towards each other.

The first time I observed it was on a fine Sunday

evening in summer. They were sitting together in a pretty beechen bower in our garden, and I was on the green close beside them, but out of sight, absorbed in the Pilgrim's Progress. I had crossed the Delectable Mountains, passed through the Enchanted Ground, and was about to enter the land of Beulah, when I was startled by Tibbie, exclaiming—"What are ye glowrin' at, Tammas; did ye never see my face afore. I'm shure ye've been sittin' this half oor glowrin' at me, an' no spoken ae word. I dinna like tae be glowred at that gate; gin ye see onything wrang wi' my face tell me even oot, an' hae dune wi't."

"Oh! Tibbie," said Tammas, "there's something about your face I can never tire lookin' at. It's sae quiet an' placid; it't jist like a Sabbath evenin'."

"O ye haverin cratur; something aboot my face like a Sabbath evenin'!"

"I'm no meanin' that jist exactly; I'm speakin' a kind o' figurative like—jist the same as when the poet says o' Annie Laurie—

'Her broo is like the snaw drift,
Her neck is like the swan.'

Noo, I'm shure ye wadna be angry though I wad say that your neck is like the swan; for it's as bonnie to me, Tibbie, as Annie Laurie's was tae him at made the sang."

"Dae ye ken wha yer mockin'? I'm no denyin' but Annie Laurie's craig may hae been as lang an' as sma' as a swan's, an' if it was, she'd been a bon-

nie pictur! but I assure ye, Tammas, I dinna thank ye for makin' sic odorous comparisons aboot me; an' gin ye dinna speak sense I'll gae tae house an' leave ye."

"In that case, Tibbie, the licht o' my e'en 'll depairt; the star o' my heart 'll gae oot o' sicht. Oh! I wish I was the heaven aboon ye, an' a' the stars that 'll be comin' blinkin' oot in a wee, were my e'en, I wad mak' nae ither use o' them a' than jist tae look at you."

"I'm thinkin' gin that were the case, an' ye made nae ither use o' yer e'en, ye wad hae but thin brose for sic a muckle stamach." And here Tibbie burst into a laugh at the idea of Tammas being heaven, &c. Tammas had found the idea in an old number of *Blackwood's Magazine*, in "Translations from the Greek Anthology," and thought it very apropos. He was consequently rather disappointed at its effect upon Tibbie. Tammas determined to try another mode, as well he might, for Tibbie was no Greek. "Tibbie," he said, "look at me; look into my face an' tell me gin ye dinna see truth an' sincerity imprinted there; tell me gin ye dinna see love an' strong affection for ye speakin' oot o' my e'en."

"Deed, Tammas, tae be plain wi' ye, I see naething printed on yer face except the mark o' ane o' yer thooms, that hasna been very clean; an' tae imagine that I could see ye speakin' wi' yer e'en, is tae tak' me for as great a fool as yersel'. I see naething by ordinar' i' yer face, except a drap at yer nose."

"Oh! Tibbie," said Tammas, "ye'll ding me distrackit; ye winna understand me. I like ye, Tibbie; oh! I like ye."

"Weel, Tammas," said Tibbie, "I think ye dae; an' gin ye wadna haver sae muckle I micht like you no that ill mysel'; bit I ken fine it's jist thae poetry books an' novels that pits sic nonsense i' yer head; so I can forgie ye."

They both rose and went away to the house together; a new light was breaking in on my understanding in regard to Tammas and Tibbie; and I became desirous of watching the progress of this romance in real life—the issue of which you shall know in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

TIBBIE POPS THE QUESTION.

There's a duality in nature:
All things about us have their counterparts.
Why should not man obey the natural law?
Why not fulfil the purpose of his being,
By cleaving to a wife?—ANON.

A few days after the incident related in the last chapter, Auntie Tibbie received a visit from her gossip, Chirstie Cummins. Chirstie was a short-legged, barrel-bodied, fat-faced, blythe-looking bodie. She had been for fourteen years the wife of Saunders M'Siccar, the weaver; and had, during that period, presented him with eleven young M'Siccars. It was not yet customary in our parish to designate a married woman by the name of her husband. The only exception to this was in favour of the minister's wife, who was spoken of as *Mrs* Bowick. A few innovators sometimes gave the title of *Mrs* to the innkeeper's wife; but this was resisted in such terms as these—"Set her up wi' *Mistress!* Jenny Cobb's guide eneuch for her. Her faither was a cadger!" Thus it was that Mrs M'Siccar was never spoken of as such, but continued to be known by her maiden name—Chirstie Cummins. Chirstie's experience in regard to family matters had been very great, and her volubility in relating it, though wanting in continuity of mean-

ing, was remarkable for minuteness of detail. It is interesting to remark how beautifully the law of compensation provides against deficiency and excess in the social as well as in the physical relations. Chirstie was under five feet, but of considerable rotundity. Saunders was upwards of six feet, but of a thin windle-strae like figure. Chirstie's tongue was as near an approach as possible to perpetual motion. Saunders could, with difficulty, utter half a dozen words in succession, and *na* and *aye* were the only words he spoke for days together. Thus were the deficiencies of the one made up for by the redundancies of the other.

"Do ye think, Chirstie," said Tibbie, "that there's ony sic thing as *ordination* in marriages, that ilk ane just gets their ane, and that what is tae be, maun be?"

"Atweel that I dae, Tibbie woman; but means maun whiles be used tae bring it aboot, ye ken. There was my Saunders an' me. Naebody wad hae said we were made for ane an' ither. He's no nane like me, an' I'm no nane like him, but we cam thegither for a' that; an' though he's whiles a wee dour i' the temper, I aye get him tae dae what I want—so there's nae doot we were made for ane an'ither; but ordination is a queer subject tae begin aboot afore a bodie gets weel sittin' doon. The quastions says it's true, ye ken, so ye maun believe it. But what was I wantin'? Ou ay. Hae ye ony o' the ringworm saw left that Doctor Quacker gied

ye? My Willie has a red spot on his head, an' I'm feared it's the ringworm; but I gar'd him tak' salts this mornin', an' gin it had a lick o' the saw it 'll maybe wear awa."

"Ou ay," said Tibbie, "ye'se get the saw; but I'm gaun tae tell ye something that 'll let ye see what set me a thinkin' aboot ordination; ye'll maybe think I'm daft or fey, but it's as shure as I'm stannin' here. I think Tammas Taepiece is in love wi' me; an' gin I could only get him tae speak plain, I think he means marriage, an' gin it be ordained, ye ken, I maun jist tak' him."

"It's no possible! Weel I needna say that neither, for Saunders M'Siccar's twal year aulder than me; an' Tammas 'll no be abune ten year younger than you—unlikelier things have happened; an' as the sang says, ye ken, Tibbie—

'We needa say this will or that winna be,
For the longer we live the mair uncos we see.'

But can ye no get him tae come tae the point, woman? Can ye no get him tae speak plain?"

"That's jist my difeeculty. He's aye sighin', an' glowrin', an' speakin' nonsense, that he gets in poetry books an' novels—for he's a great reader, ye ken; an' no half an hour syne, when he saw me howkin' taties fornent our back shop window, he began a singin'—

'My heart is sair, I daurna tell;
My heart is sair for somebody."

An' he aye cam' ower the words 'I daurna tell' wi'

sic a waesome an' dowie like sound that my heart near cam' tae my mou, an' I couldna help bein' real sorry for him."

"Eh, woman, that's real like our Saunders. I mind, afore him an me was marrit, he used tae follow me wi' his e'en aye when I was near him; an' when I shook hands wi' him he used tae squeeze my fingers—first ae big squeeze, an' then a lot o' little wee warm kind o' squeezies, an' he lookit in tae my face wi' a lang, earnest, steady look, but said naething. I kent fine what he was meanin'; but I was shure he wad never speak about it—for he never had muckle tae say, our Saunders; but ae summer nicht I met him in the loaning, an' when he took my han' an' squeezed it, I said, 'Wad ye no like tae be marrit, Saunders?' He grinned, and said, 'Ay, at the term;' an' we were marrit at the term. Some folk may think I was ower forward, an' no very modest; but I kent, if I didna, in a sort o' way, seek him, he wad never seek me. So you'll maybe hae tae dae the same wi' Tammas. But I maun awa' hame, for I left Jenny rockin' the cradle, Betsy scrapin' the taties, an' Johnny sheelin' the peas, an' there's nae sayin' what the rest may be at by this time. An' I'm muckle obleeged tae ye for the saw."

Chirstie's conversation was not without its effect upon Tibbie, for that evening, when my father had gone to bed in the ben room, and I was lying awake in the closet—the door of which was half open, and Tibbie and Tammas were sitting in the kitchen

together—Tibbie said, "yer unco quiet the nicht, Tammas; hae ye naething tae say? what are ye thinkin' aboot?"

"I hae strange thochts, Tibbie, as the poet says—
'Thochts that lie too deep for tears.'"

"Yer no shurely gaun tae greet," said Tibbie; "a body wad think ye were in love, an' couldna get the lass. I wish I were her—I wad sune set yer mind at ease."

Tammas sprang from his chair, fell on his knees, seized Tibbie's hand, and said, 'Wad ye though. Adorable Tibbic, it's you that I luve—you are the star of my heart, and the loadstone of my affections."

"Oh, Tammas," said Tibbie, "I'm naither a star nor a loadstone, but a plain woman; but if ye like me, an' are willin' tae marry me, gie in oor names tae Mr M'Loofie on Saturday, tae be cried on Sunday, an' let's be marrit as sune's ye like, for my providin' is a' ready."

Tammas seemed to acquiesce; but the rest of their conversation was carried on in a lower tone, and I could only distinguish such words as "Holy knot—bonds of matrimony," from Tammas; "marrit'—providin'—blankets," from Tibbie; and these whisperings were mixed with certain sounds not unlike the drawing of corks, which impressed me with the idea that they were agreeably employed, and brought back to my recollection my own encounter with the miller's Betty in the corn yard. After about half an hour Tammas came to bed

beside me, but slept little, for he tossed about in a restless manner till far in the night.

The marriage was to take place the following week. My father was not surprised when he heard of it, for he had suspected from Tammas' manner, on certain occasions, that he was enamoured; and as Tammas was a sober, steady workman, my father made no objection. A bedroom was fitted up for the couple, and it was agreed that Tibbie should still continue to act as housekeeper to my father, and that Tammas should still work as journeyman; so that the marriage would produce little change in our domestic arrangements. I have but a faint recollection of some of the events that took place between the night on which Tibbie popped the question and the marriage day. But the events of the day itself are fresh in my memory. I think I see Tammas in his white vest and trousers, with a blue coat, adorned with shining brass buttons; and Tibbie with her coal-scuttle-looking bonnet, and large bishop-sleeved gown. Six couple started arm in arm for the manse, all in proper order, except that Tammas took the bridesmaid's arm instead of giving her his. The firing of pistols as they passed through the village was tremendous, but no accident happened, and all went well until supper time. It was not the fashion at that time for newly married couples to go away a jaunt after the ceremony. They generally had a hearty supper, followed by an evening's merrymaking, with singing and dancing.

Mrs Broust of the village inn had prepared a supper in her finest style, and did her best to set it on the table in a fashionable way. Chief among the viands was a haggis of tremendous size—the odour of which was grateful to the nostrils. It was set at the head of the table, opposite the bride and bridegroom, and not far from the edge. Tammas was not expected to do anything in the carving line, but he was restless, and could not let knives and forks lie; so just when the blessing was pronounced he began poking at the side of the haggis with a carving knife, when to his consternation, out burst the contents, and overflowed not only on the table but also on the knees of those who were near, and a large mass of it spurted into Tibbie's lap. The burning fluid soon made itself felt through Tammas' thin white trousers. He started to his feet and roared, "I'm dead, burnt to the very bane." Tibbie, in alarm, flung a decanter of water on his legs, then, recovering her self possession, she said, "O Tammas, ye unlucky cratur, ye've spoilt my braw bombazine; what a sclutter ye've made in my lap, ye stipid, haunless"—and she was about to launch out into a storm of invective against Tammas, when a glance at his trousers and his woeful look calmed her. She led him away to get him cleaned; and it was sometime before the company recovered from their confusion. Tammas, on being brought back, was evidently ill at ease: he was not at all in his element. Knives and forks, and the proprieties of a

genteel supper, were quite strange to him. Besides, the interesting circumstances in which he was placed, flustered him a good deal; and when he blundered, certain painfully sharp admonitions from the elbows of Tibbie made him doubt as to whether he had not overestimated the gentle and angelic qualities of his bride.

These doubtings, however, and his awkwardness, left him in the course of the evening, for a continued flow of *spirits* elevated him so much as to induce him to make a speech, whieh was couched in such hyperbolical and flowery terms that nobody understood it; and it may be doubted whether his own notions of its meaning were not somewhat confused. All ended well; and the subsequent life of this couple was such, notwithstanding a few bickerings and misunderstandings, as to make me think that neither of them repented their union.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WIDOW LADY AND HER DAUGHTERS.—THE AUGUST FLOOD.—THE RESCUE.

Almost everybody at a certain period passes from the prose to the poetry of life. This may happen two or three times; but it is on the first occasion only that life assumes all the golden hues of loveliness that constitute the poetry of existence—it is then only that it is flooded all over with "the light that never was on sea or shore." As I have already mentioned, I lived for some time in an imaginary world of fairies and genii, but for a short time before and after the marriage of my Auntie Tibbie, the real had taken the place of the ideal. The hard actuality of all things, the matter-of-fact nature of all events, and the seeming selfishness of all creatures made painful impressions on my mind as to the unsatisfactory nature of my position in the world, and these feelings, had they not been checked, would soon have made me feel at variance with every thing and every body.

I began to be painfully conscious of all my surroundings. The hard seat, the rough leather apron, the cold pincers, the heavy lapstone, the rosin, the batter, the close air, the leathery smell, and all the other parapharnalia of my trade assumed a hostile attitude towards me. I had an indefinable yearning after something less gross—something that would

form an outlet to my thoughts, and that would elevate them so as to enable me to look upon and beyond all these things through the refining medium which is always produced by love and sympathy. I was longing instinctively for a transition from the prose to the poetry of life. Read on a little farther and you will see how this change was effected.

About a quarter of a mile above our house the River Esk makes a wide sweep round a lovely haugh, and at the lower end of this haugh there stood an old house that had once been a flax mill, but which the proprietor had turned into a dwelling house. The old mill dam was at the upper end of the haugh, through which the hollow bed of the old mill race was still plainly visible. A few weeks before Auntie Tibbie's marriage a widow lady had taken up her residence there, and with her two daughters, the one a lovely golden haired girl of twelve years, and the other a fair child of six, led a lonely life, holding no intercourse with anybody, and manifesting no wish to do so. Little was known about her, except that she was the widow of an officer who had been killed in India, and that, mourning his loss and refusing to be comforted, she had come to this lonely place desiring to cherish in solitude, the remembrance of her beloved husband. Everybody treated her with the greatest respect; even Chirstie Cummins lowered her tone when speaking of her, and had never ought but good to say of the gentle lady and her fatherless girls.

I had been once or twice on messages at Burnfoot, and had on such occasions received a kind word and a sweet smile from Mrs Rose; but I am not sure whether the smile was one of approval of my care and diligence, or of amusement at my awkward attempts at politeness. Putting in practice a few lessons in manners which Tammas Taepiece had kindly given me, I remember, I lifted my bonnet off my head and scraped the ground backward with my right foot and leaned forward on the toes of my left, and on one occasion I lost my balance, to the great alarm of pretty Mary and little Annie Rose, who looked so pitiful, and asked whether I was hurt in such kindly tones, that, so far from feeling injured by the fall, I wished I could find a decent pretence for doing it again.

Our acquaintanceship had acquired no greater degrce of intimacy than this, when, about the close of Tammas and Tibbie's honeymoon, an event took place which entirely altered our relations to each other. Many of my elderly readers will remember the August floods of 18——, when every river in Scotland overflowed its banks to a greater height than ever was known before or since. The summer had been unusually dry, but at the beginning of August it began to rain, and it continued to do so for many days without interruption. Gradually, day by day the Esk rose higher and higher, until it began to threaten destruction to the crops and houses in its neighbourhood. On a Saturday forenoon the

interest we took in the rise of the river was of a fearful character. All work was suspended, and though the cold rain fell on us, drenching us to the skin, as it was impelled against us by the driving wind, we stood upon the brae near our door and watched the wreck from fields and farms, and barns and houses as it went sweeping past. Onward upon the river's heaving yellow bosom went bounding past great trees that had been undermined and borne down by the raging waters; and with the sheaves of yellow grain and other field produce were mingled at intervals a drowned sheep, and even at times a pig that had been swept away from some poor peasant's cot. Strangest of all, a cradle went past so near the edge that we could see the string still fastened to the handle. While we were speculating on where it could have come from, a shout was heard behind us, and a cry that the embankment at the old dam-dyke near the top of Burnfoot haugh had burst, and that the water was rushing down the old mill race and spreading over the haugh. "Mistress Rose and her bairns," cried somebody, and we all ran towards Burnfoot to see what could be done for their safety.

My father was the first to reach the dreadful scene, and, without hesitation or consideration, he had leaped into the water, and, though it reached up to his shoulders as he passed through, he had arrived safely at the higher ground on which the house stood, where the water was not yet above

three feet deep, though gradually rising. When we came up—that is, Tammas, Tibbie, myself, and a few others—my father was standing before the door irresolute as to what he should do—for he was afraid lest if, upon the door being opened, the violence of the water rushing in might cause the back part of the house to give way. The three inmates had fled to the garret, and were waving a white napkin from a small window in the gable, and calling for aid. "Jump in," cried my father to Tammas, "an' try if ye can stan' an' kep them, an' I'll lat them doon at the end window." Tammas was about to do as he was bid, when Tibbie seized him by the coat tails, and cried—"Oh! Tammas, ye'se dae nae sic thing; ye're no near sae strong's my brither; the water wad carry ye awa'; an' what wad become o' me a puir lone widow, wi' maybe a sma' family." Tammas turned sharply round, and with a sudden jerk freed himself from Tibbie's grasp. and exclaiming, "Fie, Tibbie, woman! there's a God aboon us wha has tauld us tae luve oor neebors as oursells," he sprang into the flood. It was well that a bit of stone wall which had been built across the bottom of the old mill race, as a garden fence, was still standing, as it broke the force of the current, and thus enabled Tammas to get over safely. My father had by this time dashed in the frame of a lower window, and made his way into the house and up to the garret. Hastily tieing the bed clothes, he made a sort of a sling into which he placed Annie,

the youngest, and let her down. When Tammas received her into his arms there was a shout of encouragement from the crowd that had by this time assembled on the bank. In the same manner were let down Mrs Rose and Mary. Saunders M'Siccar had arrived, bringing a stout rope, one end of which was thrown to Tammas, and by him fastened to an old iron spike in the wall. My father now dropped down himself, and stood holding the rope tight, which was also held by those on land, until Tammas got safely over with Annie in his arms; then, making sure that the rope was firmly fastened to the spike, placing Mary on his back, with her arms round his neck, and taking Mrs Rose in his right arm, he held on by the rope with his left, and began his progress through the water. I had been eager to go to my father's assistance, but had been held back as I was thought too young to run such risk. I was fourteen years of age, an excellent swimmer, and had no fears on my own account. But now it seemed my aid would not be needed, for my father, with his precious burden, was within ten yards of safety, and congratulatory exclamations were beginning to be heard, when a scream from one of the women startled us. The old garden wall had fallen. No barrier to the water now. My father leant hard against the rope, which nearly pulled those that were holding it into the water. The iron spike at the other end gave way. My father was lifted off his feet, but he clung to the

rope with one hand, held fast the lady with the other, and was pulled on shore. But Mary had let go her hold and was carried away. I heard a shriek, and saw a little hand above the water, and with a sudden impulse to save her or die, leapt into the flood. Catching hold of her dress with one hand, and keeping my own head above water by the strokes of the other, I could not for a time, so great was the force of the current, get her into such a position as to allow her to breathe freely, but, one minute more, and we were swept round a point into a smooth eddy, where the water was more still. Making a strong effort, I got her head above the surface, and struck out for the shore; but I soon felt that the swirl was again bearing us into the stream. Onward we went. My attempts to reach land were vain. All around us was the heave and the rush of water. Through the trees on the banks I could at intervals catch a glimpse of a dress and a wave of a hand, and, mingled with the rushing sound of waters, could hear now and again a hoarse shout and a wailing cry. Yet hope died not within me, and I struggled hard. Near the foot of the brae, before my father's house, the river makes a sharp turn round a projection of rock, and forms beneath it a deep still pool. Round this point we were swept with fearful rapidity, and I, for a moment, thought we were lost; but, no, round went the eddy, bearing us with it. Close by the shore it swept us; and, though beginning to feel faint, I

seized the overhanging branch of a tree, and in a few minutes, felt myself grasped by the arm, and lifted from the water. I saw that Mary, too, was safe; but what immediately followed I cannot tell.

The effort had been too great for my strength to bear without relapse, and consciousness left me for a time. When I recovered, I felt as if awaking from a terrible night mare. I heard the sound of feet going softly through the room, and voices whispering near me. And then I was gently lifted up into a sitting posture, and pillows were put behind my back to support me; and Tibbie's voice, more kindly and soft than ever I had heard it before, was asking, "Are ye better, noo; speak tae me, Jamie, if ye can." I spoke to her, and inquired if Mary and the rest were safe. "There a' safe; an' Mary, though she was far throo, puir thing, has been recovered, an' noo she's sleepin' in your bed in the closet." These words acted like a charm. A feeling of thankfulness and comfort stole over me; and in my dreams, although the waters still seemed to bear me onward, it was peacefully and gently, to smiling, sunlit seas, with flowery isles, such as I had read of in fairy tales, where one might float for ever without weariness. And Mary sleeps within my closet bed, and her golden hair, so lately drenched and soiled, now lies in wavy folds upon my pillow, and Annie's pale cheek touches hers, and Annie's arms are twined around her neck, as if protecting her; and o'er them bends their mother, with her sad and

gentle face, in whose eye, ever and anon upturned, glistens the tear of gratitude, and from whose lips there come soft, low breathings of thankfulness to Him who wrought our great deliverance. Blessed be His name.

CHAPTER XIV.

DR. QUACKER.—ROMANCE AND REALITY.—TAMMAS AND TIBBIE.

The next morning was Sabbath. The storm had somewhat abated, though the clouds were still drifting along the sky, obscuring the sun's face in quick succession, one after another, as if they were unwilling that he should be permitted to look out upon the scene of desolation which they had caused.

After a long sound sleep, I got up almost as fresh and well as if nothing unusual had happened. Mary Rose was also better, but still somewhat weak; and though she wished to rise, it was thought better, on the recommendation of Dr. Quacker, the village practitioner, that she should remain in bed for that day at least.

Dr. Quacker was an excellent but somewhat eccentric man. I was not at that time capable of appreciating the peculiarities of his character so fully as I did afterwards, when better acquainted with him; but there were certain prominent traits about him which the most casual observer could not fail to notice.

He was a little rubicund personage, with puffy cheeks, and a double chin. His eyes were small, and when he laughed they went nearly out of sight. Though a little satirical at times, he was one of the

kindest-hearted of men; and when he joked at one's expense, he laughed so heartily, and his little eyes, when they reappcared, peeped over his fat cheeks, with such a merry, good-humoured twinkle, that it was almost impossible to be angry with him. You wouldn't have thought it; but Dr. Quacker was very clever. In his youth he had been very distinguished; and the gilded volumes of "*Bartholini Anatomia Reformata*," and "*Halleri Bibliotheca Anatomica*," with the inscription, "*Joannes Quackerus in classe obstetricis, ingenio ac labore insignis, hocce praemium consecutus est*," gave evidence of his diligence as a student. There was one theory of his which procured him great respect and credit among the country people, viz., his belief in the curative properties of herbs. He believed that for every ailment that flesh is heir to there is an antidote in the herbs of the field; and that even from the commonest weeds might be extractcd, if we only knew how, the most invaluable remedies. He had also a wonderful talent for describing their diseases and feelings to his patients; but his anatomical and pathalogical descriptions were generally in such a style that nobody understood him; no matter for that, the more incomprehensible hc was, the more he was admired. The redness produced by a flea bite was "inflamation of the cuticle," and the *itch* was "an irritation of the dermitical integuments." His *materia medica* was very extensive, and contained many ingredients not described in the London and

Edinburgh Pharmacopoeias. His most famous remedies were *pulvis novus* and *pulvis dock*, the former of which was principally, the latter almost exclusively, composed of dockweed roots. His *molass-cum-farina* pills were much used, as they were agreeable to the taste, and mild in their action.

These preparations were generally efficacious, as they were composed of harmless materials, and the learned names they had, inspired the patients with such faith in their powers as made up for their want of medicinal virtues.

As an operator, the doctor was very skilful. He cut and carved one's flesh so lovingly, and touched one's sores so tenderly, that the sense of gratitude to him for doing it almost overcame the feeling of pain caused by his operation.

"Dae ye think she'll shune get better?" said Auntie Tibbie to the doctor, as he came out of the little closet.

"No fear of that," said the doctor; "just keep her quiet. I see she has received a slight contusion on the arm, which is beginning to exhibit inflammatory symptoms; but if you apply a tepid fomentation every half-hour, and give her half a teaspoonful of pulvis dock every two hours, she will soon be all right."

"Very gude, doctor; I noticed the confusion on her arm, mysel'; but what's a teapat fermentation? for the like o' me's no up tae thae dictionary words."

The doctor's merry eye grew merrier, as with a

knowing wink and a nod to Mrs Rose, who was standing by, he said to Tibbie in as broad Scotch as he was capable of—" Tak' some loo warm water in a bowl, an' a bit flannen clout, dip the clout i' the loo warm water, an' pit it on the sair place; that's a tepid fomentation."

" Gude keep us, doctor," said Tibbie; " it's a wonnerfu' thing learnin'! tae think that ye cud say a' that in twa words."

The doctor placed in Tibbie's hand a packet of pulvis dock, with directions for use written on the back, and went away chuckling, while Tibbie turned into the kitchen to spell over her written instructions.

After breakfast, I was admitted into the closet to see Mary. She was somewhat pale, which seemed to give to her exceeding loveliness a more spiritual cast than usual. Tears of gratitude came to her eyes, and her heart was so full that she could not speak; but she put out her lovely little blue-veined hand, and, taking hold of mine, made my whole frame tremble by its gentle pressure. But when I felt her warm lips touch my fingers, and when she looked up in my face with eyes so full of gratitude, I became a prey to contending emotions, and left the room without speaking a word.

I felt an intoxication of pleasure and yet had a feeling as if I had committed a crime. That one so lovely and so good should feel grateful to me, and should think of me kindly was what, even in my highest flights of fancy I had never imagined. That I should

have given my hard, rosin-crusted hand to be kissed by one so pure, seemed something like sacrilege.

Many were the congratulations which I received that day from neighbours and visitors, to all which my father said, "Dinna praise him ower muckle, he only did his duty."

Praises that under ordinary circumstances might have elated me too much were almost unheeded, for my mind was pre-occupied, busied with but one thought, but one image. The pale but lovely face, the beauteous head with clustering golden hair, though but an idea, yet, like a felt presence, went with me everywhere. The fact is, that without exactly knowing it, I was desperately in love.

On the Sabbath afternoon, my father was sitting in the parlour reading the Bible. Mrs Rose was tending Mary; and Annie was by her side reading the history of Joseph with coloured illustrations, when Tammas, and Tibbie, and myself went out to the garden, and sat down together in the beechen bower.

"It seems to me," said Tammas, "that there's something very romantic like in a' that's happened within the last twa days, an' I'm inclined tae think that Jamie's fortune's made. I've often read in books o' siclike things, an' they aye turned oot weel i' the end I was thinking aboot it yestreen when I gaed tae my bed, but I was expectin' that Jamie wad hae been in a fever this mornin'; yes, Jamie, ye shud hae been in a fever, an' been very ill; an' Mary shud hae gotten better afore ye, and she shud

hae nursed ye, an' tended ye in yer illness, an' confessed her luve for you, an' vowed fidelity for ever; but, as ye haena taen a fever, which is a pity, we maun just hope for the best, but I never read o' ony body yet, but wad hae dune it under the circumstances. It wad hae gien ye sic a fine chance o' creatin' a sympathy for yoursel', and lettin' ye get intercoorse wi' her ye like best. However, we maun just wait an' hope that there'll some means turn up for bringing a thing about as weel as we cud wish, without the fever. Mary's a bonny lassie, an' yer sure tae fa' in luve wi' her, an' as she seems tae hae a gratefu' bit heart—she's sure to return your affection. Her mither 'll likely turn oot tae hae rich freends, an' by their means she'll be able tae do something for ye. Ye'll be sent tae the schule an' maybe tae the college, and after that ye'll come oot either a learned doctor or a famous preacher. There 'll be a rival nae doot—there's aye a rival in sic cases—an' he'll be a black hearted villain, as a' rivals are, an' he'll be supported by, maybe, a rich uncle, an' Mary 'll be sadly persecuted, but ye'll get the better o' them a', an' be marrit tae Miss Rose i' the end, an' live happily ever after, wi' a bonnie family o' olive branches growin up roun' yer table tae be a comfort tae ye i' yer declinin years."

"Really Tammas," said Tibbie, "I winder ye haena mair sense than tae blaw the laddie up wi' sic nonsense. Thae novel books o' yours hae turned yer head. Dinna believe him, Jamie. Things sel-

dom turn oot sae weel in real life as they dae in books. It was a guide thing ye saved the lassie, but really it was a tempin o' providence. It's a winder ye warna baith drooned. I wadna advise ye tae rin sic a risk again. As tae fa'in in luve wi' the lassie ye mauna think o' that. She's come o' gentle bluid, nae doot, an' though she may be gratefu' eneuch, she'll never think o' you as a sweetheart, an' besides her mither wadna let her. She's a proud lady I'se warrant her, an' has grand prospects for her dochter, for a' sae quiet an' hamely as she makes hersel' wi' us. Na, na, that wad never dae. Besides ye wad jist make ane anither miserable after ye're marrit—for her thochts an' feelings 'll be a' different frae yours. She'll no be learnt tae dae ony hoose wark. She'll neither ken hoo tae wash a sark nor darn a stockin. As tae your turnin' a grand gentleman, Jamie, ye needna mak yersel ower sure o' that. So if ye'll tak my advice, ye'll sit contentedly doon tae yer wark the morn, an' think nae mair aboot her, for its no likely she'll ever think muckle mair aboot you!"

"Keep up yer speerits, Jamie," said Tammas, "Faint heart never won a fair lady."

I said litttle in reply, but I must confess that Tammas' picture pleased me best, though I suspected there was also some truth in Tibbie's remarks. It will, however, be seen in the sequel, that real life is neither so fine as romance generally makes it, nor so disagreeable and full of selfishness as croakers delight to represent it.

CHAPTER XV.

FIDGETS—KISSING—LEAVE-TAKING.

"Always expect the worst and if the better or the best happen, ye'll get an agreeable disappointment." This was a maxim of my father's, which I had heard repeated so often that it had for me all the force and authority of an established principle, and I had begun to act upon it without enquiring too curiously into its truth or fallacy. The authority of this maxim, and Tibbie's advice, influenced me so far that I resolved to restrain the propensity to build castles in the air, which the visionary predictions of Tammas had too great a tendency to foster.

Monday morning saw me early at work. I put the shop in order, donned the leather apron, sat down to the stiff in-seam of a pair of bluchers, and wrought with terrible earnestness, in the vain endeavour to keep down the rising thoughts that were ever intruding. With such rapidity and energy did I wax my thread, that the rosin became as soft as butter in my hand from the friction. With a smart twist and a jerk I made the awl crunch through insole, upper leather, and welt. With a strain and a tug, and a *whish*, like that which a quarryman makes when driving a wedge, I strengthened each steek, and made the thread crack as it leaped from between the hard rosin ruts of my hand-leather and

awl handle. It would not do. Through the midst of all this fury and fuss the thought was ever rising —shall I see her to-day—will she come and speak to me before she goes away—how will she look—what will she say—how shall I look—what will I do, &c.

As her old residence at Burnfoot was uninhabitable, Mrs Rose had been kindly requested by one of the farmers in the neighbourhood to take up her abode with him for a few weeks, until she could find suitable accommodation; and she and her girls were to leave our house at noon.

When the time approached I was still working with desperate earnestness. I was now paring the edge of the sole after stitching the welt, but was so agitated that I ran my knife three times into the upper leather. The exertion, the vexation, and the agitation made the sweat break out like drops of dew upon my forehead and my upper lip. How my heart leapt when I heard light footsteps approaching! It was Mary and Annie come to bid me goodbye. With smiles on their faces, and a bounding step, they came up to me, put their arms round my neck, and kissed me.

Gentle Reader, if you were ever a raw country Scotch callant, you will thoroughly understand the confusion into which this treatment threw me. Children brought up in England have such ways with them! Interesting customs which, with them, are the offspring of real heartfelt kindness, are apt

to be looked upon by us as indications of brazen-faced forwardness. How is it that we Scotchmen, reverencing, as we generally do, the Old Testament, and impressed as our minds are with the spirit of its narratives, and the characteristic traits of its characters, have left off, in the common intercourse of life, to a greater extent than most other nations, the beautiful practice of kissing?—so emblematic of close connection, firmly fixed friendship, and affectionate endearment. Jacob kissed Rachel, Laban kissed Jacob, Aaron kissed Moses, Jonathan kissed David, and Samuel kissed Saul. Why should we, when countenanced in the practice by these good men, have as great a horror of kissing, except in wantonness, as if it were a mortal sin? I am happy to say that I myself have now got so much the better of the prejudices of birth and education as to believe that, by relaxing in our severity so far as to allow of a judicious selection, the practice would not be found to be very disagreeable. But this is a digression. Let us return to our narrative.

When Mary kissed me I was thrown into great confusion. Except my mother and the miller's Betty, nobody had ever kissed me before. What a warm, soft, pleasant sensation it was! Methinks I feel it yet, after the lapse of more than thirty years. Were it proper to speak of the echo of a feeling, I would say that the echo of that kiss lingers lovingly upon my right cheek with a gentle warmth, even now, while I record its impression.

I do not know what sort of a face I put upon it, but I believe I looked very foolish. Had the slang of the present day been then in vogue, I would have been undoubtedly characterised as a *great spoon* or a *regular muff*.

"'I am come to bid you good-bye," said Mary. "My mother, and Annie, and I, will never forget your kindness: I'm sure I shan't, at any rate. You saved my life, and I hope you will let us always love you for it."

I twisted on my seat as if I were sitting on heckles, and muttered in reply—

"Tuts, it was naething—its no worth speakin' aboot; I wad hae dune the same for onybody."

The latter part of my assertion was, perhaps, scarcely true. It is very questionable, indeed, whether I would have done the same for Auntie Tibbie, or Chirstie Cummins. I cannot assert positively that I would not have done it in their case; but I deem it my duty, as an impartial narrator, to confess that I have my doubts about it.

While I was disclaiming all merit on my part, Mrs Rose came in and asked me if I would be so kind as to take my father's barrow, and hurl a small box of hers to Hilton Farm. Of course I felt delighted. Mary and Annie both said that they would wait and go with me, while their mother would go on before.

Readers of novels will, I daresay, be shocked at the impropriety of my having my first sweet walk

and my first fond talk with the object of my affections while hurling a barrow with a box in it, along a country road; and were I writing an entirely fictitious story, I would, I believe, have made the thing somewhat finer and more poetical; but as I intend to keep as near the truth as possible, I shall endeavour to resist the temptation to improve upon nature.

Hilton Farm was nearly a mile from our house; and the road lay through an old wood by the side of which grew doghips, raspberries, and a few large gean trees, on which the fruit hung thick and ripe. As we were in no hurry, we left the barrow sitting in the middle of the path, and enjoyed ourselves among the rasps, &c., until Mary got a thorn in her finger, which she requested me to try to extract. This was a very unimportant circumstance apparently, but it had a great influence on my future life; and is a notable example of the truth, that great events often depend on little things. Taking her slender, small, white finger between my finger and thumb I pressed it gently, O, how gently! and with the point of a pin I moved the head of the thorn backwards and forwards until it was slack and then tried to catch it with the nails of my forefinger and thumb, and I might have pulled it out at the first attempt, but there was a strange pleasure in prolonging the operation. I must confess that I was so cruel as intentionally to miss catching it two or three times. Was I not excusable? My head

was bent forward, and my forehead touched her hair where it was parted above her brow; and some influence, I know not what—animal magnetism, perhaps—held me under its power. The operation was at length performed, and Mary warmly praised my skill, and said, "Would you not like, James, to be a doctor?"

I replied with great readiness, (mark how soon love teaches the language of gallantry), "I wad I, if a' the folk that needit me tae cure them was like you."

"I am sure," said she, without attending to my compliment, "you would make an excellent medical man. Would your father not let you go to school and leave off making shoes?"

"I dinna ken."

"Have you ever learned Latin? Doctors require to learn that language."

"No, I never learned it."

"When we go home I shall ask mamma to let you have a Latin Grammar that belonged to my poor, dear papa; will you try to learn it?"

"Will I no?"

This interrogatory was put in such a tone as to imply a very strong affirmative, and Mary thereupon expressed her determination to secure all her mother's aid and influence to get me made a doctor.

This being settled, we went on a little farther until we came opposite a large gean tree, on which the geans were hanging thick and quite black, and

nearly as large as cherries. Mary expressed a wish for some; but they were difficult to be got at, as the stem rose pretty high before there were any branches. Her wish, however, was enough to make me undertake anything. I almost wished some wild beast would come out of the wood to attack us that I might have an opportunity of showing my devotion to her. After several unsuccessful attempts, in one of which, I tore a long screed in the leg of my trousers, I succeeded in mounting, and soon filled her little apron with beautiful geans. Wishing to let her see how gracefully I could drop from one of the lower branches, I swung myself clear of the stem, and then let go my hold expecting to alight at her feet in safety; but unfortunately there was a snag of a broken branch projecting out from the stem that caught hold of my jacket and suspended me with my feet about three feet from the ground; and the nearest branch was a foot above my reach. There was a predicament for a valiant lover to be in! and I had, even then, sense enough to appreciate the absurdity and awkwardness of my position; but I was perfectly helpless, and I do not know how long I might have wriggled and twisted had not Saunders M'Siccar happened to pass on his way home with a web on his back. Saunders' appearance was a great relief to us all, but my feelings were so hurt by the rude and unceremonious way in which he took hold of me, that I almost wished he had not come, for he grasped the neck of my

jacket with the one hand, and the broad part of my trousers with the other, and lifted me off; but before setting me down he held me out at arm's length as if to show his strength, which position I felt to be anything but dignified. I was so mortified that I did not even thank him. He went away laughing. Mary's only words and looks were those of commiseration, and were prompted by a desire to soothe my feelings. When we arrived at Hilton her mother was waiting us. The Latin Grammar was given with much good will, and I returned home with the precious volume which I expected was to clear my path to fortune and distinction. We shall see.

CHAPTER XVI.

MY FIRST SMOKE—MY LATIN STUDIES—UNCLE SANDY.

I now began to undergo a rapid course of improvement, both in my mental powers, and in my personal appearance; and there was certainly ample room for both. For giving an impulse to such a course, and for effectively carrying it on, there is no stimulus like love. It is a wise arrangement of Providence, that this stimulus should generally begin to act at a time, when, casting aside the bright, but unreal fancies of boyhood, the mind begins to take acount of the hard actualities of life, and is liable to be discouraged by the naked view of the apparently antagonistic elements, of which our social life is composed, and by the continual struggle of these for the mastery in the hard battle of life. The sun's rays fell on the earth the very same as they had ever done, but they now became "beams of golden glory." The winds continued as formerly to blow with varying degrees of speed and power, but now they "sighed and moaned," and became at times "balmy gales and whispering breezes." The leaves of the trees when moved by the wind no longer merely made a noise, they "rustled and trembled." Streams, instead of merely flowing, "meandered through meadows." Little burns became "gurgling brooks and wimpling rills." If a

cloud obscured the sun and raindrops fell, "the heavens were weeping;" and if the sun shone out before the shower was over, "he was smiling through his tears." All things seemed to be imbued with the spirit of beauty, and between all material objects and myself there sprang up a kind of sympathy which made my heart undergo a softening process, and drew me towards all things, animate and inanimate, as it were with cords of love. Doubts and fears, however, that I had never felt before, now began to harass me. Vague suspicions of the unstable and unsatisfactory nature of my present happiness, and doubts as to whether my hopes might not be blasted and my aspirations checked, came into my mind at times to cast a shadow on my bright day dreams. But on the whole, my happiness was much increased, and it was the sunny side of the picture that I loved to contemplate. This keen appreciation of, and relish for, order and beauty, reacted on my personal appearance. I began to wash my face and comb my hair every day. I became particular in regard to the tie of my neckcloth and the cut of my clothes. My father gave me permission to order a pair of moleskin trousers. I had got a notion that I had particularly neat legs, and gave orders to the tailor to make me a pair of skintights. The tailor wrought most exactly to order, and made me a pair so tight that I got them on with great difficulty, but found it beyond my power to take them off. As a last resource, I sum-

moned Auntie Tibbie, who, during the operation, made so many sarcastic remarks about spindles, sheepshanks, and windlestraes, that I felt quite mortified. These trousers formed a bitter drop in the cup of my happiness for nearly two years.

It was about this time that I thought it would add much to my manliness if I could learn to smoke, but as this was a costly habit, I could not get it indulged easily. There grew on the braes near our house a broad-leaved plant which we called *dishalaga*, and some one told me that when dried it formed an excellent substitute for tobacco. With a halfpenny that I had got for running a message I purchased a couple of red clay pipes, and for about a month smoked the dried leaves of the aforementioned plant, but secretly for fear of my father. Tammas one day when my father was from home took pity on my poverty and gave me a pipeful of real tobacco. Proud of this acquisition, and anticipating great pleasure from a real smoke, I lost no time in filling my pipe, and commenced to smoke with great vigour, Tammas the while watching the process with apparently great delight. Aping Tammas, I pushed out my chin, curled my lips, and made them give a dull crack at every whiff, and then by way of variety, sent the smoke out at the edge of my mouth, and made it curl upwards in a small column, which I contemplated with great admiration, and thought that it was very beautiful and cleverly done. I very soon, however, began to feel a queer

sensation in my stomach, as if something were turning over and over in it. This uncomfortable commotion soon spread a nauseous kind of feeling through my whole body. My face grew white, my head grew giddy, and I felt as if all my stomach were knocking at my throat to get out. At length it came, and O, how I retched and vomited. I almost wished I might die. Tammas sympathised with me, brought me water, and bathed my temples, but Tibbie scolded, and said I was very cheaply served. Tammas, too, received a considerable share of her abuse, which he bore with exemplary patience, as a loving husband ought to do. That smoke did me good, for though its immediate effects were very disagreeable, yet, it completely cured me of the habit; and I have ever since had a great aversion for tobacco and tobacco reek.

It was a considerable time after I received the Latin Rudiments from Mary before I ventured to make known to my father my strong desire to learn that language, and it might have been longer, but he one night got the book in my stool drawer, and questioned me about it. I had by that time got as far as "ut, quo, licet," and he seemed pleased with my proficiency.

"I'm no ill pleased wi' ye for learning Latin, but ye mauna neglect yer wark wi' it. Tae encourage ye, I'll no consider ye as an apprentice nae mair. I'll pay ye wages for yer wark, and charge ye only half-a-croon i' the week for yer board, and I'll let ye awa'

twa hours tae the school ilka forenoon. If yer able tae raise yersel' there's an opportunity, and gin ye canna get on by yer ain perseverance, I'll conclude there's no muckle in ye, and ye'll be better as ye are."

These may seem to some not very encouraging terms, but they were much better than I expected. I thanked him, and promised to do my best.

The only lessons I had as yet got were from a farmer's son, who herded cows near our house. At breakfast and dinner hours I used to slip out and he was always willing to give me a lesson. He had during several winters studied the language at the parish school with Mr M'Loofie, and could read Sallust and Virgil. He taught me to give the letter *e* the sound of *a*, and various other peculiarities of our Scotch pronounciation of Latin that I could not have found out for myself. I have great doubts as to the correctness of our quantities, but, upon the whole, he did me much good, and I shall never cease to be grateful for it. How curious it must have been to hear us pronouncing acerbus, acerba, acerbum (bitter), drawling out the words in the following fashion—*a-sair-bus*, a bitter man ; *a-sair-ba*, a bitter woman ; *a-sair-bum*, a bitter thing.

On going to the parish school I found that I had in this way been so well grounded in the grammar of the language that I was able to join a class in Cæsar and the grammatical exercises.

After about nine months hard study, I had made

such progress that the master advised my father to give me a quarter at Aberdeen Grammar School, assuring him that I would in all likelihood take a bursary at the competition, which would enable me to go to King's College. My father was very desirous of complying with the master's advice, but was doubtful if he could afford the sum required for that purpose. Tammas, however, proferred assistance, and even Tibbie promised aid, in the shape of bread, butter, and cheese. This was the only occasion on which I ever saw Tibbie display anything like enthusiasm. She said "it wad be sic an honour tae hae a doctor conneckit wi' the family." On the morning after a serious consultation on the subject, she expressed a desire to hear me speak Latin, and told me that unless I sought my porridge in that language, I should get none. The ministers, at the examination, had given me some good ticklers, and had tested my scholarship very severely, but none of them, with all their learning, had been able to give me such a poser as my Auntie Tibbie. I hesitated a little, for in all my reading of the classics, I had never once met with the word porridge. Looking up into her face, on which there was a hopefully expectant smile, and—bad boy that I was—trusting to her ignorance, I boldly said, "Da mihi porridgium, lac, et cutty-hornspoonium." "There, noo," she said, setting down the porridge; "but I doot ye did'na gie me the richt wird for milk—I did'na understand it at any rate. Sup,

noo, and as ye've dune sae weel, I'll maybe gie ye a bitty o' butter an' bread, an' the tail o' my herrin' till'd, when I tak my tea."

It was some time before my father would agree to let me go, but he was at length induced to consent, being prevailed upon by the urgent entreaties of my uncle Sandy who promised to give me pecuniary assistance.

None of my friends took a greater interest in me than my uncle Sandy. He was a bachelor, and being a good tailor, had saved a little money. He seldom wrought at home, but went and did his work at the houses of his employers. This was called whipping the cat. As he had at one time been four days in Perth, he was said to have been "oot about an' seen the world." He, consequently, had a reputation for knowing a thing or two, and was considered an authority on all matters that pertained to etiquette, which, he said, should be pronounced *eat a cat*. One evening, not long before my departure for Aberdeen, I had been up the glen visiting one of my schoolfellows who was to go to the Grammar School with me. When I was returning I overtook my uncle, who was trudging home from his work in true bachelor fashion, with a small pitcher full of treacle in one hand, and a loaf with a number of biscuits tied up in a red napkin in the other. He expressed himself glad to see me, told me he had lent my father thirty shillings to help to keep me at the Grammar School, and exhorted me to take care

of it, as it was a large sum of money, and had cost him many a stitch. He was proceeding to give me some valuable instructions in regard to etiquette, when we saw the minister approaching. He told me that I should learn to make a low bow to the minister, or any other man of rank whom I might chance to meet, and bade me observe how he did when we came near the minister. My uncle was, no doubt, animated by the best intentions, and sincerely desirous of doing his best for my improvement, but he had sadly miscalculated his ability to do his devoir properly, encumbered, as he was, with bread and treacle. The minister was now close upon us, when all at once my uncle felt how helpless he was. His presence of mind, which, on some other occasions, had been very remarkable, entirely deserted him, for instead of giving me the bread to hold, he put it between his knees, and was about to raise his hand to his hat, when the knot of the napkin slipt, and the biscuits fell out and rolled along the road, which sloped gently downward towards the village. The minister, trained though he was, to maintain gravity, could not stand it. He tottered to one side of the road, and I to the other, and we literally roared with laughter. My uncle looked at first most comically foolish, and then broke out into a rage, and forgot himself so far, in presence of the minister, as to ——. Well, I will not say what he did, for he was my uncle, and he was not in the habit of doing it.

CHAPTER XVII.

I AM SENT TO THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

The important day at length arrived on which I was to leave the cottage of my father to go and live among strangers in a far distant town. Tibbie had packed my little trunk with a number of things which she judged necessary for my comfort. Besides Ainsworth's Dictionary, and about half a dozen old Latin books, it contained two striped shirts and two fronts, commonly called *dickies*, one pair of stockings and a necktie for Sunday, a small skimmed milk cheese, half a dozen oaten cakes and 3 lbs of butter. One of my younger brothers was sent away with it in the morning to the carrier's, at Finhaven, who had undertaken to take it to Aberdeen, a distance of fifty miles, for one shilling. Were I writing fiction, I might describe my father as laying his hand on my head and invoking blessings on it, and my aunt as embracing me and kissing me over and over again, and shedding many tears of sorrow at my departure. Those writers who describe Scotch parents of the humble classes as acting thus, could not have derived their notions of them, from experience, as I have done. In no country in the world do parents love their children more than in Scotland, but in no country is their love so little manifested in the common intercourse of life. Gene-

rally, the Scottish peasantry consider it a great weakness to show any affectionate emotion in presence of their children. When I was about to depart, my father said, in as cold a manner as he could assume, but I observed a tear sparkle in his eye as he turned aside his head while speaking—"Noo sir, ye'l look sharp an' win awa, for the day's wearin' on, an' ye've a lang road afore ye. Ye're gaun till a big toon, where there's a great deal o' wickedness. Be sure an' do yer maister's biddin', an' haud at yer learnin'. Mind an' gae tae the kirk regular, an' aye read a chapter at nicht, an' be sure an' dinna forget yer carritches." Tammas gave me a small copy of Bloomfield's poems, and bade me not neglect the muses. Uncle Sandy bade me see an' be gude mainnert. I was now wearing towards the door, and Tibbie followed, carrying little Jamie in her arms, and Davie and Kirstie were on each side of her, hanging on by her gown. She slipped sixpence into my hand with a look, which showed she did not wish my father to know, and said, "Mind an' tak' care o' yer siller." I said nothing, but felt very thankful, for my father had made her sew all my money, four pounds ten shillings, into the lining of my trousers, giving me only threepence-halfpenny to buy a penny roll and a bottle of ale by the way when I should feel hungry. I now felt myself rich and quite ready for my journey. "See an' behave yersel' noo," said Tibbie, and turned quickly into the house, leaving Davie and Kirstie standing on

the door step looking after me. When I had gone a few yards I turned round and saw Tibbie looking through the gable window and wiping her eyes with her apron. My own heart was very full, but I was determined not to *greet*, so I walked on as fast as I could, until I arrived at the village, where I was joined by Rob Winter, the fellow student, who was to accompany me. The kind-hearted parish minister furnished us with a letter of introduction to the Rector of the Grammar School; he also recommended us to lodgings in College Bounds, kept by Mrs Reid, with whom he had lived himself, when at college, nearly twenty years before.

There were no railroads in those days, and we were too poor to pay for a seat on the Defiance Coach, which had, a few years before, commenced to run between Perth and Aberdeen. So we had to trudge along the whole way on foot. While we were marching on through the Mearns, we both began to feel very hungry, and were on the look out for a place of refreshment. At length we came to a low thatched cottage, over the door of which there was a sign-board, announcing that "spirits, porter, and ale" were sold within. Neither of us had ever been in a public-house before, on our own account, and we hesitated a good deal before we ventured in. After a considerable amount of discussion as to who should enter first, Rob screwed up his courage and marched up to the door, where he was met by a hard featured old woman, who showed us into a little

room where there was no furniture but a wooden table and two forms. There was, however, a small peat fire burning on the hearth, which gave an air of some comfort to the place. Rob proposed that we should have each a bottle of ale and a penny roll, but as my Aunt's sixpence enabled me to be generous, I offered to treat him to a bit of cheese, and my offer was accepted. The ale, the rolls, and the cheese were accordingly brought in, and we set to work upon them; but great was our dismay when we found the cheese so hard that we could not cut it. It was a hard heel of a kebbuck, hollowed out in the middle, nothing being left but the horny outside. We had given up all hopes of making anything of it, when Rob proposed to roast it. I had some misgivings as to the propriety of this, but at length consented. Rob then laid the tongs across the fire, and placed the cheese upon them, and in a few minutes it was as soft as paste and quite delicious. In a very short time the whole of it had disappeared, and we felt very comfortable and ready to start. When we had rapped on the table (there was no bell) the landlady came in and told us the amount of the *lawin*, which was very moderate. We paid it, and were rising to depart, when she said—

"Stop a wee, na lads; far's ma cheese?"

"We've eaten 't a'," said Rob, "there wisna muckle o'd."

"Ye leein scounril," said she, "there's mony ane wi' as gweed teeth as you, has tryed it an' cudna

mak' muckle o't. It's lastit me this nine months, an' a thrifty cheese it's been, weel I wat. Yee'l no gae oot o' this hoose, no ae stap, till ye tell me far it is. Ye canna hae eaten't, for it was ower hard."

"It was michty hard," said Rob, "but we roastit it!"

"D——l birst yer hungry kites," said she, and sprang forward to seize the tongs.

Rob and I leaped past her and took to our heels. We heard the tongs rattle on the ground close behind us, as we left the house, but we neither stopt nor looked round till we were nearly a mile off. We went on without any other adventure worthy of notice, and reached the Alton of Aberdeen, tired and wearied, about nine o'clock at night.

Those who have been brought up in parts of the country where population is dense, and where experience, in everything that pertains to the proprieties of social intercourse, can be so readily acquired, will have some difficulty in forming a right conception of the nature of a boy's thoughts and feelings, on leaving, at the age of fifteen, a thinly inhabited country parish. My friend Rob and myself had both been brought up in a very primitive manner. We had been taught to respect nobody but the minister, and so little desirous were we of showing respect to him, although we knew it to be our duty, that we would have gone a mile about rather than meet him. Our fare, though substantial, had always been very plain. Oatmeal porridge, potatoes and kail, had

formed the principal part of our food. We never tasted tea except on Sunday mornings, when we got half a cup if we had been *guid bairns*, after our parents had finished; and, about once a month, when we got a dose of salts, our breakfast consisted entirely of tea. Salts is not an agreeable beverage, but the prospect of a tea breakfast made us take it quite cheerfully. At table we all supped out of one dish. The only flesh meat we ever tasted was pork, which we all ate out of one plate, lifting it with our fingers, after it had been cut into small pieces by our father, with the only knife and fork in the house. Our ideas of the world and its ongoings, were formed from reading a provincial newspaper which we got weekly, about a week after the day of publication. Accidents, murders, and robberies had a far greater charm for us than political news. From indulging in this kind of reading, we had formed a very bad opinion of our fellowmen, and were very distrustful of everybody with whom we were not intimately acquainted. This feeling was, in my own case, much heightened by reading the Life of Dick Turpin and the Adventures of Roderick Random, which Tammas had lent me for the express purpose of giving me a knowledge of the world. They were much better, he said, for that purpose, than the Latin Classics.

Our landlady received us very kindly, on our arrival in the Alton of Aberdeen, and showed us into a small garret room, the rent of which was to be two

shillings per week. She made us a cup of tea, which raised her considerably in our estimation; but we were very suspicious of her, and determined to receive her advances towards anything like intimacy with the greatest caution. As there was no bell in our room, she made an apology, which she might have omitted as neither of us had ever seen one used, and, consequently, would not have felt the want of it. She showed us how to proceed when we wanted her. We were to take the poker and tongs and rattle them at the top of the stair, until she heard us, and she assured us she would come up instantly. We thought this mighty complaisant, but we were very suspicious as to what it might ultimately tend.

When left to ourselves for the night, a strange feeling of loneliness came over us. We felt that we were, indeed, strangers in a strange land. We thought, as we were nearly fifty miles from our fathers and mothers, we might be robbed and murdered during the night, and no one ever hear of us more.

"Man," said Rob, "I dinna ken about this hoose, fat if somebody come up through the nicht, an' steal wir siller?"

The idea was appaling. I proposed that we should place our *breeks*, in which our money was, below our pillow. This was done. Rob next examined the door, and found that it had neither lock nor bar. This, he thought, very suspicious.

"Man," said he, "I'll tell ye fat we'll do. We'll pit the table tae the back o' the door, an' that'll lat's hear gin ony body comes in."

"An' pit a chair on the tap o' the table," said I.

"An' the caunlestick on the tap o' the chair," said Rob, "gey an' near the edge, an' it'll be shure to fa' into oor bed an' waken' us, gin ony body meddle wi' the door."

This was all done, but very quietly, as soon as suggested. We then went to bed, but it was long before we slept, for our imaginations conjured up many dreadful things, that might happen to us so far from home. We felt sure, however, that no one could come in without awaking us, as the head of the bed was towards the door, and the candlestick was so placed, that the least disturbance would bring it down upon us. Rob told me when we lay down that he had placed the poker in such a position as that he could easily lay hold of it, for purposes of defence. I fell asleep at length, and dreamed of an old woman who seemed to stand over me, threatening to strike me with a pair of tongs, the legs of which were covered with roasted cheese. Twice I awoke, and felt below my pillow to see if my *breeks* were there. I was awakened the third time by a cry of murder, and on starting up I beheld Rob standing before the fire-place brandishing the poker, while his nose was streaming with blood. Our landlady's face appeared looking in at the edge of the door with a very puzzled expression.

"Fat's a dee," she cried, "hae ye been fechtin' an' fat are ye deein wi' the table and the chair at the back o' the door? O ye feel laddies, get up an' win awa to the squeel" (school.)

Rob, who now began to see the true state of matters, dropped the poker, and said—

"It's naething. Fat gars ye come an' fley fouk that way? ye micht aye wait till fouk gets on their claes at ony rate."

The candlestick had fallen on Rob's nose, but after the bleeding was staunched he found it was not much worse. There remained, however, a blue mark, the least reference to which afterwards, put him in a very bad humour. We both felt heartily ashamed of our suspicions, made the best excuse we could for our strange conduct, and prepared to set out for school.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.—COMPETITION FOR A BURSARY.—FAILURE.

Scotland, in proportion to its population, has produced more eminent men than any other country in the world; and, it is worthy of remark, that the majority of these have risen from the lower ranks of society. I attribute this, in a great measure, to the facilities which are, in almost all parts of the country, afforded for obtaining a good solid education at a very moderate rate. In our parish schools, and others of a similar character, a good elementary education may be obtained for about 12s. per annum. In our Academies and Grammar Schools the fees are a little higher, but still so low as to enable the industrious poor to pay them without inconvenience. The frugal mode of living practised among the poor, and the plain food to which they are accustomed, enable their aspiring sons to struggle and subsist under circumstances which would appal and overwhelm the more delicately nurtured children of other nations. Many of our distinguished ministers, physicians, and lawyers, are the sons of weavers, tailors, ploughmen, shepherds, &c. Some of them, I know, paid their College fees and supported themselves on not more than £20 a session. There are, at this moment, shepherds on the hillside and

peasants at the ploughtail, who, during the coming winter will distinguish themselves at college, and who, in a few years, will be distinguished teachers, skilful physicians, and eloquent preachers.

Though my friend Rob and I have not distinguished ourselves, we underwent the same hard discipline, and practised the same self-denial, as most of our poor countrymen who aspire after academic honours.

The sum of £4 10s., which our mothers had sewed for safety into the lining of our *breeks*, was deemed amply sufficient to pay our board and education for three months. After a plain but wholesome breakfast of porridge and milk, we set out for the Newtown Grammar School. We had about a mile to walk, and as we were ignorant of the way, Rob said to a shopkeeper, who was standing idly at his shop door, "Cud ye tell's far the Grammar Schule is?" "The Grammar Squeel," said the man, pointing along the street with his foot; "brawly, it's doon that way, and then yont a gweed bittie ti the wastirt."

After a series of similar questions and replies, we reached school just as the rector was entering. We sat down at the end of a long series of benches, in which were seated about 180 youths of ages varying from twelve to twenty. Their dresses indicated that they belonged to very different ranks and conditions of life. The best black cloth, hoddin-grey, and corduroy were all mingled together. The son of a

Professor in Marischal College, a shepherd from Ballater, a weaver from Kirriemuir, and the son of a shipbuilder, were at the top of the first bench, and were considered the best scholars.

We presented our letters of introduction and had our names enrolled. There was another new scholar besides ourselves who attracted a good deal of attention, from the strangeness of his demeanour and the uncouthness of his manners. His shaggy, unkempt head of hair was slightly reddish. He wore a dark-green tartan coat, so short behind as scarcely to cover the end of his back. His vest was of the same material. His legs had grown much too long for his hoddin-grey *trews*, between the tattered extremities of which and the top of his great *tackety* boots, his bare ancles were visible.

After we had enrolled our names, he went up to the rector and said—" My name's Duncan Macallum. I want a *raith's* (quarter's) gweed squeelin fae ye, bit afore I begin I wad like to ken fat ye'll tak."

The rector, with a smile, said—" You know the fee is ten and sixpence a quarter."

" It's ower muckle," said Duncan, " I'll gi'e ye seven an' sax."

" Go away to your seat," said the rector, " I never lower my fees."

Duncan, with a pitiful look, said—" O, bit maister, I'm a *peer loonie* (poor boy); an' wad ye no' be steekin yer han' upon aucht an' sax ; my

mither's deed, an' my faither's a widow-man, wi' a lot o' *litlins* (children). I wad like to tak' a big *buss* (bursary) at the competition, an' I'll maybe be able to do something for them yet."

The rector was a kind-hearted man. He told Duncan to call on him in the evening, when I believe he took something considerably less than *aucht an' sax*. Duncan was a good deal annoyed by the other boys asking him what kind of a *buss* he meant to tak'—was't a *breem buss*, or a *whin buss?* Duncan bore it all patiently, and had his revenge next day, for there was a trial version which consisted in turning a part of Hume's beautiful description of the death of Mary Queen of Scots into Latin, and Duncan's version was marked *sine errore* (without error), which placed him within five of the top.

Rob and I had no success in writing versions. We could translate Latin into English with some facility, but translating English into Latin was an exercise to which we had not been accustomed. This did not augur well for our success at the competition. Prosody was not then much cultivated at Aberdeen, and we were only once asked to do a voluntary exercise in Latin verse. Rob and I had never attempted anything of the kind before, and we had no idea of Latin prosody, except so much as is implied in ability to scan Virgil. Whether it was because the song of Annie Laurie was a favourite with Tammas Taepiece, and consequently quite familiar to me; or whether I thought it easy

to translate, I do not now remember, but, for some reason or other, I selected it for translation into Latin. Rob chose the Fifth Hymn for the same purpose. In performing our task our only care was to produce rhyme, grammar, and such a number of syllables as would suit the air of Annie Laurie and the Old Hundred Psalm tune. We scarcely knew what feet meant, and had no knowledge of Horatian measures. As our productions may not be uninteresting to some of my classical readers, I give them here as originally written.

ANNA LAURIE.

Maxwellt'ni clivi pulchri,
  Ubi cito ros cadit,
Queis locis Annâ Laurie
  Mihi fidem dedit,
  Mihi fidem dedit,
Quam non obliviscar;
Et pro pulchrâ Annâ Laurie
  Libenter moriar.

Frons ejus similis nivi,
  Collum est cygneum,
Sol pulchriori vultui
  Illuxit nonunquam,
  Illuxit nonunquam,
Oculi sunt cæsii;
Et pro pulchrâ Annâ Laurie
  Non recuso mori.

Ut quoque ros in flores,
  Ita cadunt pedes,
Ut susurrus Favoni
  Demissæ sunt voces,
  Demissæ sunt voces,
Percara est mihi;
Et pro pulchrâ Annâ Laurie
  Paratus sum mori.

CHRISTIANUS MORIENS. HYMNUS V.

E vita excessurus sum,
Vox Dei me vocat domum,
Fac ne doloribus premar,
Ut, Deus, pace moriar.

Per cursum vitæ transii;
Certavi et palmam tuli.
Pax nunc est mihi cum Deo,
Est mihi testis in cœlo.

Me innocentem non credo,
Meipsum tibi submitto;
Per Jesu sanguinem spero
Me salvum fore in cœlo.

Discedo sine lacrimis,
Sed doleo de amicis.
Eis præbeto solatium;
Eis præsta te perfugium.

Ad te vocantem venio,
Et animam tibi trado.
Fac mortis in articulo,
Tu mihi sis auxilio.

When these pieces were read in the class there was a general titter of laughter among our fellow students. The rector said they were wonderful productions, and would undoubtedly have astonished Horace. He, however, admitted that Rob's Hymn was very literal, and might have found a place in the hymnology of the church, had it been written during the dark ages. When the competition day arrived, we were in great agitation. I tried to be calm but could not. I thought that my fortune and my hopes of Miss Rose depended on the issue, and could not keep down my agitation. I took great pains to avoid what we called *maxies*, construed

every sentence, and was satisfied that I had made no grammatical errors. I took home a scroll copy of what I had written, and began to read it, that Rob might give his opinion. It began as follows:—"A Turkish brig, having sailed from the harbour of Athens, was attacked by three Spanish vessels." "Quum Turcicus pons e portu Athenensi navigasset, tria vasa Hispanica in eum impetum fecerunt." Rob burst into a laugh, and cried, "O ye gowk; *pons* a bridge, and *vas* a dish; what were ye thinkin aboot." I saw at once that I was done for, and began to cry over my blasted hopes. On Wednesday, when the names of the successful competitors were read, my name was not among them, but Duncan Macallum was first, and Rob second bursar. This secured to the former thirty, and to the latter twenty pounds per annum for four years. I returned home, much dispirited, and began once more to make shoes. My father received me very dryly, Tibbie scolded, and Tammas comforted me. I was anxious to see Miss Rose, but half afraid lest she should reproach me.

CHAPTER XIX.

KEEPER.—MY FIRST GENTEEL DINNER.

"Take off your apron, Jamie," said my father one day after dinner, "and take these slippers of Miss Rose's up to Hilton Farm."

This was a message that I had been expecting to be sent, all the forenoon, for I had finished the slippers myself, the day before; and had expended on them all the handicraft of which I was capable; and I had heard my father say that he would send them up. I would have volunteered myself to go, but bashfulness and the consciousness that I could not make the proposal without blushing prevented me: glad, therefore, was I, when my father gave the order, and with great alacrity did I proceed to put it in execution.

Hilton Farm, though a plain, bare-looking place to most people, was to me a perfect paradise. The flowers that grew there were the most beautiful in the world, and their perfume was sweeter far than that of those that grew elsewhere. The very grass of the place had a peculiar greenness of its own that was most refreshing for my eye to look upon; even the odour that came steaming from the dung-hill in the court behind the house, and which elsewhere would have been offensive, was so neutralized and modified by some ethereal essence whose exist-

ence cannot be denied, but which has hitherto baffled the most searching investigations of chemistry, that it fell on the nostrils as a grateful and rich effluvia. Happy to go there at any time, I was especially so on the present occasion, for I would now have an opportunity of slipping into Mary's hand the jargonelle pear that I had carried for five days in my trouser's pocket with intent to give it to her as a proof of my affection.

As I was wending my way along, drawing near the house, and thinking of all things bright and fair, and anticipating a hearty welcome with smiles and kindly greetings, the pleasant train of my reflections was suddenly interrupted by the appearance, in the middle of the road, before the gate, of a great shaggy dog, who appeared to show symptoms of emotion on my approach, which, though really friendly, I immediately concluded to be significant of hostility. The dog rose, cocked his ears, jumped two or three times from one side of the road to the other, and then lay down in the middle of it, with his nose between his outstretched paws. I stood irresolute in the middle of the road, my knees knocking against each other and uncertain whether to advance or retreat. The expression of Keeper's face seemed to say, "Come any further if you dare!" There was a happy-like expression in the clear, steady, wide, open glower of his large eyes, indicative of a romping and rollicking, rather than of a vindictive disposition, which might have been reassuring, had

I not attributed it to a feeling of intense satisfaction arising from anticipation of the thorough biting he would give me.

While standing thus, not knowing what to do, I gave one quick glance up to the window where I saw Mary standing looking at me and beckoning to me with one of her sweetest smiles, to come forward.

To stand irresolute while she was looking on was a thing impossible. I made a few short, quick, but very shaky steps forward, when, to my surprise and great delight, Keeper started to his feet and bounded away in the opposite direction; but he did not go far, for, making a sharp detour, he came rushing on describing a circular curve in the line of which I was, and leaped upon me with such force that, thrown off my centre of gravity by the momentum, I tumbled into the ditch by the roadside. I gave one wild scream as I fell, certain that I would be devoured immediately. My face was buried among the rank damp grass of the ditch, and terror for a few moments deprived me of consciousness. When I began to recover and to wonder why I was not torn to pieces, I felt a gentle pull at the neck of my jacket, and thought that it was the dog trying to get at my face. But the horrid fear was soon dispelled, for the pitying accents of Mary fell on my ear and the little pull that was repeated, was not like a dog's at all.

"Are ye hurt, dear James; look up and tell me.

Surely Keeper did not bite you; he must have leaped on you in fun, for he's scampering away across the field just now, and not illnatured like at all. Don't be frightened, James. He won't harm you."

I wished the earth would open and swallow me for half-an-hour; for the truth of what Mary was saying flashed upon me, and I, who had braved the raging flood and rescued her from death—fifteen years old—a Latin scholar—and an aspirant for the medical profession, was *greeting*—blubbering like a big baby. Rendered desperate by the thought of how unmanly such conduct must seem in the eyes of her before whom I wished to appear as the impersonation of all that was manly, I resolved to pretend that I had been shamming. Keeping my face averted, I scrambled up the bank on the opposite side of the ditch, and then hastily pulled from my trouser's pocket my handkerchief to wipe my tear soiled face, but in my hurry and confusion I never noticed that the over-ripe jargonelle round which it had been wrapped had been all crushed to jelly; and before I had time to reflect, my face was all besmeared with it. The smile with which I intended to reassure the girls, and to show that I had not been frightened, was checked mid-way when breaking out, by the sight of the napkin, and by the little exclamation of surprise which they uttered, when they saw my face all covered over with brown putrid looking matter. I started to my feet and ran with-

out stopping until I came to a little stream that ran along the bottom of the field where I hastily washed my napkin and my face, and came back smiling and pretending that I had smeared my face intentionally to frighten them.

Mary looked dubiously at me for a moment, and a pang of remorse shot through my heart, for the lie I had told her. But quickly the dubious look disappeared, and with a bright smile and a clear ringing voice, she said,

"I'm glad ye're not hurt at any rate. Keeper is a good dog, but when he becomes playful and leaps on one, he forgets how big and strong he is; and though he sometimes drives one over he means no ill."

"I'm sure you don't, dear Keeper;" and she put her arms round his neck, and looked into his face as if in expectation that the brute would confirm what she had said in his favour, which he did as far as he could by lifting up his nose and with his large red tongue almost kissing her forehead. Though perfectly satisfied of the innocence and sincerity of his intentions, I could have kicked the big shaggy brute, of whose place in Mary's affections I was for the moment jealous. Gladly would I for the time have been in Keeper's position.

"Mamma has gone to Coul to spend the afternoon," continued Mary; "Annie and I are to have a nice little bit of dinner which is just ready, and you will stay and help us to eat it. We will be so happy!"

"I've gotten my dinner already afore I cam awa."

"O, never mind, you will be none the worse of a little more," and she took me by one hand while Annie led me by the other, and drew me into the dining room.

There was a table covered with a snow white cloth, and on it were a tureen of soup, a plate of beef, a plate of potatoes, a rice pudding, and a beautifully shaped mass of something white, which they called moss, but which seemed to me very unlike that vegetable. There were covers for two, but, on the bell being rung, another was brought for me.

I felt myself in a false position. This dinner table had a totally different appearance from that of Auntie Tibbie, who, plain, honest woman, had accustomed us to sit round a plain fir table, to sup all out of one large basin, to peel our potatoes and eat our beef with our fingers, and to use as little ceremony as possible, and who, when Tammas gently hinted that some improvement might be made in this respect, had cut short all argument by saying, "tuts, what's the use o' sae muckle fash, it's a' the same if ye get yer wames weel filled. Fingers were made afore knives an' forks."

"What will you take, James," said Mary, looking across the table to me.

"Kail," said I, meaning what was in the tureen before her, for I had been accustomed to call all soups, broths, &c. by the general name of kail.

"I am sorry we have no kail to-day."

"Taties then," said I determined to make no mistake this time.

"Help yourself, James; but would you not take a little soup?"

"Ou aye, a wee drappie gin ye please."

Seeing Annie stick her fork into a potato, I did the same, but trusting too much to the cohesive power of the prongs, and not taking into account the gravity of the potato, I did not turn it up sufficiently; it consequently fell with a splash into the plate of soup that had just been set before me, causing no little annoyance to the girls and dismay to myself. I hastily snatched it from among the soup with my hand, and flung it on the table cloth. With some difficulty I suppressed a cry of pain, for my hand was scalded by the nearly boiling soup.

With true politeness on the part of the girls the blunder was treated as an accident, and with a gentle admonition from Mary just to take time, the dinner proceeded. When the soup was finished a large slice of beef was placed on my plate. I had never cut beef at all before, nor had I ever cut anything at such an elevation. On the first attempt, my right elbow stuck out so far laterally that it overturned the cream jug, and spilt its contents in the mustard-pot. To give myself more room, and to prevent the repetition of such an accident, I pushed back my chair, and placed my plate on my knee, and was beginning to feel at ease, though

disturbed a little by certain twitchings about the corners of Mary's mouth, which I could scarcely understand, when, reaching forward to take another potato, my plate slipped off my knees, and was broken, and its contents fell on the floor. Keeper, who had been sitting sometime looking at me with an imploring eye, seized the favourable opportunity, snatched up the large piece of beef, and made off with it. I followed, in the vain hope of his relinquishing it; but on Mary crying after me to let him have it, and she would give me more, I returned; but no entreaties could induce me to take my place at table again.

On going away, Mary accompanied me for some distance, and told me that Dr. Quacker had been at Hilton the day before, and that, at the request of her mother, he had agreed to receive me into his shop as an apprentice; that she had told him of my failure at the competition, but that she was sure I still wanted to continue my studies, and that he had expressed his willingness to assist me as far as lay in his power. It had been agreed that if my father made no objection I should commence the discharge of my duties in his shop on Monday fortnight, as Ben Simmons, his apprentice, was soon after that to leave for Aberdeen College, to which place it was expected that I would in due time follow him in the pursuit of knowledge, as a true disciple of Esculapius.

CHAPTER XX.

A NEW CAREER—DR. QUACKER'S SHOP.

I was to go to Dr. Quacker's on Monday, and to Monday I looked forward with great glee as the first day of my new life. No more rosin, nor lapstones, nor bend leather for me, after Monday. And Monday came, and half-past eight A.M. saw me wending my way along to Dr. Quacker's house, with a white apron under my arm, with my hair combed and brushed as it never had been combed and brushed before, and with my striped shirt collar turned over a necktie which had been made by Auntie Tibbie out of a piece of silk from a very old gown of her own, in a way that made me feel quite proud. I daresay there was a smile on my face that morning, for Auntie Tibbie had told me, as I was going out at the door, that I was "a bit weel faur'd callant, but I was to take care an' no puzhon onybody." When I got to Dr. Quacker's, Ben Simmons, who was leaving in about a week to go to College, and who was to indoctrinate me so far as he could in that time into the ways of the shop, was taking down the shutters. "Well, Tacket," said Ben, "so you are going to be a doctor. Just commence by carrying these shutters round into the close, like a good fellow." Ben intended to be very patronising in his way, so addressed me as a "good

fellow." He was two or three years older than I, was well educated, and had served with Dr. Quacker for about eighteen months previous to going to Aberdeen. He was a very jolly sort of fellow, though I had learned to think of him with fear on account of savage attacks which he made on small boys whom he caught spitting or pasting clay on the window. It was a queer window that window of Dr. Quacker's shop. There were many little panes of glass in it, but the dust and fly dirt accumulations of several years had materially dimmed their transparency. Blue and red bottles there were none, but instead, there could be seen looming through the glass darkly a bottle containing a tape-worm, said to be 35 feet long; several bottles of castor oil (nearly tasteless), and a bunch or two of herbs. These various articles had remained in that window since a time beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant. They had been there when Dr. Quacker came, which was many years ago, and he had left them in undisturbed possession. The front shop was low in the ceiling, and correspondingly dingy. There were the many little drawers, the bottles, the white pots of pills and unguents. But the back parlour into which Dr. Quacker took the old women who came to consult him about sulphur or worm powders for their grandchildren was the especial object of awe to the village boys. Many a nauseous dose of castor oil or India pink had been levelled at their unhappy stomachs from that back parlour. It

was of the smallest possible dimensions, and was hung round with bunches of herbs of all kinds and sizes, for, as I observed in a former chapter, Dr. Quacker had much faith in the herbs of the field. Penny royal and buckbean, trefoil and mountainflax were there, with many other indigenous herbs, whose virtues have been ignored by the medical men of the present day. This little parlour was a model of small comfort in its way, for Dr. Quacker liked his creature comforts. The easy chair (the only one of the kind in the village), the small grate, the comfortable-looking little window, and the thoroughly-seasoned clay pipe, only half concealed below the sturdy footstool, all told of Dr. Quacker's back shop enjoyments.

All this was observed in the hurried glance which I took of the premises after carrying round the shutters that Monday morning. Mr Simmons proceeded to show me how to sweep out the shop, where I was to get the watering-can, and the brush, and the dusters. I must confess that I was perfectly astonished at the holes and corners from which, one after the other, these various articles were disinterred. In due time, under the careful eye of Ben, the fire was lighted, the shop was swept out and dusted, the easy chair set at a proper angle, the footstool planted at a correct distance from the chair, and the clay pipe put on the hob of the little grate. The rest of the morning was occupied in my cross-examination of Ben as to the price of this, and the price of that,

what was "puzhon," and what wasna "puzhon," all much to Ben's ire, I doubt not.

About ten o'clock, Dr. Quacker came down stairs to have his morning pipe before going abroad for the forenoon. "Well, James," he said, "how do you think you will like the shop?" "I think weel aneuch sir." Auntie Tibbie had given me express instructions always to say Sir when answering the doctor.

"Benjamin, have you shown James how to sweep the floor, and where to find his brushes?"

"Yes," said Ben.

"I think your *pulvis dockii* is nearly done. You had better show James how to grind the *radix dockii*."

"The *radix dockii* is all done."

"Then you must send James out to gather more. Do you know where you could get some *radix dockii*, James?"

"I dinna ken, Sir, what *radix docky* is, Sir," said I. Mindful of Auntie Tibbie's advice, I was giving him plenty of Sirs, and Ben laughed, but whether at the Sirs or at my ignorance I know not. The doctor looked at Ben, and Ben looked at the doctor, in a way which said as plainly as if he had spoken, "you may as well tell him at once."

"Well, James," said the doctor, clearing his throat, "you must understand that one of the simples which I use very extensively is the powder of the roots of the various species of *rumex*, principally

the *rumex acetosa* and the *rumex acutus*—plants confounded by the vulgar under the common name of dock."

"Is't the docken, Sir?" said I.

"Yes, James, the docken."

"I ken whaur I could get some richt big dockens, Sir."

"It's the roots we want, James—the radix."

"Awell, Sir, I'll get the rutes."

"That's a good lad; but, James, you need not let any of the neighbours know what you are gathering."

"Verra weel, Sir."

In the course of that forenoon I collected a perfect treasure of *radix dockii* for Dr. Quacker, which Mr Simmons and I spent the afternoon in washing, drying, and grinding in an old hand coffee-mill. As I was quite ignorant of any special virtues possessed by dock roots, I felt anxious to know what they were. Whether I ever learned that or not we will see anon.

That evening, in the back shop, the doctor gave me his first lesson in Latin; and he was glad to see how far I had progressed in it. He also volunteered me a lesson in English.

"James," said he, "you must perceive that if you ever hope to be acccounted at all educated, you must give up that vile habit of talking broad Scotch, and learn to express yourself in modern English. It does not matter, of course, so much just now, when

you are staying in your native village, where everybody knows you ; but as you will find it much more difficult to acquire a habit of speaking correctly when you grow older, I would advise you to commence immediately in an attempt to talk like an educated person. You will find your study of Latin help you much in this."

It seemed to me that amendment in this matter would be very easy. I therefore resolved to show the doctor that I could already speak good English. "I'm mickle obleeged to you, Sir, and I houp that I will profit by your precept and example."

"Very good, James, but remember that 'mickle' is not English, and allow me to observe that your pronounciation of 'hope' is too affected."

"I beg your pardon, Sir, but does not Shakespere who wrote good English, say, in one of his plays,

> 'O *mickle* is the powerful grace that lies,
> In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities—
> For nought so vile that on the earth doth live,
> But to the earth some special good doth give.'"

The doctor stared at me as if surprised, and then seizing my hand, he said,

"You are right, James ; I honour you for that quotation. The English is good, and the words are as beautiful as they are true ; but I am sorry to say the truth they express is too much lost sight of by modern physicians. It augurs well for your future eminence, that such a passage arrested your atten-

tion, and imprinted itself on your memory. I would have you, however, to notice that *mickle* has become obsolete, and that its use is confined to the vulgar; I am glad that you read Shakespere. He is a well of English undefiled, and of good sense unadulterated."

"Thank you, Sir, I did not ken that mickle was obsolete."

"Ken? James, ken?"

"I meant to say, Sir, I didna know."

"Didna? eh, James, didna?"

"I beg your pardon, Sir, I see English is much waur tae speak nor I thocht."

"So I think," said the worthy doctor, with a smile, "good night, James, good night."

"Gude nicht, Sir," said I, "I'll do the best I can, an' a' the men o' the Mearns canna dae mair."

With a bow and a scrape, and the comfortable consciousness of having made a favourable impression on the doctor, I departed.

Thus ended my first day with Dr. Quacker.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE.

The days slipped quietly past in the little surgery. At first I suffered a good deal of annoyance from several practical jokes on the part of Mr Ben Simmons, which, doubtless, he thought exceedingly amusing. He endeavoured with great earnestness to impress upon my mind the fact, that all the rough treatment that I experienced at his hands was for my good. After he had made me drink drugged effervescing powders which nearly poisoned me, he told me, that I should thence learn that beneath the sparkling pleasures of life there often lurks a noxious ingredient, which, if not guarded against, will waste the faculties of the soul. After he had secretly withdrawn my stool from its place, on seeing me about to sit down, and made me experience a painful concussion on the hard flagstone, he said that he meaned to teach me the necessity of always carefully examining whether the fundamental basis on which I rested my conclusions was solid and secure; otherwise I might be painfully disappointed by seeing them fall to the ground. He told me that it was a fine thing to practise the bearing of pain and sudden disappointments with equanimity, as it was an excellent preparation for enabling me to endure many of the

hardships that I would meet with in my journey through life. He regretted the necessity he was under of leaving me so soon as I would be deprived of his salutary discipline, which had a tendency to sharpen the faculties and make one always look alive. In the green simplicity of my heart I half believed him, and gave him credit for meaning well towards me. The serious steady look with which he regarded me, and the grand philosophical style in which he consoled me while I was suffering from his tricks, covered a serio-comic kind of rascality which I could not as yet comprehend or appreciate. On his departure for Aberdeen I experienced a great relief, and yet I felt as if I had lost a friend.

My time in the shop was spent agreeably enough. When there were no customers to be served, and when a sufficient quantity of our various preparations had been compounded and made up, I usually retired into the back parlour, from which I could command a full view of the front shop through the little pane in the partition, and there learned my Latin lessons, or read some of the many curious books with which the doctor's library abounded. When the doctor observed that I was fond of reading, and careful of books, he gave me free access to his library—a liberty never granted to any one before. Having a good deal of leisure, I went through an immense quantity of multifarious reading, and acquired a rather extensive book-knowledge of men and things. Passages that pleased me I committed

to memory, especially, if they had any reference to the theory and practice of medicine. By these means it soon came to pass, that the distinction between master and apprentice was often lost sight of between the doctor and myself in our conversations; and he allowed me to talk to him as freely as if I had been his equal.

In making up our various preparations I generally acted under Dr. Quacker's directions. One day I had been making up the *pil. molass cum farina* and had been wondering what disease they could possibly have any influence in curing, when circumstances occurred that satisfied my curiosity. Treacle and flour had been always associated in my mind with Auntie Tibbie's gingerbread, so I felt anxious to know if they possessed any hidden virtues unknown to the vulgar. When the doctor came in that afternoon he said,

"James, there will be a woman round for some medicine in a little. Give her three dozen of the *pil. molass cum farina.* Tell her to take one before each meal, three times a day."

"What are they for, Sir."

"They're for nothing at all that I know of, James. There's nothing wrong with the woman's stomach, though she thinks there is, and has been telling me so every day for the last week. I know that a moderate diet would soon put her all right, but she wont believe me. The fact is that people will not allow me to be the judge as to whether they require

medicine or not. They will have it, right or wrong, so I give them treacle and flour in small doses, which is as harmless and pleasant a preparation as I know. Though the pills are perfectly powerless for either good or ill, I often annex to the taking of them such conditions as enable me to gain my point."

"Is that what *pulvis dock* is for, too, Sir?"

"The very same, James, the very same."

"And *pulvis novus* too?"

"Just to humbug the people, James. Do you know what the great physician Boerhaave did? On his deathbed he directed all his books to be burned except one folio, which was to be carefully preserved. When he died his learned friends were very anxious to know what this book contained. They turned it up and found nothing but blank paper. On the last page only were written these words, 'head cool, feet warm, and bowels open, will make doctors poor.' Rather good, wasn't it, James."

"And some truth in it, I dinna doot, Sir. Are the Latin names you give to your simples humbug too, Sir."

"Yes, James, there is to the common people a wonderful virtue in a Latin name. You know, I daresay, the old proverb, *omne ignotum pro magnifico est*, which means that every thing unknown is taken for magnificent. Faith, in medicine, is one of the most powerful remedies. If you can get your patient, by a mysterious name, or by any other means, however absurd, to have faith in you and

your medicine, your chance of effecting a cure will be increased tenfold. I believe my *molass cum farina* pill would do no good if the people knew it to be a compound of treacle and flour. Who would derive any benefit from *pulvis dock* if it were known to consist of ground dockweed roots. There's great virtue in a name."

"Then, Sir, it seems Juliet was mistaken when she asked Romeo—

> 'What's in a name? That which we call a rose
> By any other name would smell as sweet.'

For this powder of yours, when called pulvis dock, is an excellent curative agent, but if called dockweed roots it would effect no cure at all."

"Exactly so, James, exactly so."

"But, Sir, is there not a good deal of cheatery in all this; ye, nae doot, mean well, but I have been reading lately that its no richt—no right, I mean—to do evil that gude may come."

"Very true, James, that is a most pernicious doctrine, but I dont think that these artifices can be rightly called evil; they are merely a species of what is vulgarly termed gammon. I think it is a very venial kind of cheatery."

"The ancients thought so too," said I, "for Lucretius says

> 'Physicians do, when anxious to enforce
> On the pale boy the wormwoods bitter draught,
> With lucious honey, tint the goblets edge,
> Deceiving thus, while yet unused to guile
> His unsuspecting lip, till deep he drinks,
> And gathers vigour from the venial cheat.'"

It will be well for us if gammon be a venial kind of cheatery, for we all practise it. There is a weak point in every man's character which is searched out and taken advantage of on all hands by his neighbours. I knew that the doctor was fond of poetical quotations, and made it a point to slip them into my discourse whenever I could, knowing that by this means I would rise considerably in his esteem.

The doctor was prevented from making a reply to my quotation by the arrival of the woman for her pills.

During our conversation I had been counting out the pills and putting them up, but my attention was directed more to what the doctor was saying than to what I was doing.

"Now, ma'am," said the doctor. "Now, ma'am, you're to take one of these pills half-an-hour before each meal, but only three times a day. You must not take a meal without first taking a pill, and you must not take more than three pills a day. You understand?"

"Yes, Sir, but what will I do with my supper?"

"Oh, you must just do without your supper. It might be dangerous you know. You must not take any more suppers. Take your tea a little later, and you wont need supper. Now, mind, half-an-hour before each meal.

"Oh, yes, I'll mind that," said the patient, as she went away.

When she had got to a safe distance, the doctor, turning to me, said,

"That woman confessed to me that she was very fond of black pudding to supper, and yet she expected to have an orderly stomach."

Two or three days after, the same woman again made her appearance with rather a woe-begone expression of countenance. The doctor was in the front shop at the time, so I overheard what passed between them.

"Do you not think, Sir, that yon pills that you gave me were rather strong?"

"Oh, not at all, ma'am, not at all. The very thing for your case, ma'am. They are as mild as—as a zephyr."

"Aweel, Sir, that may be; but I never took medicine sae strong as yon before."

"If you think that, ma'am, we will give you them still milder. Just run over for the box and we'll exchange them for you."

After she was out, the doctor said to me,

"Are you sure you gave her the right ones, James?"

"I'm feart, Sir, I've made a mistake this time. There's no sae mony of the *pil. purg.* in the pot as there should be."

"Egad, if that's the case, James, I'm afraid they would be rather strong. Ha! ha! ha! She wouldn't indulge in black pudding to supper after them, I fancy. They wont do her any harm, so ye needn't be frightened. But, James, you know, you mustn't make any more of these mistakes. They might be more serious."

I promised future accuracy, and faithfully kept my promise. One lesson was quite sufficient.

In the evening the doctor said to me,

"You take an interest in the Roses at Hilton Farm; do you not, James?"

"Yes, Sir," I said, "there's nothing wrang—wrong, I mean—with them I hope."

"Not much as yet, but that youngest girl, Annie, I think, is her name, is far too wise and old-fashioned for her years. I was up seeing her yesterday, and she took me all aback by asking, while sitting beside me, if I would like to die. I scarcely knew how to answer her, and made her a very confused reply; and she sat and looked at me with such a long, sad, searching look that I could scarcely bear it. Children do put such staggering questions sometimes. 'Would I like to die!' I never gave the matter much consideration. I'm afraid, James, we doctors are so much employed in cutting, carving, and curing the material part of us, that we are apt to leave the spiritual part out of consideration altogether. That question of hers, James, haunts me a little, and makes me feel rather uncomfortable."

"Is Annie ill, sir?" said I, "for the doctor's strange talk, and stranger manner, made me feel uneasy on her account."

"Not exactly ill; but there are symptoms about her, in addition to those I have mentioned, which are somewhat alarming. Her skin is too transparent. There is a glassy brightness in her eye, and at times

she has a hard cough, which makes me fear lest she may be affected with Phthisis, in other words—consumption."

The doctor's words cast a gloom over my spirits; there was a shadow seemed to fall on all things. It hovered over me all the evening, and seemed to make the dark night still darker, and even when the morning came, the sun's rays could not entirely dispel it. It was the foreshadowing of the shadow of death.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

Not till very lately had I taken a particular interest in Annie Rose. She was but a little girl, between seven and eight years of age, and my attention had always been diverted away from her, by the more showy attractions of her elder sister. It was but lately that I had become myself capable of appreciating in any measure the worth and goodness of that little creature, whose strangely quiet ways and unchildishly wise remarks began to be talked of by the neighbours in low whispers, accompanied by serious looks and grave shakings of the head. My visits to Hilton Farm, during the winter, had been very frequent. Sometimes I was sent there on little messages with medicine and other things; sometimes I went, attracted there, by an influence of which I had not yet formed so definite an idea as to give it a name. Annie had begun lately on these occasions to manifest a great degree of fondness for me. As the maiden modesty of Mary, now close on the verge of womanhood, and (as I flattered myself) my own more young-gentlemanly appearance, made her feel more shy and retiring in my presence ; so much the more closely did Annie seem to insinuate herself into my affections—so much the more intimate and confidential did we seem to become. Mrs Rose was a

warmhearted, intelligent, religious woman, and brought up her children in the love and fear of God. Their course of reading comprehended a great variety of useful books, but their principal text-book was the Bible; and it had been so taught that the reading of it was not to them, as it is to many, an irksome task; on the contrary, it was read and re-read with ever increasing pleasure. This was more particularly the case with Annie. Her mind was stored with its precepts, and her imagination was strangely coloured by the golden light of heavenly glory that had been reflected on her mind from its pages. The calm and unconsciously innocent manner in which the words of heavenly wisdom often fell from her lips, and the indications her words sometimes gave of her having been favoured with visions, even in day dreams, of glorious things, that, on the earth, can neither be seen nor heard, made her be looked on with a mournful interest, and much of sad foreboding. Frequently on Sabbath afternoons I accompanied Mrs Rose, and Mary, and Annie home from church; and in the evenings, in the little parlour, we read together from the blessed book, and many a time did I wonder at the readiness and clearness with which Annie seemed to understand its figurative language; and often did I see Mrs Rose shading her eyes with her hand and looking at her long and sadly as she sat, and in an abstracted way repeated again and again texts and short passages that particularly pleased her; and

sometimes her mother's heart, on such occasions, would grow so full within her that she had to turn aside her head and stealthily wipe away the swimming tears that were ready to overflow. Yet the child herself was always so quiet, so gentle, and so happy, that I, inexperienced as I was, saw no cause for alarm. It was only after what the doctor said to me as recorded in the last chapter, that I saw clearly the dark shadow of her approaching death.

When I went home that night Chirstie Cummins and Tibbie were talking about her.

"She's far owre wise," said Auntie Tibbie, "I doot she'll no be lang in this world."

"That's just my opinion," said Chirstie, "I'm aye wae when I hear bairns crackin like auld folk. It aye minds me o' my Willie that's deed an' gane. When he was a wee bit callant, no abune five year auld, he wad speir sic quastins at a body as I'm no sure gin even the minister himself cud answer; an' he aye spake o' the gude place that he was gaun tae, and bade me no greet when he gaed awa, an' speired gin me an' faither wad be lang o' comin, for he wad be waitin an' aye lookin for us up yonder. O, Tibbie, mony a nicht did I press my wee Willie tae my bosom, an' sair, sair, did I greet, when I heard him mutterin' gude words in his sleep. I was whiles wae tae see him sae gude an' sae happy, even when he was suffering sair, puir thing. My heart was like tae brak at the thocht o' pairtin wi' him; and when he was taen awa, it was hard tae say, but Saunders

an' me baith said, 'His will be dune.'"

"Dae ye think, Chirstie, sic young things really understand what they're speakin aboot when they speak that way?"

"There's nae doot o' that, woman; bairns think far mair than ye wad suppose. I haena brocht up near a dizzen o' them without kennin something aboot it. I've noticed it in them a', but mair than ordinar in wee Willie that's awa. I've seen him sit an' glowr into the fire for half an hour at a time, an' thinking a' the while sae earnestly, that when he was spoken tae he never heard ye. Sometimes he wad stand at the door an' look at the clouds as they gaed sailin' by, and wish that he were able tae ride on them, and wonder where they a' went tae. An' he wad glowr, an' speir what was beyond the hills—whaur the wind cam frae—and how far it was frae here tae heaven, and ither sic like things. He was an innocent wee lamb, an' yet afore he was taen awa, he often grat for wicked thochts that he said had come intae his wee head, an' cried to Our Father tae forgie him for the sake o' Him that died for us a.' Ye may depend upon it, Tibbie, bairns often understand thae things better than mony aulder folk."

"Yon lassie's skin is far ower bonnie," said Tibbie; "she's ower pure red an' white."

"That's anither bad sign; but I'm no sae fear'd at that, for our Mary was far clearer in the skin than she is, an' I thocht lang she was ower bonnie, but she's growin' up a braw, healthy lassie. Annie

has a nasty dry cough that's far waur than that. I took up some lozenges that our Saunders said cured him, an' the lassie took them ; but they did her nae gude."

"What does the doctor think aboot her, Jamie ?" said Tibbie, turning to me.

"He thinks she's not well," said I, shortly and sharply, and then turned into my closet, for I was afraid that Chirstie might bore me with some more lengthened details regarding her family, which, though not uninteresting on ordinary occasions, I was then in no mood to hear.

The spring came on, and longer and brighter grew the days—the bright flowers came forth—the woods and fields began to grow green, and all nature was putting on a cheerful aspect ; but the shadow that had begun to cast its gloomy influence on my mind was ever growing darker.

The doctor was now a frequent visitor at Hilton, and kind and assiduous was he in his attention to Annie. He saw that the last enemy was approaching his little patient, and that no skill that he could use had any power to arrest his progress ; but he did much to relieve her sufferings at times ; and so gently and tenderly did he deal with her that all hearts felt grateful to him for it. With all his peculiarities he was a kind old man ; and though I may have seemed at times to speak lightly of him, in my heart I revere his memory.

It was a bright Sabbath in May. I had been sitting

beside the sofa, on which Annie lay reclined, propped up with pillows. She had talked long and cheerfully; and one would have thought, to see her, that she might yet be spared some time to bless us with her presence. She asked me to read to her the last chapter of Revelations. When I concluded the fifth verse, she said, "I shall soon be there, and I shall see it all; 'And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.'"

When I had concluded the whole chapter, she repeated twice over the words, "Even so come Lord Jesus." Mary and I then sung, at her request, the Paraphrase beginning—

"How bright these glorious spirits shine;
Whence all their white array?
How came they to the blissful seats
Of everlasting day?"

"Open the window, mother, and turn my face to it, so that I may look out. Do you hear that music, mother? the air is filled with it."

She seemed to listen attentively, and we held our breath; and all as it were instinctively knelt down beside her, and could not restrain our tears, for, in a low and tremulous voice, she began to sing—

"The hour of my departure's come—
I hear the voice that calls me home:
At last, O Lord! let troubles cease,
And let thy servant die in peace."

As the last words of the last line died away

almost inaudibly, we saw that the cold hand of the King of Terrors was passing over her face. She gave one wild and ghastly look, and then the light that beamed in those radiant eyes seemed to grow brighter and brighter, but cold and pale as snow grew her face and hands.

"Kiss me mother and Mary, dear; I am going to sleep. Good night."

These were the last words we could distinguish. A film seemed to spread over the eyes; a most oppressive stillness filled the room, and the shadow cast its deepest shade of darkness.

Weep on now, kind-hearted mother and loving sister, and relieve the aching of your bursting hearts. Such grief as yours may be imagined, but cannot be described. Look to Him who can alone pour balm into your hearts. Your feelings may be rebellious for a time; but you are Christians, and when the first bitterness is past, you will be able to say, "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

Dust was committed to dust. The dark Valley of the Shadow of Death was passed through. Those who erewhile were nearly blinded by its darkness, now have a clear and undimmed prospect beyond the dark river, and see there the shining ones beckoning them onward.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OUR PARISH MINISTER.—TEACHING.

It was in connection with the sad events recorded in the last chapter that I first became intimately acquainted with our parish minister. He was a plain-looking man, of middle age, and of middle stature. There was nothing very remarkable in his appearance, except at times an air of abstractedness. He seemed to be often indulging in reveries, and frequently, when spoken to, started and begged pardon, as if his thoughts had been elsewhere. This absence of mind greatly increased his reputation for learning, as he was in his absent moments supposed to be employed in solving the most abstruse questions in science or morals. In reality, however, he was a man of great learning and sterling worth. His piety showed itself more in acts of kindness to his neighbours, than in sanctity of demeanour or wordy profession. When not allowed to fall into his brown studies, he was remarkably cheerful, and his sunny smile and words of hearty encouragement were grateful to all. A determined foe to every kind of licentious levity, he was yet a great lover of an innocent joke, and had a keen sense of the ludicrous. Exhibitions of gross ignorance filled him with sadness; but he could not, for all that, help smiling at the queer conceptions of untutored simplicity. It was no uncommon thing to see in his

face the tear of sorrow, and the smile of a tickled fancy striving for the mastery. Though a bachelor, he had a fatherly sympathy with children, and his manner towards them was so gentle and winning that he generally easily gained their confidence; and so highly did they appreciate his approbation, that a nod and a smile from him filled their little hearts with a flutter of delight. He was, in short, beloved by all, for he could be a sharer in all their joys; and none knew better how to comfort their hearts in sadness.

For a week or two after Annie's death he was almost a daily visitor at Hilton Farm; and on several of these occasions he had talked familiarly with me, and given me great encouragement to persevere in my endeavours after self-improvement. One night he asked me to walk with him to the village, and, by the way, our conversation turned on Mary and her mother, whom we had just left.

"I perceive, Mr Tacket, that you are a great favourite with Miss Rose and her mother—particularly with Miss Rose; that, however, is not to be wondered at, considering the manner in which you became acquainted."

It was a few minutes before I could make any reply, for this was the first time that I had been styled Mr Tacket. The doctor had called me James, and that was such an improvement on Auntie Tibbie's *Jamie*, and Ben Simmons' *Tacket*, that I felt myself honoured; but to be spoken to as

Maister Tacket, and by the minister, too, was a distinction, the importance of which I could not at first fully realize. I thought I felt myself growing two or three inches taller all at once. My head became slightly elevated, my back became considerably more straight, and my steps seemed to grow firmer, and so much lengthened as to keep time with those of the minister. I looked round and discovered, for the first time, that my head was really on a level with the rim of the minister's hat, and that I was indeed, after all, quite a young man —perhaps a young gentleman, and said—

"Yes, sir, I have a very great respect for Mrs Rose and her daughter. I think they are very—very-aw' nice sort of people."

"Nice sort of people!" Mr Tacket, "I imagined they were very dear friends of yours."

This phrase, which the minister repeated in a somewhat reproving tone, was one that Ben Simmons had been in the habit of using with reference to those whom he favoured with his good will, and I had uttered it in his tone and manner as nearly as I could, thinking it would be very apropos and young gentleman like. I felt now that I had committed a great mistake, which I hastened to repair by saying—

"That's what I meaned to say, sir; they are very dear friends. Mary is much cast down for the loss of her sister. I wish I could do anything to make her more cheerful."

"Time, Mr Tacket, will soften her sorrow. Occupation would do her good. She is a tall girl, and very intelligent. How old is she?"

"Fifteen."

"I thought her older. Do you think she would like to teach one of my Sabbath classes?"

"I am sure she would, sir; she is very fond of teaching. She takes the cottar's children at the farm into the house every day, and gives them a lesson."

"I shall speak to her on the subject. Would you take a class yourself, Mr Tacket? It would tend to your own improvement. Teaching is one of the very best methods of learning."

"I am afraid, Sir, I am not well qualified, but I shall try. If you give me a very young class I think I could do it. I'm feared I would not be good at the explanations."

"You will improve. I shall give you a few hints. I have started Sabbath classes lately at New Mills. The manager and a few workmen conduct them. I shall be glad of your company on Sabbath afternoon, when I go to visit them."

"Thank ye, Sir. I shall be most happy to go."

"Good night, Mr Tacket."

"Good night, Sir."

"I shall call on you at four o'clock, as I pass your father's."

"All right, Sir."

The minister turned sharply round as he was

going away, and gave me a look which seemed to say, "you are very familiar my young friend." That last sentence of mine was one of Ben Simmons' favourite phrases. This was the second time I had imitated Ben in my conversation with the minister, and both times I had been unfortunate. Though I could not make out where the impropriety of Ben's expressions lay, I determined to eschew both his words and mode of speaking henceforth.

New Mills was a large work lately established in the parish for the spinning of flax. Most of the spinners had been brought from Dundee, and the ignorance of the great majority of them was extreme.

At the appointed hour the minister, Mr Wilson, called for me, and I went away with him. After we had gone a few yards he asked me to take his arm, which, after some hesitation, I did. Except at marriages, it was a very uncommon thing, in our parish, to see a woman walking with hold of a man's arm; but to see two men walking arm in arm was a thing almost unknown. The only instance of such a thing that had ever come under my notice had been the laird of Coul and his brother, at an heritors' meeting in the parish school. I tried to look as unconcerned as possible, but I felt very hot in the face when we met any body, and imagined that our mode of walking would be thought very strange.

When we entered the bothy, where the Sabbath

School was held, I was introduced to the manager as Mr Tacket, a medical student, come to see the classes. I shook hands with the manager, and looked about me with as easy an air as I could assume. I did give one uneasy glance at Mr Wilson, but he was really quite serious and seemed to have no idea that he was giving me greater honour than I deserved. Perhaps it was pure imagination, but I did think the manager gave one contemptuous look at my cap which I held in my left hand. It all at once struck me that I ought to have had a hat. This desre for a hat from that moment grew strong within me, and had, as will be seen afterwards, unfortunate results.

"Come here, Mr Tacket," said the minister, who was listening to the manager's brother teaching three boys who seemed to be between twelve and fourteen years of age, "You see these three boys. A month ago they could not read the alphabet; they can now read portions of the shorter catechism."

"The punishment of the wicked will be very severe," said the teacher. "How will they be punished?"

The boys looked dubiously at each other, and then at the teacher; at length one of them, an open mouthed, pock-pitted, curly-haired lad, said, "stick."

The teacher shook his head, and said, "wrong, Dinnie; what do you think, Watson?"

Watson's eye brightened as if he had made a discovery, and he cried, "shoot."

"Wrong," said the teacher. "What do you think, Smart?"

Smart looked as sharp as possible, and eagerly shouted, "droon."

The minister held down his head and covered his face with his handkerchief. Looking up again, he said, in a low voice, "that is very disheartening, but we must not be discouraged. Men unaccustomed to teaching very often begin at the wrong end. Boys should be well taught before they are questioned. These boys cannot answer what they never knew. It is absurd to teach, by assuming knowledge to be where it is not, and then trying to draw it out." He asked the teacher to allow him to speak to the boys. He then, in beautiful and simple language, with homely illustrations, taught the boys some of the simplest elements of religious knowledge; and on questioning them regarding what they had heard, he was gratified to find that they could answer in such a way as to indicate that they had received some benefit from his instruction. It was on this occasion that I received my first notion regarding the philosophy of teaching. One good idea amid the many vain ones that floated in my mind that night was, that there was good work in the world to be done even by me if I would only will to do it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MY FIRST HAT.—PRIDE GETS A FALL.

To some I daresay it seems strange that I should make known to the public all my faults and failings as I have freely done in these chapters. It would be very easy for me to relate only those circumstances in my history which would make me appear noble and good in the eyes of the world; but when I determined to write my life, I resolved to relate events just as they happened—adding nought for my own glorification, nor keeping back anything from fear of being laughed at. In fiction, men and women are generally entirely good or utterly bad—highly correct in all their deportment or extremely absurd. In real life it is seldom so. Our characters are a mixture of good and evil, of wisdom and folly; and the representation of human life, which does not display both, is not natural. The tendency of such representations is to give false views of life—to make us believe good men and women to be almost entirely free from failings, and the less good to have no amiable qualities at all. Since I am guided by this principle in writing these chapters, it need surprise no one that I relate candidly, and without any reserve, the absurd predicaments into which I sometimes fell, and the foolish things I often said, as well as those sayings and doings that are to my

credit. Truth may not be so exciting as fiction, as it does not admit of the manufacture of intricate plots, and soul-harassing scenes; but it is the writer's fault if it be not equally interesting and instructive.

When I began to teach a Sabbath school, I was not animated by the highest motives—I had not a proper conception of the importance of the work. I did not feel sufficiently how much of weal and woe to the children depended on my exertions. There was in my mind a vague wish to do good—a strong desire for the approbation of Mr Wilson, and a great satisfaction in being engaged in the same work with Mary Rose. The fact of being looked up to as an instructor gave me a feeling of self-importance that was pleasing to my vanity. Yet, even then, I had moments of serious thought regarding my work, and self-examinations, which, as they increased in frequency, and were directed by maturer judgment, ultimately did me good. Vanity, however, was at this time my besetting sin. I wished to be accounted manly in my bearing, and handsome in my person. Auntie Tibbie's ideas of hairdressing were now far behind mine, and she was no longer permitted to operate on my locks. The want of fashionable elegance in my raiment caused me more misery than all my other causes of annoyance put together. But ever since the contemptuous look that I imagined the manager at New Mills had cast towards my cap, nearly all my thoughts were bent on the acquirement of a hat. Miss Rose had now

come out in a long skirted gown, and looked quite a woman, and it seemed hard that I should be prevented from looking quite manly, in consequence of being unable to doff a hat.

I knew that I need not apply to my father, as he had no sympathy with my views in this matter; still less could I hope for aid from Auntie Tibbie.

I managed, however, to make known my desires to Tammas Taepiece, who thought my wishes were very reasonable, and assured me that Miss Rose would look on me with ten times greater favour if I had a hat. I had two shillings of my own, and Tammas promised to advance me half-a-crown. He assured me that his own hat had only cost four and sixpence, and he had no doubt but I could get one as good for the same money. We bought it on a Saturday evening, and it was sent home in a pasteboard box. My father hoped it was honestly come by, but his doubts were set at rest by Tammas. Tibbie wondered what this world wad turn tae, and said that pride was sure tae get a fa.'

For nearly half an hour that night did I privately contemplate myself in various attitudes with my hat on, in the little looking-glass that hung on the wall in my bedroom. I placed it far back on my head, but thought it made me too sailor looking; I next drew it forward with the brim resting on my eyebrows, but this seemed to give me too gloomy an appearance; I then put it on slightly agee to one side, and was delighted with the jaunty, free, and

easy air which it gave me, and resolved to wear it in that mode to-morrow. I now thought myself to be really a good-looking young man. The hat was, as far as I could judge, a first-rate one. The brim was narrow (for such was the fashion at that time), and the crown was much less in circumference than the base—so that the *tout ensemble* very much resembled a flower-pot. The pile did seem to be rather long, and gave it a shaggy appearance; but as Tammas, whose experience in the matter of hats was far greater than my own, highly approved of it, I supposed that its shagginess was no defect. I felt sure that with it on, and my new tight-fitting trousers kept close down over my shoes, to make them look like boots, by a pair of short straps that Tammas had kindly prepared for me, I could not fail to attract a large share of admiration. Would not Miss Rose be proud of me? and would not I be able to walk up to her to-morrow with becoming dignity and self-respect?

Sabbath morning came at length, and I believe it was the most unprofitable Sabbath morning that ever I spent. I did read a chapter as usual during the forenoon, but when I had finished, could not have told what it was about; for the idea of my hat was ever intruding, and excluded all serious thought. I took a short walk with it on, before church time, to accustom myself to it. It was rather tight, and pained my temples a little; but what of that, if it became me, and if I could walk gracefully

under it. In a quiet hollow near our house I spent a short time in practising the most graceful manner of lifting it off while making a bow and a scrape, as I contemplated doing the thing very elegantly in presence of Miss Rose. When I came home from my walk I was annoyed to find that a dirty red circular mark had been imprinted around my forehead, which gave me a very odd look, and, though I sat bareheaded for nearly half an hour, it had not entirely disappeared when the bell rang for church. I saw that the hat would require to be worn more lightly, but as there was a high wind blowing, it was doubtful whether that wonld be practicable. When we started, Tammas praised my appearance, but Tibbie said hats didna become beardless laddies. Tibbie's remark stung me to the quick, and I allowed my resentment so far to get the mastery of me as to impel me to reply, "better beardless laddies than bearded ladies at any rate."

This was a very bad state of mind in which to go to church; but my punishment was at hand. I was strutting along the road with the assurance that all eyes must be directed towards me in admiration of my improved appearance, and with the consciousness (for I had been taking a sly peep round now and then) that Miss Rose was close behind me. I was in no hurry to show myself conscious of her presence, as I wished to give her sufficient time to admire me. At length I turned slightly round, with the intention of making my very finest bow, and lifting my hat

in the most graceful style, when, to my amazement and utter confusion, a sudden gust of wind blew it off and sent it spinning along the road. My hair, that had been carefully parted and nicely smoothed down, was blown into disorder; but the thought of it was only momentary, for there was my fine new hat of which I was so proud whirling round and round, about twenty yards off, in a puddle of dirty water. It would be very undignified to run after it, but to stand and look at it was worse. I heard a titter of a laugh from some one near me, and saw a few rows of grinning teeth, the indices of malicious mirth, and even caught a glimpse of a smile on the face of Mary Rose. I felt maddened, and in desperation bolted after my vagrant hat. When about to lay hold of it, another puff sent it a dozen yards farther on to another puddle, and I fell on my knees. My trousers were short and the straps were tight. The cloth gave way from the sudden strain, so that, when I rose, I observed a portion of my white flannel drawers looking through a wide rent in each of my knees. Terribly chagrined and confused, I sprang forward with fearful impctus, determined to catch it this time, but on the edge of the puddle my foot slipped, and I fell at full length into it, crushing the unlucky beaver flat beneath me. I felt somewhat stunned, and lay for about half a minute in a swimming attitude; but, on the approach of Tammas and Saunders M'Siccar, who came running to help me up, I started to my feet and ran in

a contrary direction ; for I saw at a glance that going to church now was out of the question, and in my present plight I could not think of facing any of the church-going people. My nose was bleeding, my shirt front, that Tibbie had dressed so carefully, was all bespattered with mud ; and little rivulets of dirty water were trickling down my vest and over my trousers. I took to the fields, and making a detour of considerable length, reached our own house without meeting anybody. Auntie Tibbie nearly fainted when she saw me ; but she had little sympathy for me. On the contrary, a smile of grim satisfaction seemed to pass over her face, when she understood how it had all happened. I saw she thought I had only got my deserts. I began to think so myself. On placing clean clothes before me, she merely remarked, "I kent pride wad be sure tae get a fa'."

CHAPTER XXV.

I BECOME POETICAL.

It was sometime before I recovered from the effects of the hat disaster. My dignity had been taken down in so public a manner that almost everybody knew about it. It is a curious perversity in human nature, that painful circumstances, which have a considerable amount of the ludicrous connected with them, instead of calling forth feelings of sympathy and commiseration, only move the risible faculties and produce shouts of laughter. For a few days after my mishap, I saw, or imagined I saw, smiles and indications of smothered laughter in everybody's face. But my greatest annoyance arose from the pertinacious persecution of a few small boys, who, as I was going to and from the shop, would shout after me in the following alliterative style—

> "Tacket tak' tent tae yer tile,
> For fear the fur o't ye file."

Some of the cleverer ones even composed doggrel verses on the subject, and would run past the shop door singing out—

> "Jamie Tacket had a tile,
> But the wind smashed it;
> In a puddle Jamie fell,
> An' flat's a flounder bash'd it."

When the doctor heard of my misfortune he could not conceal his mirth, but said he was sorry for me, and, partly to heal my wounded feelings, partly, I believe, out of pure charity, he bought me a new hat, much finer and far more genteel than that which I had destroyed. But so sensitive was I, that it was nearly three months after, before I ventured out with it on. Miss Rose with great delicacy of feeling never once alluded to the subject. Mr Wilson, the minister, said he was sorry for my mishap, and added, "ye see, Mr Tacket, it's not every head that's capable of managing a hat."

It was nearly six months before people ceased to banter me about my unfortunate beaver. During that time my character was undergoing a slow but steady course of improvement. My religious feelings were drawn out more and more, partly by the influence exercised over me by Mr Wilson; but principally by the intercouse I was still permitted to enjoy with Miss Rose. The more I knew that dear girl, the more I admired her; but my admiration was reverential rather than doatingly tender. My love for her indeed was very great; but respect, and the thought of my inferiority to her in many ways, prevented me from confessing my passion. Her mind was deeply imbued with the spirit of religion, and in her conversations with me she gave free expression to her feelings. Her quiet assumption that I was animated by religious sentiments as deep and sincere as her own, made me feel ashamed of my

coldness of heart, and led me to think more frequently on religious subjects, until I was animated by a degree of fervour, which I mistook for true religion.

Almost every young man at some period between the ages of fourteen and twenty takes to writing verses; and so long as he is content to enjoy them in the privacy of his own chamber, or in the domestic circle, they do no harm; indeed, they are often very beneficial; for the making of them is often like the action of a safety valve, admitting of the escape of vapours which should otherwise prove destructive. Sometimes a youth is impelled to verse-writing by religious feeling, sometimes by love. The time of life I have mentioned may be called the poetical age. Then the affections are warm and the heart is keenly alive to all the impulses of love and devotion.

In looking over an old copy-book in which I wrote out in my best hand some of my rhymed effusions, I am astonished at the abundance of mediocre verses which I composed at this period. The most of them are unfit for publication; for they are neither so good as that one might profit by their perusal, nor so bad as to excite merriment, and thus yield amusement. I here give as a specimen a few stanzas addressed—

TO MARY.

Mary, thou'rt beautiful, charming, and fair,
Bright is the sheen of thy soft golden hair,
Gentle the gaze of thy bonnie blue eye—
Cloudless and clear as the bright summer sky.

Dimples and smiles ever play round thy mouth,
Balmy's thy breath as a breeze of the south;
Thy voice gives forth gladness or pathos profound,
Soothing and soft is its silvery sound.

Why throbs my heart ever, when thou art nigh?
When thon art gone from me, why do I sigh?
Why, when thou smilest, love, have I no fears?
Why, when thou sorrowest, melt I in tears?

Loving sincerely, we have but one heart,
Life, when thon leavest me, seems to depart;
Love makes our hearts sing the same notes of gladness,
Tunes them to unison even in sadness.

Thon cheerest me, Mary, when cares do annoy,
My sorrow and sighing thon turnest to joy,
The gloom of my spirit thou changest to light,
When prospects are darkened thou makest them bright.

The most of my love rhymes were, like the preceding, composed with reference to Miss Rose. I sometimes regret—though very foolishly—the fit of desperation, which led me to burn most of them; but I remember well a few verses of another piece and the occasion which called it forth.

Mary, on parting with me one Sabbath afternoon at the school door, held my hand a little longer than usual, and looked into my face with a sad regretful-like expression. I felt a little bit of folded paper in the hollow of her hand, which was at that moment transferred to mine. When she was out of sight I opened it and read these words—

"Dear Mr Tacket—Meet me on Tuesday evening in the witch den, near the old thorn tree, at eight o'clock. I have something very important to say to you. I trust you will not disappoint me. Believe me ever, your affectionate

MARY ROSE."

This letter threw me into a state of great excitement; for I did not know well what to make of it.

I was once proud of being called Mr Tacket; but I would have given anything now had the respectful, but cold epithet not been at the beginning of Mary's short epistle. Had she but called me James I would have been sure that her feelings towards me were of a tender nature—I would have been certain that I was more to her than even a very dear friend. But the word *affectionate* at the end was some compensation. She called herself *my affectionate* Mary Rose. Had she not loved me she would not surely have done that. What could she want with me in the witch den at sunset? It was a lonely place, full of birches, hazels, and broom bushes; but a private footpath up the side of the burn that flowed through it was the nearest way to the village from Hilton Farm. Perhaps she only wanted me to accompany her there and back, as it might be dark ere she returned. But no; she had something very important to say. Perhaps she wanted to make known her affection for me. I soon reasoned myself into the belief that such must be the case, and had it not been for the *Mr* at the beginning of the note, I would have had no doubt at all. I was very much excited in regard to the subject all the Monday, and at length gave vent to my feelings in the following effusion—

I'll awa tae yon bower,
At the sweet gloamin' hour,
Where I'll banish each warldly care;
And on yon snowy breast
My head I will rest,
For my heart it is aching sair.

Nae red roses grow
In yon bonny howe,
Tae refresh wi' their fragrant smell;
But a flower mair fair,
Whose sweets I share,
Blooms for me in yon broomy dell.

Awa ye sun bright,
Wi' your dazzling light;
Hide ahint yon distant hill—
Then a star will appear,
That my heart will cheer,
Mang the broom by the wimpling rill.

When the silvery gleam
Of the pale moonbeam
Shimmers down through the leafy grove,
Then Mary and me,
Near the auld thorn tree,
Will confess to each other our love.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE INTERVIEW.

It very often happens that our romantic anticipations of scenes and circumstances are quite different from what they turn out in reality. I never imagined beforehand, that the day preceding the evening I was to meet with Mary, could be ought but fair and sunny. Great then was my disappointment to find it rendered damp and dull by a continuous Scotch mist. My poetical invocation to the sun requesting him to remove his dazzling light would be quite unnecessary. Mary and I might probably confess our love beside the auld thorn tree, but there seemed no likelihood that the pale moonbeam's silvery gleam would shimmer down upon us during the process.

As there was not much business doing, I sat in the little back shop most of the day and amused myself by conjecturing the mode and nature of the expected interview. Many were the fond endearing little speeches that I made for myself to make to Mary in reply to the affectionate terms in which I thought it possible she might address me, and great pleasure had I in imagining the powerful effect they must necessarily produce.

Evening, however, came at last; and after shutting the shop, brushing my hair, and making my-

self as neat as possible, I put a peppermint lozenge in my mouth to sweeten my breath, and started for the anld thorn tree in the witch den. Though the night was very far from my beau ideal of a night for meeting with my sweetheart, yet it had this advantage, that, being foggy, it would screen me from observation while going to the place of meeting. After leaving the village, I leapt across an old stone dyke into a field, and was making my way through it towards the stream that flowed along the other side of it before entering the witch den. When more than half-way through this field I heard a bellowing sound behind me, and, on looking round, beheld dimly through the mist the figure of Milton's wild bull coming towards me. Seen looming through the fog, he seemed much larger than was natural, and the terror with which he inspired me was indescribable. I was not many minutes in reaching the other side of the field, the fence of which I cleared at one bound, but, O, dire misfortune! which I would fain not record, my coat tail had been caught in the passage, and was left sticking on the point of one of the paling stobs. It added to my vexation that the bull had not followed me after all, and that my misfortune had been caused by a mere panic which might lay me open, were it known, to the snspicion of cowardice. Having a few pins about me, I fastened on the fragment as neatly as possible, and prepared to cross the stream, down the other side of which I must needs go before

reaching the trysting place. If there are such beings as the fates, they must have been against me that night, for whether from agitation or from being exhausted by my swift flight from the bull, I had not strength sufficient to leap across the stream. I selected a narrow part where the water ran still and deep between the level green banks, but though I gave myself as much momentum as possible by taking a short race before making the leap, I alighted about a foot short of the opposite bank in nearly three feet deep of water. This would have been sufficient to damp the ardour, and cool the resolution of one less determined than myself, but "faint heart never won a fair lady" thought I, while scrambling out on the other side. As I went down the little pathway the water in my shoes made a disagreeable jerking noise, and at every step came oosing through the pint-holes, and over the edge of the upper-leather. I might have stopt to empty my shoes, and wring the water out of my stockings, but I knew that I was somewhat late, and was determined to suffer any inconvenience rather than keep Mary waiting. I was, however, at the appointed place about five minutes before her. During that short interval I had time to reflect that I was in a condition very unfavourable to health, for, instead of having my head cool and feet warm, I had my head warm and my feet cool. But these selfish thoughts were all put to flight upon the appearance of Mary, who came softly down the bank behind me and put her

hand in mine almost before I was aware of her presence. Neither of us spoke for a few minutes. Mary's look was grave; and to me the silence was painful.

"Dear James," she at length said, "I trust you will not think me very imprudent in asking you to meet me here alone; I might have written all I had to say, but our friendship has been so long and so uninterrupted, that I thought I might place confidence in you, that you would not misunderstand or misconstrue the motives which induced me to ask for this interview."

"And be assured, Miss Rose, your confidence will not be misplaced, for there is nothing that could be done but would willingly be done by me to serve you. Only make known to me your wishes and I am ready to execute them."

"Let there be no ceremony between us to-night, James,; call me Mary for this night at least, as it is the last time we may be together for a long time. I will be very frank and confidential with you, James, and trust you will be the same with me."

"But why cannot we meet often, dear Mary? Are you going away from here? There will be very many miles between us if I cannot sometimes come to see you."

"There will be very many miles between us, for I am going far away from here. But, dear James, though we should have opportunities we must not meet again, for a time at least. Listen, and I will

tell you why. My father had a brother, with whom, for some reason or other which I never rightly understood, he did not live on very intimate terms for some time before his death. This uncle of mine is a wealthy merchant in Glasgow. He has lately suffered severe family bereavement, and is now mourning the loss of his only son. Not long ago he wrote a very kind letter to my mother, telling her that he had settled on her a handsome yearly income, and offering to give me, if I would come and live in his family, a good education along with his two daughters—my cousins. My mother is very grateful to my uncle for his kindness, and has resolved to accept his kind offer in regard to me; and in less than a week I shall leave for Glasgow. But that is not all. My mother has observed that our intercourse has hitherto been as free and cordial as if we were brother and sister; and I am sure, James, no sister ever loved a brother more sincerely than I love you; and I shall despise myself if ever I cease to be grateful to you, who so generously saved my life at the risk of your own. Last week my mother, while conversing with me seriously in regard to my future prospects, told me, that it would be prudent for me, as I am now almost arrived at womanhood, to cease to have familiar intercourse with you any longer. She says she has the greatest respect for you, and would willingly do anything in her power to advance your interests; but that our paths in life are likely to be very different, and that

it will be better for us both to separate now. She made me promise not to see you more than once before I go away, and never to write to you when I am away. I was very reluctant, but I made this promise, and since I have made it I will keep it—hoping, however, that in course of time we shall have the pleasure of renewing our intercourse, with my mother's permission and approval. I know that it is your worldly position that influences my mother; but the confidence I have in your ability soon to better yourself in that respect, gives me hope for the future."

While Mary was telling me all this, I experienced a great variety of feelings; but that which predominated, and which remained fixed in my mind, was one of resentment against Mrs Rose for acting, as I thought, in so cruel and arbitrary a manner. This feeling, however, I managed to conceal out of regard to Mary, whose meek submission and filial obedience I could not help respecting.

"Your mother must be obeyed, Mary," said I, "though it seems very hard. You say you love me as a brother, but I feel that I love you more than as a sister; you love me from a mere feeling of gratitude, but I love you for yourself."

"You do me injustice, James, you have misunderstood me; I love you as a brother, and I cannot but feel grateful to you; but my love for you is more than brotherly, and there is in my heart a feeling towards you that is stronger than gratitude."

"Knowing this, dear Mary, and having faith in your constancy, I shall endeavour to make myself worthy of you."

I pressed the dear girl to my bosom, and kissed her forehead. She gave me a lock of her hair, tastefully tied with a bit of blue ribbon, and bade me keep it for her sake. She asked me in return for a lock of mine, which I willingly gave her. Many were the assurances we gave each other of unwavering constancy. We felt sure our love could never change. Sad was our parting; but we tore ourselves away from each other. We would have often turned and looked back, waved our hands, and blown kisses to each other, as lovers generally do in such circumstances, but the mist was too thick, and the darkness too great, for us to see to do such things. The night was emblematic of my future prospects—I could not clearly see my way before me. The means by which I might raise myself to eminence were as yet invisible. However, I determined not to despair. I had a prize to gain, and I would strive for it. Many strive for prizes—all do not win; yet those who lose are often great gainers, for the competitor, though unsuccessful, acquires by his efforts power and dexterity, which more than repay him for all his trouble. With cold feet, a sad heart, and agitated feelings, I reached home that night—miserable in mind and body.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ECLIPSE OF FAITH.

On the morning after my parting with Mary, I awoke in a wretched condition. My throat was so sore that I could with difficulty swallow anything, and I was so hoarse that Auntie Tibbie could scarcely make out a word I said. Notwithstanding the candour and earnestness with which Mary had expressed her affection for me, I now began to doubt her sincerity. I thought if she really loved me, she would not have been so easily persuaded to cease holding intercourse with me, even for a time. My ideas of love-making had been principally derived from ballads and novels, and in these I had seen love overcoming all obstacles, — opposing itself with unbending obstinacy to the wishes of parents and brothers, and even breaking through the restraints of the divine law ; and when circumstances were most adverse, and there seemed no escape from a course of conduct opposed to the interests of true love, the thwarted one had always a last resource—she could "lay her doon and dee." The conduct of Mary, when compared with that of the heroines of fiction, and of the olden time, seemed cold and tame, and made me doubt whether, after all, the affection she professed for me was the genuine passion of true love. These

unworthy feelings would doubtless soon have passed away, and my better frame of mind would have quickly returned, had I not received a visit from an old acquaintance, who possessed a great influence over me, and the whole tenor of whose conversation tended to shake my belief in every kind of goodness, whether human or divine. This acquaintance was Mr Benjamin Simmons, who had now been two sessions at college. Ben had come to stay for a few weeks with Dr. Quacker, partly to assist the worthy old gentleman, and partly to get some practice in his profession before going to resume his studies at Aberdeen during the next winter session. When Ben came in, during the forenoon, I was in bed, and under the careful surveillance of Auntie Tibbie. That stern matron had been subjecting me to a course of treatment in which I had not much faith, but to which I felt myself obliged to conform. As an infallible remedy for my hoarseness, she had wrapped my stocking round my neck, with the sole next the chin; and as a general restorative, she had made me swallow about two pints of a kind of water gruel, which she called *brochan*. I had meditated rebellion against Tibbie's authority, and made two or three attempts to rise; but, on her removing my clothes, and telling me that unless I lay still for two or three hours, she would not restore them, I became quietly resigned to my fate.

When Ben came in I scarcely knew him. It was more than two years since I had seen him last. He

was dressed in the most fashionable style. Looked at with the eye of a tailor, the appearance of the man was faultless. There was a perfection of shineyness about his hat and boots that bespoke the fashionable gentleman. The short cane, with an ivory head, which he continually applied to his lips, gave the finishing touch to his external appearance of gentility. A thin, watery-looking assemblage of hairs on each cheek, which became thinner and more watery-looking as they approached the region of the chin, showed that he wished to have a manly look; and a few hairs sparsely spread over his upper lip, indicated that he was desirous to look fierce; but they were so few and so fine, that their only effect was to make him look feeble.

When Auntie Tibbie introduced him into my bedroom, he looked at me for a minute or two, and pressed the ivory head of his cane to his lips, then, with a sudden start, he grasped my hand, and said: —"Why, Tacket, what's the matter? why are you in bed, old fellow?"

I scarcely knew what reply to make to this salutation: there was a warmth in Ben's manner which I rather liked; but I could not see the propriety of the term old fellow, as applied to me. After looking for a moment, somewhat doubtful as to whether he might not be mocking me, I said—

"I have got cold, Mr Simmons; but it's not much; I hope I shall soon get better."

"What the dickens is that you've got about your

throat? No wonder you can't speak with snch a stunning choker on. Undo the bandages, and let us have a diagnosis."

"I daresay you will langh at me, Mr Simmons, when I tell you that I have got one of my own stockings about my throat. I have no faith in it myself; but my auntie says that there is a virtue in the perspiration of the feet, which, when absorbed by the sole of a stocking, and applied externally, proves a never-failing remedy for a sore throat. She says she has tried it in numerous instances, and never known it to fail."

"The deuce she has," said Ben, taking out his note-book and pencil; "I must make a memorandum of that. By jingo! there are more cures in heaven and earth than were ever dreamed of by onr most learned faculty. Who knows but I may find use for this yet. If I could only obtain plenty of perspiration to make throat plaisters, and advertise properly, I might make my fortune."

Ben closed his note-book, and put it in his pocket, with such a knowing wink, that I saw he was in a joking mood; but he immediately assumed a graver manner, and said, "Come, now, and tell me seriously how you got this cold."

After some hesitation, I made him promise never to speak of it to any one, and told him the whole affair.

Ben received my narrative with sundry very expressive contortions of visage, and such exclama-

tions as, 'The doose you did!' 'The doose she did!' He took a handkerchief from his pocket, and seemed so affected with my story that he rubbed his eyes; but I cannot say for certain whether it was tears he was wiping away. When I had ended, he said—

"Really, Tacket, my dear fellow, it's quite a romance; what a pity that it's all humbug."

"But it's all true, Mr Simmons, and there is no humbug about it."

"You don't mean to say, my verdant young friend, that the girl really loves you. She said it, no doubt, and you believed her at the time, and I daresay I ought to excuse you for having faith in her even now; but when you have as much experience as I have had, you will think differently. Sighs and tears, plighted troths and broken hearts, are all very fine, as bits of sentimental bye play, aside from the real business of life; but I assure you a regard for number one is the predominating motive that influences every man and woman. She loves you, but she leaves you, in fact, gives you up. Better your worldly position, and she will again hold intercourse with you. I believe her—the worldly position will win her smiles."

"I think you do Mary injustice. She has been well brought up. Not only does she know the letter of the fifth commandment, but she has imbibed its spirit. In obeying her mother contrary to her own inclinations, she proves herself to be animated by motives the very opposite of selfish."

"Gammon and bosh! religion is made the pretext for every kind of selfishness. Whatever wicked thing your would-be holy people wish to do they always find some sort of religious sanction for it. You are a green young man, Tacket, and believe all that ministers and good people tell you. The age of reason has not yet dawned upon you, but I feel an interest in you, and must endeavour to set you free from the bonds of superstition."

I must let the veil of silence drop over the particulars of what followed. Suffice it to say, that this silly fool, with his gay, rattling, off-hand manner, his glib tongue, and a considerable smattering of learning, obtained such an influence over me as to unhinge my faith in everything that was sacred. I shudder even yet when I think of the horrid state of mind in which I lived for nearly twelve months after this. Ben supplied me with "The Age of Reason," "Haslam's Letters," "The New Moral World," &c., the reading of which brought me to a state of universal doubt. Good habits which my mother taught me were abandoned as silly superstitious practices, unworthy of a mind swayed by reason alone. From the altitude of my self-conceit I looked down with contempt on my ignorant fellow-creatures, but out of pity for their prejudices I practised a hypocritical conformity to established usages. But all my philosophical reason, as I called it, could not keep down doubts and fears. I was haunted by vague terrors which no amount of

mere reasoning could drive away. "Whence came I?" "why am I here?" "what awaits me hereafter?" were questions ever recurring to my mind, and which kept me in a state of continual unrest. It is strange, that when the mind is strongly moved by passion, good or bad, it has a tendency towards verse. My poetical reading at this time consisted principally of the then newly published works of Byron and Shelly. I was a great admirer of such pieces as "Heaven and Hell," "Cain a Mystery," &c. I sometimes think that the admiration created for some of the worst of the productions of these men of genius, exercised a great influence in bringing in the spasmodic school of poetry, from the pernicious influence of which poetical literature has suffered greatly, and notwithstanding the lash of Ayton, is still suffering much; for I find that nearly all the pieces composed by myself about this time are strongly spasmodic. There is a kind of grammatical connection which gives them a seeming coherency, but there is an utter absence of meaning. As a specimen, and to give an indication of how near to a state of mind bordering on madness I was reduced at this period, I shall quote the introduction to a long poem called—

THE INFINITIES—A MYSTERY.

Who dares with me to tread the dark inane,
With tortuous feet up to the murky verge,
Where sit enthroned the vast infinities?
Let him advance, and tempt the bold emprise.
By the great soul of Milton, I am calm,

As is a slumbering infant on the verge
Of an incensed volcano growling grim.
I stood npon a monntain peak sublime,
And gazed aloft upon the vast concave,
I mocking laughed at the great vault of heaven,
Nay, jeered and flouted with a ribald sneer.
I raised aloft my great immaculate face,
And, taunting, cried, "On this devoted head
Shower down thy fires of ruin; they will pale
Within this cycle which my presence fills."
I spoke and shook my god-like curls aloft.
From the big belly of a burly clond
Came forth a growl as if from pain of spasm.
Aloft I gazed, and cast one eagle glance
Right in the face of the mad glaring sun.
He shuddered in his path, and, struck with awe,
Withdrew his paly beams within his sphere.
Another glance from those great orbs of mine
Hurled him defeated from the vault of heaven.
The stars fell palsied round my stamping feet
Then snnk in Lethe's deepest Stygian gloom.
My eyes next scanned the vast Tartaric hold,
Where each upon his adamantine steep,
Reclined the eternal volubilities,
Encoiled in folds where baseless visions loom.
Shuddering the vast infinities next heard
The shriek with which I woke the great concave,
Startling the reign of chaos and old night.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SERMONISING.

The means by which I was withdrawn from the state of infidelity into which I had been led, by the precepts and example of Mr Benjamin Simmons, were gradual in their operation. On the departure of that young gentleman for college I had no one to hold intercourse with on the subject, and my own reasonings, in regard to my position in creation, and the purpose of my being, founded as they were on sceptical premises, led to very unsatisfactory conclusions.

Ben had been in the habit of congratulating himself and me as being happily free from the yoke of superstition, and under the guidance of reason alone. I felt, however, that this had by no means added to my happiness. The thought that God exercises no care over us, but has left us to the guidance of our own reason, did not, somehow, yield me much comfort. To feel myself one of many thousands of miserable creatures in a "forsaken and fatherless world," did not seem, after all, to afford great cause for self-gratulation. To believe that my thinking part was like a fitful flickering flame which death would put out for ever as an extinguisher does a candle, did not fill me with joy and rejoicing. I be-

gan to think it hard that men should have as it were a yearning after a highest good—a longing for rest with happiness, after the struggle and the strife of life's battle is ended; and yet have no guide to show them where to find it. This led me the more carefully to examine the claims of the Bible to be such a guide, and gradually I came to the conclusion, that the morality with which it is filled is too pure to have come from a human source, supposing human nature to have always been such as it is; that the bliss of heaven is too purely spiritual—too unlike the pleasures which men enjoy on earth, to have been conceived of by them as the highest ideal of happiness, and the best reward of perfect obedience; that there is no basis in the mind of man or in anything that he knows, on which it was possible to found the scriptural conception of the being and attributes of God and his relation to man through a Redeemer; and that the purity of life, and the disinterested love of that Redeemer, so far transcend all human experience, that He could not possibly have been a merely human conception. For these reasons, and before I had studied the historical evidences, I became convinced that the Bible is the will of God to men. For weeks and months did I ponder on these things; but, at length the incubus of doubt in regard to them was entirely shaken off. I had much more difficulty in recovering my faith in the possibility of disinterested human affection. Mrs Rose had left Hilton Farm

soon after Mary's departure, and I had not heard anything of the dear girl for more than twelve months.

During that period I had done nothing towards the bettering of my worldly position, and had now very little prospect of being soon able to do so. My father was unable to assist me to get to college, and I could not see my way clearly, if I should have to trust entirely to my own resources. I was still with Dr. Quacker, and, thanks to him had acquired a good knowledge of Latin; but my inclinations were now tending more towards theology than medicine. I began to wish that I could become a great preacher. What an amount of good I thought I would do. Mary could not fail to love me, and her mother would be proud to own me as her son-in-law.

I now ceased to write spasmodic poetry, and occupied the greater part of my leisure time in writing sermons. Notwithstanding the change for the better that had been lately wrought within me, I was still much under the influence of inordinate vanity. I imagined that my sermons were perfect models of composition. When I read printed sermons that were accounted good specimens of pulpit eloquence, I had thought how tame and flat they were in comparison to mine. I never heard such flowery language as my own, and the imagery employed for the purpose of illustration was most gorgeous. I felt sure that if it were once known that I could write such sermons,

ways and means would be found for getting me advanced to the ministry, and my highest anticipations would be fulfilled. I had tried the effect of them once or twice at home when my father was out, and Tibbie had declared that she could not understand them; but Tammas said they were splendid, and that the style of language was far grander than that of any sermons he had ever heard preached. Tibbie said there were far too few practical applications in them, and that though there were a great many fine sounding words, there seemed to be a want of connection. Tammas bade me never mind her, as she hadna the poetic faculty, and assured me that they were just like prose poems, and some passages minded him of bits o' Thomson's seasons. I thought there was a good deal of truth in what Tammas said, and resolved not to let my light remain hid under a bushel.

One night, when in company with Mr Wilson, the minister, I told him that I had written a few sermons for my own amusement, that I had no idea there was any merit in them; but that if he liked I would read one of them to him some night, and get his opinion as to the style.

Mr Wilson said, "I am pleased to know, Mr Tacket, that you have been so well employed. Even though the sermons are not of much value, the writing of them may do you good, for you may thereby acquire a habit of thinking, and, if you are careful, you may improve your style of composi-

tion. Come over to the manse to-morrow night and bring one of your sermons with you, and I shall hear it, and will freely give you my opinion in regard to it."

I thought there was something satirical about the remarks of Mr Wilson. Did he suppose that I had not yet acquired a habit of thinking? Did he think my style of composition needed improvement? That was the very thing in which I thought myself a proficient. However, I thanked him for his kindness and promised to come.

Next night, after shutting the shop, I selected the sermon which I considered to be my finest production, and went to wait on the minister. I had no fear of his criticism I had been so delighted by the sermon myself, that I felt sure it must meet with his approbation.

The minister's house was kept by an old maiden lady—his aunt. She had a very rough manner, which, to those not intimately acquainted with her, seemed to proceed from downright ill nature, and yet she was in reality a kind-hearted woman. It was only in the presence of those whom she considered real gentlemen, that she became in the least deferential; and to those who she imagined were assuming airs above their station, she was scarcely civil. In all my previous visits to the manse I had gone to the kitchen door, and had comported myself so humbly that I had reason to believe that I was regarded with special favour by Miss Brisby. Man-

kind, from Miss Brisby's point of view, might have been divided into two classes—kitchen-door people and front-door people; and never was her ire more easily roused than when one of the former attempted to encroach on the privileges of the latter. I had several times thought, on previous occasions, that I ought to become a front-door man; but never, until now, was I able to screw my courage up to the point of making the attempt. Most gentlemen who called on the minister went to the front door. I knew that the doctor was, on all occasions, a front-door man; and I thought it would be no great presumption if I, when invited to read a sermon of my own composition to the minister, should shake off my timidity, and boldly ring the front door bell. When Miss Brisby came to the door in answer to the summons, she planted herself in the middle of the passage, and calmly surveyed me from head to foot, for a few moments, and then she said in a dry satirical tone, "Gude keep us a', I could hardly believe my e'en; that's jist you, Jamie Tacket; I thocht it was a gentleman."

I was a little staggered at this reception, and felt for a moment a slight inclination to resent the implication that I was not a gentleman; but I restrained myself, and asked if Mr Wilson was in. She said,

"He is that, Sir—Mr Tacket, I suppose I maun ca' ye—— eh, Sirs, what will this warld turn till;" and, with a low bow of mock deference, she ushered me into the library. I was terribly chagrined; my

pride was deeply wounded, and I could neither vindicate myself nor retaliate without making matters worse.

Mr Wilson received me very kindly, and asked if I had brought my manuscript. I produced it, and after some hesitation began to read. After I had delivered two pages in my finest style, and was gaining confidence, and becoming more and more emphatic, Mr Wilson quietly told me to stop. He said he had heard quite enough to enable him to form a judgment as to the merits of the production. There was a peculiar smile on his face when he said this, that I did not at all like.

"Mr Tacket," said he, "from what I know of you, I think you can bear to be told the truth, and that you will not be offended though it should be disagreeable."

My heart was sinking within me—my hopes were fading fast; but I stammered out "O no, not at all; tell me just what you think."

"Well, then, the most glaring defect in your style is, that it is too diffuse. There are, by far, too many words for the ideas. There are certain words that occur too frequently, such as, "sublime," "magnificent," "glorious." Your information, also, is too defective. You must read more books of general information to enable you to avoid absurdities. Read again that last paragraph, in which you describe the evening of the crucifixion."

"'Tis evening. All is calm and still. Silence

sublime broods on the face of nature. The glorious sun is sinking in solitary magnificence behind the western hills, tinging their oriental tops with gold. Not a single sound is to be heard save the harsh, dissonant braying of the Roman trumpets, and the doleful knell of the clocks in the lofty steeples of Jerusalem."

"You will observe, Mr Tacket, that oriental means Eastern, and the propriety of describing the setting sun as tinging the eastern tops of the western hills, is very questionable. You have committed what critics would call a great anachronism in representing clocks as knelling in steeples, more than a thousand years before clocks were invented. Pay a little more attention to the sense, and you will doubtless yet be a good writer."

When I left the manse I was very crest-fallen. I had, however, sense enough to see the justice of Mr Wilson's remarks, and felt the necessity of being more humble and modest in estimating my own acquirements and abilities. I began to have a dim perception of the great truth, that the first step towards excellence of any kind is humility; that he who would securely climb must begin at the bottom of the ladder, and mount step by step. I grew daily more and more discontented with my village life. I had an end to gain. Circumstances were very adverse; but I resolved to go out into the world, and try to overcome them.

CHAPTER XXIX.

STARVATION—RELIEF.

On a cold November evening, in the year 18—, a tall, ruddy, but somewhat raw-looking young man might have been seen sauntering along Prince's Street, Edinburgh. He stoops a little, and there is a want of that springiness of step, and smartness of attire, which a person might expect in one so young. Indeed, there is a shade of sadness on his countenance which it is pitiful to behold; and the furtive glances which he casts, sometimes in the faces of the passers by, and sometimes at the shop windows —especially at those in which there are pies and other pastries temptingly displayed—betoken a mind suffering great anxiety. On each side, before and behind, there are objects of the greatest beauty, and rich with historical associations; but he thinks not of them. Scenes of great natural grandeur, enriched with almost every kind of architectural adornment, are around him; but he regards them not. His thoughts are evidently employed much more subjectively than objectively—more occupied with things internal than external. There is a hollowness about his cheeks, and a slackness about the lower part of the vest, which might lead an attentive observer to suspect that he has not of late been troubled with too many of the good things of

this life; and one might conclude from the longing looks which he directs towards bakers' bread-baskets, and from the lingering slowness with which he passes areas, whence come steaming up the rich odours of savoury dishes, that he is, at the present moment, suffering the pangs of hunger, and that the most delightful prospect that could be presented to his view would be the prospect of a good dinner. Having passed along the whole length of Prince's Street without discovering any means whereby his desires might be gratified, he mounts the Calton stairs, leaning his hand on his knee at every step, as if to give the back that support which it ought to get from the belly, and slowly ascends the Calton Hill. He seats himself upon a cold stone seat on the north side of the National Monument; and with the spine of his back bent outward, more than seems natural, a hand on each cheek, and his elbows resting upon his thighs a little above the knees, he looks over the town of Leith to the Frith of Forth and the shores of Fife; and to the eye of an artist, he might now serve as an excellent model for a statute of starvation.

I, James Tacket, was the young man here described. Some one lately told me, that if I would write my history more in the style of a novel, it would be much more interesting; and in the beginning of this chapter I have made the attempt. It was very foolish in me to do so, for I feel myself incapable of going on with it.

Excuse me, then, gentle reader, and allow me to resume my narrative in my usual plain manner. You see me sitting on a stone seat on the top of the Calton Hill at Edinburgh, and you now, doubtless, want to know how I came there. Well, then, thus it was :—

After the severe but just criticism of my favourite sermon by Mr Wilson, I lost all conceit of myself, and became very unhappy. My prospects, as I said before, were very gloomy ; and certain remarks that began to be made at home, in my hearing, almost rendered me desperate. My father said I was lazy; and that if I did not resume the apron and the awls I wad gae weirdless. Tibbie said I was growin' a big idle foutar, and no worth my meat. Tammas alone said a word in my favour. He was sure that I was an unappreciated genius ; and that if I could only get tae Em'bro, and there make my abilities known, I wad be sure tae shine like a star i' the poetical warld. But Tammas's flattery had now little power over me, for ever since my disappointment in regard to the sermon, I suspected his judgment was not very sound in regard to literary matters. His making mention of Edinburgh, however, planted in my mind the first germ of a desire to go there ; and in the course of a few days it grew into a determination, which I communicated to Tammas ; and he not only approved of it, but generously, though secretly, for fear of Tibbie, lent me thirty shillings to assist me in my project. I

left home early on a Monday morning, and travelled on foot to Dundee—crossed the Tay in a small boat to Newport, journeyed through Fife to Kirkcaldy, and then passed over the Forth to Leith in a steamboat—the first I had ever seen, and one of the first that plied between those places. On reaching Edinburgh I felt sadly bewildered, and did not know where to go. I had heard such stories of the wickedness of the less respectable places in it, that I was afraid lest I should land in some bad locality, and perhaps be murdered by cruel men like Burke and Hare—one of whom had been lately executed. In order to guard as much as possible against such a contingency, I resolved that, in seeking for lodgings, I would go only to the most respectable parts of the new town. When I came into Abercrombie Place, and saw a ticket with "Lodgings" on it, sticking out at a window, I thought this is the place for me; and with my few necessaries tied up in a red napkin, and carried over my shoulder on the end of my walking stick, I went up the steps, rung the door bell, and asked the gentlemen who answered, if he could give me lodgings. He smiled a peculiar but good-humoured smile, said I was completely out of my latitude, and directed me to some porters, who, he said, would show me where to get lodgings.

After some trouble, I took a room in the sixth story of one of those high houses for which Edinburgh is remarkable, in a steep street that goes down

from James Square towards the Adelphi Theatre. I lived there for about a fortnight, and had made several attempts to get some means of earning money, but without success. I had tried every druggist in town, but none of them wanted an assistant. My thirty shillings were all spent, I had brought myself down to a couple of rolls per day, and had no money to pay for my next week's lodgings or to buy food, and in this great strait I sauntered along Princes Street as already described, and sat down on the Calton Hill.

To be hungry, and not to know where to get food, is, indeed, a very miserable condition. To be in a city where wealth abounds—where all good things are temptingly displayed in great profusion, and not to have the power of alleviating the craving of hunger, is most painfully tantalising. I do not believe that the savage old heathen Tantalus, himself, was ever more miserable than I was, as I sat on the cold stone seat on that cold November night, with an empty pocket and a no less empty stomach. I was too honest to steal, and too proud to beg. There was but one resource left—I might list and become a soldier.

I resolved to go down into the town and make one more attempt to get something to do, and if unsuccessful, I would then take the shilling.

I felt that I was an object of commiseration to the passers by; for some of them who happened to notice me slackened their pace and looked at me

with a pitying gaze, but no one spoke to me. They generally passed on with such a shrug of the shoulders as made me suppose that they took me for the victim of my own misdeeds. Darkness was coming on; the Inchkeith light was beginning to revolve out in the Frith, the lamps were being lighted up, down in Leith Walk, and I was rising to go away, when there passed me an old gentleman with a young lady leaning on his arm. There was something in the profile of the lady's face, of which I got but a slight glimpse, that startled me, because it reminded me of one whose image was still fondly cherished in my remembrance. There was a cadence in the tones of her voice, as she talked, though I did not hear distinctly what she said, that made my heart beat violently and my blood circulate rapidly. I felt an impulse to rush forward and speak—but no —it could not be she—the figure before me was slightly taller—she went to Glasgow, and I never heard that she had any friends in Edinburgh. It must be a delusion.

I was not, however, satisfied. They were moving on round the hill, and I resolved to take a short cut across and meet them full in front. Though weak and like to faint, I made a great effort to look smart, and in less than five minutes, I was coming up to them and was within a few yards of them. How my heart bounded : I was recognised.

"James!"

"Miss Rose," and our hands were clasped together.

"Oh, Mr Bibloson, this is a very dear old friend of mine, Mr Tacket."

"An *old* friend, eh! Miss Rose, an *old* friend?" said the old gentleman, surveying me from head to foot with a dubious look.

"I mean that I knew him long ago—that he once saved my life, when we lived in the country.

"Very good. How de do, Mr Tacket," said the old gentleman, putting into my hand two of his fingers which I tried to shake as genteely as possible. Before I could reply he put his arm in mine and said, "we must hurry home to dinner. You have not dined, have you, Mr Tacket? come and have a chack with us."

I shall not spoil the conception, which each reader may form for himself, of my feelings, by any attempt to describe them.

CHAPTER XXX.

I GET A SITUATION.

Few remarks were made by any of us as we went down to Forth Street. Mary, partly from bashfulness and partly from being uncertain as to whether it would be for my advantage in the esteem of Mr Bibloson, did not put many questions to me. For obvious reasons I said very little during dinner, but demeaned myself as quietly as possible. When the viands were set before me I felt a strong tendency to eat voraciously; but had presence of mind enough to think how unbecoming that would be, and put so great a restraint upon myself that I have reason to believe no one observed that I ate with a greater relish than usual. When dinner was nearly over, and when a comfortable sensation of internal satisfaction was beginning to spread through my frame, I began to divert my thoughts a little from the grosser creature comforts of which I had stood so much in need, and directed my attention to the persons and things by which I was surrounded. The table was four-square. At the one end sat Mr Bibloson, at the other sat Miss Bibloson, and opposite me sat Miss Rose. Mr Bibloson was a middle-sized man, upwards of sixty, with a shining bald head, and largely developed organs of veneration and acquisitiveness. He had naturally no whiskers, and

the three or four long curled, brownish hairs that were visible on each cheek showed that he had, for a long time at least, given up the attempt to cultivate them. His nose was neither Roman nor Grecian; it was too large for a pug, and too downward in its tendencies for a snub. From its resemblance to a regularly-shaped, moderately-sized, kidney potato, with the thick end downward, I believe physiognomists would have designated it a potato nose. Its resemblance to a potato was much increased by the immense quantity of snuff which he took—giving it an unwashed, earthy appearance at its lower extremity. His chin was double, and somewhat pendant in its folds; and as it was supported by a stiff stock and shirt collar, it seemed to wrinkle up towards his face as if moved by a continual smile. The lower part of his body was well developed; and to vulgar minds it would have suggested the idea of a barrel. One glance at him as he sat picking his teeth, and looking at me with a pleased expression, served to impress on my mind these the most striking points of his appearance. I then made a hasty survey of Miss Bibloson, and saw that she was a rather tall, wiry-looking maiden, on the wintry side of fifty. The words angular and skinny were applicable to every part of her outward framework, which had a ricketty appearance. When she moved you could not help expecting to hear her creak. A pair of green spectacles astraddle on a thin sharp nose of the

Roman type gave considerable dignity to her bearing. Her face was directed towards me, but I could not tell whether or not she was looking at me, for the green of her spectacles was of so very dark a green, that I could not see her eyes. Mary I need not describe ; she was of course all radiant with beauty —the whole of her and every part of her was the perfection of loveliness.

"Take a little more pudding," said Miss Biblosson to me.

"No, thank you, maam ; I have had enough."

"*Jam satis habet, jam satis.* Do you understand Latin, Mr Tacket."

"Yes, sir, I can read it and write it ; but I am not able to speak it."

"I think you mentioned that you were in want of a situation. What can you do? Have you learned any business?"

"I could keep a druggist's shop ; but I have tried every druggist in town, and no one will employ me. One said I was too young for him, another said I had had too little experience, a third wanted a certificate of character ; and I have now lost all hope of succeeding in that way."

"Ah! I see how it is; but don't be down-hearted; don't lose respect for yourself on that account. 'Kissing goes by favour ;' don't it, Miss Rose? 'When one door shuts another opens.' Your case is quite a common one. We see many an impudent, illiterate, incapable donkey obtain a preference over

his betters, and experience great success, merely because he can put himself forward, look big, bustle about with a knowing air, and make a show of gravity and wisdom; while modest, deserving men, often creep along in the shade all their lives, and die without the world ever having taken notice of them. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. But the wise man can laugh at the world, and say 'My mind to me my kingdom is.'"

"Very true, sir; but when a man is hungry this kingdom, if he have nothing else, will not yield him much satisfaction."

"There is some force in your observation; the stomach is a kind of vulgar link that binds men to the world whether they will or no. I was speaking on the assumption that a man had the bare necessaries of life. I never was pinched myself; how much do you think, now, would, on a moderate computation, suffice to keep a man alive and in good health. Crato says we should eat but twice a-day—that there should be at least seven hours between our meals; and that we should not eat even then unless we have a good appetite. Celsus says we should always rise from table before we are satisfied. The same things are recommended by Montanus, Avicenna, and others. What do you think, Mr Tacket?"

"I have read much to the same effect. Dr. Quacker, with whom I served my apprenticeship, and nearly all the medical authorities in his

library, recommended abstemiousness; but as very few of them practised their own teaching, I suspect they had not much faith in it. But Prosper Calœnus says, '*simplex sit cibus et non varius*'—'Let your food be simple and your dishes few;' and Lessius holds that from twelve to fourteen ounces of meat and bread, &c., per day, is quite sufficient, and that, were we to confine ourselves to that quantity, we would live much longer. Were I to judge by my own experience, I should say he is quite mistaken. I have been myself for some days past living on two penny rolls a-day (which is rather more than Lessius prescribes), with copious draughts of water; and I find that it is far too little. I believe our own experience is the best guide in such matters. I am inclined, with Tiberius, to laugh at those who, after they have reached the years of discretion, want anybody's advice as to how much they should eat and drink, and as to what would be nourishing and what noxious."

Though I made these remarks in an apparently simple and easy manner, they cost me a considerable effort. My vanity was again in the ascendant, and I wished to astonish my auditors by quoting, in a familiar way, passages of uncommon authors, that I had read in Dr. Quacker's library. I must also confess, though it is by no means to my credit, that there was a good deal of cunning employed in this mode of conversing with Mr Bibloson.

I was wont to play upon Dr. Quacker's weakness

for apt poetical quotations, and often extorted his admiration by my readiness in quoting from old and strange poets. I judged from Mr Bibloson's remarks that he was fond of old authors, and supposed that the best way to ingratiate myself with him was to show that my tastes were similar to his. But in my anxiety to give a decisive and learned opinion, I forgot myself, and let out that which I would rather have concealed. I had been looking down at the table while speaking, and was expecting a reply from Mr Bibloson, which that gentleman seemed in no hurry to make. On looking up, I observed Miss Rose staring at me with a most searching and pitiful expression, across the table. Mr Bibloson was half out of his chair, bending forward, and staring wildly at me. Miss Bibloson was on her feet adjusting her spectacles, as if about to do something desperate.

"God bless me, Mr Tacket, you dont mean to say that you have been starving, but it must be true, for you look very thin."

The old gentleman awaited no reply; he sprang to the bell handle and rang with great violence. "Bring back the roast beef, Betsy," he said to the servant, "and the soup tureen full of soup, and all the meat you have. He can't be satisfied yet. Two rolls a day. Bless my heart, give me a knife and fork."

Miss Bibloson, before I could make any reply, placed before me a large plateful of pudding, Miss

Rose was pouring wine into my tumbler, and Mr Bibloson was cutting large slices of roast beef, heaping it on a plate before me, and imploring me to eat. In vain I protested that I was satisfied, that I could take no more, but they would give me no peace till they saw me begin to a second dinner.

Mr Bibloson, after considering a moment, said, "We are fools; I beg your pardon, Mr Tacket, I am too impulsive. Too much food after a long fast is injurious. I might have remembered that precept, I wrote it down but yesterday in my Repository. How do you feel youself."

"Poor fellow," said Miss Bibloson, "he is wasted to skin and bone."

Mary said nothing, but she looked a great deal.

I said, "I am very sorry indeed that I mentioned it; I did not intend to let you know, for thanks to your kindness I am now quite well."

"But what will you do to-morrow, said Mary, with tears in your eyes."

"Why, Miss Rose, he will starve, won't he?" said the old gentleman, "we won't give him any meat;" but there was a jocularity about his tone that belied his words.

"Well, well; really our meeting with you, Mr Tacket, has been quite providential. You, Sir, are just the man I have been looking for this fortnight past. I have a sincere desire to benefit my fellow-creatures, and am collecting a library of all sorts of useful books; but to make the knowledge of their

contents available, I am preparing a series of Repositories, in which I mean to insert, very briefly, the results of all discoveries that have a bearing on the welfare of man. I perceive you have read many medical books, and are conversant with the writings of the greatest authorities. You shall begin to assist me to-morrow in making extracts (for which your knowledge of Latin, &c., peculiarly fits you) for my great 'Repository of Medical Precepts.' I will give you three guineas a-week as long as you like to stay with me, and there is your first week's pay," and he put three guineas into my hand and said, "come here to-morrow morning at nine o'clock and begin."

I had no time to thank him, for he left the room abruptly, followed by Miss Bibloson, and left me alone with Mary. She took me by the hand and said, "I cannot just now explain who or what my friends are, as I am expected to follow them up stairs; but come to-morrow morning half-an-hour before nine, and I will see you in the library, before Mr Bibloson comes down stairs. God bless you; good night."

"Good night."

CHAPTER XXXI.

LETTERS FROM HOME.

"It never rains but it pours," says the proverb. On the night on which I obtained a situation with Mr Bibloson, I had some experience of its truth. My worthy employer had given me three guineas; and when I went home to my lodgings I found a letter addressed to me in Tammas Taepiece's well-known hand, containing two one-pound bank notes. I have called it a letter, but it was a letter containing a letter—the enveloping one written by Tammas, and the enveloped one by Tibbie. Tammas's epistle was as follows:—

"Deer James,—This comes to let you know that wee are all engoying the blessing of health and hops it will find you the same. The shades of sadnes has fallin on us sinse your departure. Wan that can simpathise with you in your aspireations mourns your abcense. The blackburd up in the garding seems to me to bee aye singin 'Wae's me for Tammas sinse Jammie's awa.' Ther is a unison between poatic sowls that distanse cannot sever. Mitey sees and vast ocaens may rol their billoes between us and mountins may reer ther towring tops up to the skie; but the cords of affeckshun that bindes our harts together will strech over them awl. The chop of Dr. Quaker does not seem the same cheerie place sinse your sad and much lamented departure and the young man that now sells the drogs and manyoufacturs the peels has not the same consiliateing manners as, you know who. You will bee sorey to hear of the axident that happened to your old ackwaintance Mr Benjamin

Simmons. Word came home a feu daies after you left that the ship in whicb he left last spring to goe to the wbale fishing and all the krew was crusbed to deatb by masses of frozen ise and drowned beneath the mitey isebergs of the cold polar sees. Verily our daies are as grass, one goeth and another cometh and we know not wbense we are, but as Solomon says wee must watch and be sober, for wee know not how soon we may fal. Your fatber is well and sends his cumpliments. Tibbie has written a short epistle and sealed it with ber seal and has delivered tbe said to me to be enclosed in mine whicb I hereby do. As poverty is too often tbe companion of poaitry and as it is rite not to let your rite hand know what your left band doeth I enclose a pound note, witbout Tibbie's knowledge wbich you need not mensbun in your anser, and wbicb you may use for tbe releef of tbe needcessities of nature. I trust that you will continue to culteevate the poetical talents you so largely poses, drink kopious drafts from the fountain of Parnassus, and klimb to tbe loftiest summits of Helicon.

"Be sbure and wright soon. No more at prisint but remains Your affectionate Unkle Tammas Taepiece.

"P.S.—Don't let tbe star of bope sink below the horizun of expectation. The spring time will come wben the *Rose* that disapered in atum will bloom again witb greater splendur and sweeter oders than ever.—T. T."

Having read through this very eloquent letter, I took up that of Auntie Tibbie. It was a small, neatly folded epistle, carefully fastened with bees' wax, and sealed with a thimble. The address, which was plainly written in a round, schoolboy-looking hand, was all close under the upper edge of the envelope, and ran as follows :—

"For James Tacket Drogest Edonboro these go in hast."

"Der nefu—i taik this opertunitee to send you thes fu lins tu let yu no that we ar al wel at prisint thank god for it hoping this wil find you al the sam and Tamas hees to writ a leter and min wil go in it and sav the postage and i wil send in it a pownd without letin him no but mind an taik kare of it for its a lot of siller an may sare yon a long time but as ye had nothing when ye gaed awa an has na doot gotin the grund of yer stamak gin this tim yel maybe ken somthing aboot the valay o money an dinna spend it upon braw claes bnt taik guid kare of the thing ye hae and yel maybe need tae by a cut o worsit tae mend yer stokins for ise warran them gie far throo gin this tim and oor kat kittled yestirday an i droond the kitlins i the washin tub an ive been washin aw day the day and am sare firtigit for theres nae getin the rosit aff thae sonters breeks tho i plotit them among het water mair than twa hoors and Kirsty Kummins she wis up the day an hir bairn s no weel and shes feared its the ruch fivir but its sum beter sins it tuk a switin poodir an a vomit and she sends her compliments and Sanders hes hurts back karying a sak of koles up Dokter kuakers lang stare but kirsty put a bater on it yestreen an hese som beter noo and gin ye be tae make a setelment in Edenboro writ shoon and i l pit a yer things in a trunk and send them wi the karrier and its a guid thing yer klaes is a washin for the way im in i the noo im no able tae staun mukel firtig and Tamas hes extirordinar prood aboot it and ill maist no lat me do a thing and he gaes aboot sayin what a delitefu task it il be tae reer the tendir thote and teech the yung eyedea how tae shoot and I hope he l aye continne in that mind and the ministir Mr Wilson he wis here the day an speerin whan we heard frae ye and gin it be a laddie we are gaun tae kaw it James for Tamas wad like you to get the name and hopin youl tak kare of the siller and writ shoon and lats ken hoo yer komin on no more at prisint bnt remains yours til death Tibbie Tacket.

"P.S.—Mind dinna mention the pownd not when ye writ tae Tamas for he mite think me ower ekstravagant tae gie awa sae mukel siller whan we hive sic sare wark gitten't.—T. T."

I had folded up the letters and put the money in my pocket, and was standing with my back to the fire-place. I was musing in a sort of brown study on my good fortune and my future prospects, when my landlady entered and said—

"I want tae ken, Sir, how lang ye intend to stay here, for there was a gentleman up to-day—a clerk in the post-office—wantin' tae tak' the room, an' we dinna ken naething aboot you, an' gin ye dinna pay the rent a month beforehand, we'll let him get it; an' ye can look out some ither place."

I told her I had no intention of leaving, that I felt myself quite comfortable, and that I would willingly pay a month's rent beforehand; and while saying so, I took the two Dundee Union Bank notes I had just received, and laid them open on the table before me, and threw down the sovereigns and shillings I had got from Mr Bibloson beside them. She looked surprised when her eye lighted on the money, and said "just wait a little till I ask John." She returned in a few minutes, and said,

"John, my husband, is real angry with me for having spoken tae you about leaving. He says he felt an interest in you the first time ever he saw you, and that he is sure there is something real genteel about you. And I was pairtly jokin' mysel' about the month's pay. Ye can jist tak' yer ain time tae pay the rent, and I'll tell the post-office clerk that we canna tak' him in."

For the first time in my life I was not flattered

by flattery. The cause of my landlady's change of tone was too evident. I could not help smiling as she retired, and I went off into a train of musing on the power of money. But this soon gave place to thoughts of to-morrow morning, and of my having to meet Mary alone in the library. That was a night of castle-building, and dreams in which Mary figured largely. I go to sleep just now, intending to awake to-morrow in another chapter.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I MEET WITH MARY.

I awoke and arose at the first peep of dawn, and to use a Yankee phrase, adjusted all my external fixings with the greatest nicety and care.

Though not in general over-anxious in regard to the adorning of my outer man, I have always had a high appreciation of the influence of dress, both for giving one respect for self, and for increasing the estimation in which one is held by others. My mind had been impressed very early with the fact that the respect generally accorded to men by their fellows, depends more on the quality and cut of their clothes than on kindness of heart, or ability of head. Nor do men or women ever think so highly of themselves as when they are well dressed.

The unkempt, unwashed workman, in his every-day clothes feels himself not nearly so worthy of his lady-love, as he does when he has purified his person, and donned his holiday attire. The slipshod nymph in her dirty morning wrapper, with her hair in paper, thinks so little of her merely personal attractions, that she runs to hide herself on the occasion of an untimely visit from her inconsiderate swain. Alas! how easily we are attracted and sometimes deceived by the mere outside show of things. How often is the spooney young man's

angel mere silk and satin? and the fond girl's divine man only a handsome suit? Men's hearts are often electrified, and their peace of mind frequently destroyed by the beauty of a bonnet, the graceful curve of a heartbreaking little side curl, the neatness of a shoe, or the whiteness of a stocking. Ladies' beau-ideals are sometimes mere feathers, steel caps, epaulets, and red coats, or, with reverence be it spoken, white stocks and black coats. This feeling of respect which we entertain for external appearances, when rightly regulated, is very proper, and its influence has an elevating tendency; for it is in accordance with both our religious and our poetical sentiments. "Cleanliness is allied to Godliness." "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

It was with a light heart and a bounding step that I went down Broughton Street that morning. I do not know of anything that has a greater tendency to make a man happy than plenty of money in one's pocket, and the notion that the lady one loves best, loves deeply in return. I was punctual to the appointed time. Betsy, the maid, showed me at once into the library. There was no one in it. Miss Rose had not yet come down stairs, but Betsy said she would do so in a few minutes. I employed the interval in glancing round the room, and taking a general view of its contents. It was a very large room, with only one window, and from floor to ceiling the walls were on all sides covered with book shelves, closely packed with books. The floor

also was covered with books, and in several places there were heaps of them from four to five feet in height, large and small volumes, in all sorts of binding, mingled together in wonderful confusion. I had some difficulty in picking my way to the middle of the apartment, where stood a few chairs and a small table, on which was a writing-desk, and a pile of manuscript volumes. After taking this hasty survey, I sat down on one of the chairs to await the entrance of her whom I had come so early to see. I believe I did not wait five minutes, but the time seemed much longer; and as many thoughts passed through my mind in that short time as might have served for hours, under ordinary circumstances. I tried to be calm, but somehow could not. My heart became quite outrageous in its pulsations, and I thought I heard it thumping against my breast. I once or twice imagined I heard steps outside the door, and half rose from my seat ready to receive her. A slight noise in the passage outside startled me, and I supposed it must be she, but no one entered. Well, she is long in coming, but of course she will be dressing with great care, with intent to astonish me when she comes. No sooner was this foolish thought conceived, than she glided in so quietly that she was beside me almost before I saw her. Her dress was so plain that I felt at first slightly disappointed, but a second glance told me how far plain neatness transcends, in a beautiful woman, the most gorgeous display of artificial

finery. The plain morning wrapper modestly covered, without altogether concealing, the fine contour and graceful outlines of her lovely form. He hair simply braided without any ornamentation, her full and finely-arched forehead, with her small but regular features, brought to one's mind the chaste and classic beauty of the finest forms of Grecian sculpture. We shook hands, of course, and a very warm, very expressive shake it was. The thought did for half a second flash through my mind whether we ought not to effect a conjunction of heads as well as of hands, but prudence was stronger than impulse. What an amount of feeling there is in the soft, gentle pressure of a small delicate hand! I am persuaded that there is in the hands of most ladies, especially of beautiful ones, a great amount of positive electricity, and that they are often the medium through which powerful telegraphic despatches are sent to gentlemen's hearts, on which very striking effects are thus frequently produced. I have often experienced the thing myself, but never more distinctly than on the present occasion. After it, my blood seemed to circulate more rapidly, and my whole frame was filled with an agreeable warmth. These preliminaries and other usual salutations being over, and when we were both seated, Mary said,

"Now, James, tell me the circumstances which led to your leaving home, and to our very unexpected meeting on the Calton Hill."

I told her very briefly all that had occurred, and

concluded by asking, "Who is the gentleman with whom you are living, and who has been so very kind to me."

"Mr Bibloson is by profession an advocate, but for several years past he has led a retired life. He is my uncle's cousin, and is possessed of considerable wealth. He has a small estate in the neighbourhood of Hamilton, which is managed for him by my uncle. You would observe from his conduct last night that he is very impulsive, and sometimes he becomes so excited that he is scarcely responsible for his actions. Several years ago he was employed as counsel in a very important trial, and he became so interested in the case, which his client gained mainly through his exertions, that he slightly unhinged his reason; and at times he becomes so violent that we are afraid lest he should be confined as a lunatic. He is exceeding kind-hearted, and when not excited by any particular notion, displays great good sense. He paid a visit to Glasgow a few weeks ago, and took a fancy that he would like to have me to stay with him for a short time; and my uncle, knowing how dangerous it would be to contradict his humour, allowed me to come here. I go back to Glasgow next week. But I shall be less sorry to go when you are here, because I know that from your own natural kindness of heart, and partly, perhaps, for my sake, you will endeavour to humour and regulate the fancies of our friend as much as possible."

"You may depend upon me doing whatever you desire."

"His latest fancy is, that it would be practicable to condense within a small compass the sum of all the medical knowledge in the world, and he intends to publish it in a single volume, and sell it at a cheap rate for popular use. This notion has been full in his mind for about a week, and you will do well to enter into it, for it will not last long, as some other scheme is sure to turn up to divert his attention. Miss Bibloson knows his weakness, but has a temper somewhat similar to his, and at times becomes so excited by the glowing pictures which he draws of the human race regenerated by his means, that she believes him, and aids him heartily in his plans. We are very desirous to keep him quiet, and as he is really so harmless we would be very sorry indeed should he be put into Morningside. I hear his step on the stair. I must leave you at present. Good bye. I depend on your prudence."

"You may."

Mr Bibloson opened the door, and when he saw us together, he broke forth into a loud laugh.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MR BIBLOSON, THOUGH MAD, TALKS SENSE ON THE EVILS OF BACHELORHOOD.

Under ordinary circumstances such a laugh as that of Mr Bibloson would have been contagious, and I would have been unable to keep from joining in it; but the information I had just received concerning his mental condition made me listen with a kind of pitying doubt to his cachinnatory explosion, and wonder whether it might be the result of something really very ridiculous in our appearance, or of some fantastic notion raised in his disordered mind, looking at ordinary circumstances through the distorted medium of insanity. Mary slipped quietly past him out of the room, and when his mirth had somewhat subsided, he advanced as far as the little table, muttering to himself by the way, "This is not quite what I anticipated, but it is just what I, knowing human nature so well, might have expected. One of the chief ends of man and woman is matrimony; and wherever young men and women are together, they will invariably be found scheming and striving to gain that end, or something worse. The license, too often attending protracted bachelorism, is an evil of the greatest magnitude, therefore, in seeking to ameliorate the condition of mankind, one must endeavour to provide facilities for the

early union of the sexes in the holy bonds of matrimony. Let me see. My 'Repository of Medical Precepts' will benefit mankind physically, but I must endeavour to do something for them morally. Well, this is a capital idea. I will write a book containing the most approved methods of courtship. There is a vast amount of literature on the subject, which, scattered here and there in many books, and in various languages, can be of no avail to the masses; but I will have it all condensed into one volume, and published under the title of the "Lovers' Guide to Matrimony,' for the use of the youth of both sexes. What a happy world it would be were there no diseases, and none of those solitary odd excrescences that, like myself, alas! drop off from the great body of humanity without having contributed in any way to its propagation, thus neglecting one of the first commanded duties." These words were spoken in a soliloquising tone, and during their utterance the old gentleman sat down on a chair, and, with his elbow on a table, leaned his head on his hand. On concluding, he seemed to be much distressed. Tears stood in his eyes, and his sad and steady, but vacant stare, showed that his thoughts were busy with melancholy recollections of other scenes and other times. Wishing to divert his thoughts a little, I said,

"Shall I commence making extracts for the Repository?"

"Yes," said he, starting slightly. "I almost

forgot. You will find in that corner there forty-one octavo volumes of the '*Commentarii Lipsienses de rebus in Medicina Gestis*,' that I bought in Rutherford's yesterday. Read each volume carefully from beginning to end, and make extracts of everything that you think will serve my purpose, and translate the Latin as elegantly as possible. There is also on that shelf at your right hand 'Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy,' and 'The Book of Notable Things.' You will find some excellent precepts in both of them. But, before you begin, tell me what you think of this new idea. Are you in love?"

This was a home-thrust which I did not expect, and a direct question which I did not well know how to answer. His eye was fixed so keenly upon me that I felt any attempt at equivocation would be seen through. I therefore frankly answered, "Yes, I am."

"With whom?"

This was a question which I felt I could not answer so frankly, for I was afraid lest the consequences of a true confession might be fraught with evil to Miss Rose.

"Excuse me, Sir," I said, "I am sure when I tell you that my mentioning the young lady's name might do her harm, you will not press me on the subject."

"I knew it, I knew it. You love Miss Rose. I am glad of it. She shall come to no harm by it. I

wont mention it. I wont ask you to confess it, but if it is true don't say a word."

I was silent.

"I trust, Mr Tacket, you will be more fortunate in your love affairs than I have been. It is a saddening thought to think that I must die a bachelor."

"But, Sir, when bachelors are in easy circumstances they may be very comfortable and happy; and when, like you, they have the means and the will to do good, they may be very useful in the world."

"There is some truth in what you say; they may have bodily comforts, and may do some good, but happy, as far as this world is concerned, they cannot be. There is a feeling of loneliness and solitariness creeps over them, and as they advance in years, and the friends of their youth are separated from them by death or distance, they become more and more isolated and cut off as it were from all human sympathy. The kindness shown to them by relatives who have generally other friends that are nearer and dearer, is often prompted by selfish motives. The news of a rich old bachelor's death is, to his relatives, in the majority of cases, the most welcome news they can hear regarding him. With regard to his wealth, he cannot help thinking that he is but the temporary holder of it, for the purpose of transmitting it to others that are in a measure alien to himself."

"All men, Sir, are in the same condition; they

are but the temporary holders of what they possess, and which at death they must transmit to others."

"Yes, but whatever a married man, with a family, accumulates for the purpose of leaving behind him, he feels more as if he were doing it for himself, for such a man feels that even with regard to this world, when he dies, he shall not all die, but that a part of himself shall still survive in his family, and enjoy whatever he has accumulated. I, myself have no nearer relatives, except my sister, than Miss Rose's mother and her uncle in Glasgow. Miss Rose has no brothers, and her uncle has no sons. When I die, Bibloson Cottage, near Hamilton, with the few hundred acres adjoining, will go to some one who neither bears the name, nor has any of the blood of Bibloson in his veins. Your name, James, is by no means euphonious. Would you have much objection to adopt Bibloson as a surname, instead of Tacket, if it were likely to be for your advantage."

"I think Bibloson is a very excellent name. I should like it very much."

"I can conceive the occurrence of certain circumstances which might render its adoption of great consequence to you in a worldly point of view."

Mr Bibloson was now talking so soberly, and there was so much good sense apparent in his remarks, that I began to think that possibly his mind was perfectly sound, and that those appearances of insanity which he at times exhibited might be merely the healthy natural outbursts of an impul-

sive nature. This opinion, however, was somewhat shaken by his subsequent remarks and strange conduct.

"It would be better for the world, Mr Tacket, if there were no old bachelors; and I think the best thing we can do is to provide a remedy. I shall proceed with the "Lover's Guide" immediately. We shall draw our precepts from both written records and living experience. Take your pen and prepare to write. I shall call in my sister, Miss Rose, and Betsy, the maid, and each shall relate his and her experience in the art of courtship, which you will commit to writing, and we can, afterwards, at our leisure, cull from books the best observations that have been made by wise men on the subject from Ovid downwards.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MR BIBLOSON RELATES HIS EXPERIENCE IN COURTSHIP.

When Mr Bibloson left the library to go for the females, I had a few minutes to reflect on the strange position in which I was placed. It was quite evident that this old gentleman's reason, though sound enough on most topics, yet wanted balance and regulation. He could reason acutely, and feel deeply, in regard to what was uppermost in his thoughts; but whatever occupied his mind did so, to the exclusion of everything else. Should the medical mania continue, there was work lying before me for many years. It would take me a very long time indeed to read through, and make extracts from, the forty-one volumes which he pointed out to me. But then I was uncertain whether the matrimonial mania might not drive out the medical one, to be in its turn superseded by some other. I thought that the best thing I could do would be to regulate the carrying out of his absurd projects as far as possible, and even to encourage him in them, so long as they were harmless in themselves, and not likely to be productive of bad consequences.

Scarcely was this resolution formed when he entered, followed by Miss Bibloson, Miss Rose, and Betsy. Miss Bibloson was grave and stately in her demeanour, and evidently resolved to give her

experience, as a sacred duty. Miss Rose looked a good deal confused, and cast two or three anxious glances towards me, as if wishing to know what could be the meaning and purport of all this. Betsy covered her mouth with her apron, and had evidently great difficulty in maintaining a becoming gravity in presence of her master and mistress. Mr Bibloson, having taken his station beside the little table, with the three ladies in front of him—Betsy, however, manifesting a strong inclination to hide her head behind Miss Rose, and being evidently in danger of chocking from sundry small but very undecided fits of coughing—commenced proceedings, as follows:—

"Are you prepared to take notes, Mr Tacket?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Ladies and Gentleman,—You know the purpose for which I have called you together. I would lay it down as a fundamental fact, which cannot be gainsaid, that man is a pairing animal. Natural historians have been led to this conclusion, from a careful consideration of the nature of things; and theologians know that it has been enjoined that a man should leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife. Yet, notwithstanding natural adaptation and divine injunction, there are many who fail in attaining the desired end. For the accomplishment of every object, there is a right way and a wrong; and it is the object of true science to examine into the nature and causes of things, so as to

be able to show the true methods of practical operation, and provide remedies for defective modes of proceeding. True science is founded on practical experience, and a careful induction from ascertained facts. If we could produce a set of rules, for practising the art of courtship, founded on a scientific basis, matrimony, the result aimed at, would then doubtless be reached with much greater certainty than it has hitherto been. For the attainments of a right method, it is necessary to note the causes of failure. Some of them may be deduced from my experience, which I shall now relate."

During the delivery of this preamble Miss Bibloson regarded her brother with looks of admiration, and evidently considered him a great philosopher. Mary seemed as much puzzled as ever. Betsy had become quite grave, and was looking at her master with open mouth and staring eyes. She had not at all understood what had been said, but on account of its very obscurity, she believed it to be of serious import. Courtship as a science, and matrimony in the abstract were utterly beyond her comprehension, but hearing these things so learnedly talked of, she gazed at the speaker with a vacant stare of wondering admiration. Mr Bibloson proceeded—

"I do not remember when I first fell in love. I believe when I was but three years old, I cried for the companionship of a pretty little girl of five. At school there was a ruddy-cheeked, fair-haired girl, about my own age, to whom I gave the greater part

of all the sweetmeats I bought. When fourteen years old, I had a profound admiration for my father's cook—a fat, well-favoured lass of thirty. But, as these outgoings of affection were but the premature stirrings of nature within me, and have no bearing upon the present inquiry, I pass them by without further remark. It was not till my academical education was finished, and I had begun to practise at the bar, that I—to use a vulgar phrase—fell over head and ears in love. Miss Annie Burness was the loveliest creature that I ever saw. For nearly two years her image was seldom absent from my thoughts. I mused on her all day, and dreamed of her all night.

"It is probable that she was never conscious of the effect she had produced upon me, for I never spoke to her on the subject. And yet I imagined that she loved me; for she often seemed to me to return my fond gaze with a look of tender regard. But while I was musing and gazing and dreaming, Captain Wallace was negotiating and entreating, and in consequence of his vigorous procedure he succeeded, and I was for a time disconsolate. I believe the cause of my failure in this instance was bashfulness or faintheartedness. It may have been mere imagination on my part, but I did once, at a party, think she meant to give me a little encouragement. I had sung with all the pathos of which I was capable, the fine song beginning 'My heart is sair, I daurna tell,' intending that the words should have to her

some significance, and though no one but myself, perhaps, observed it, she went immediately to the piano, and played, 'Whistle and I'll come tae ye my lad,' which I did not think at the time to be, as it seemed, merely accidental. 'I think, James,' said the old gentleman, turning to me, 'the result of my experience in this case may be summed up in the words of the well-known proverb, 'faint heart never won a fair lady,' which observation please to make a note of.

"My next experience in courtship took place in the country. I was rusticating for a few weeks at a farm house. The farmer's daughter Jessie was very kind to me, and I chatted a good deal with her. My attention to Jessie seemed to give her mother great pleasure.

"One evening not long after a country ball at which Jessie had for a partner a neighbouring young farmer, Jessie's mother was bantering her (perhaps to make me jealous) by asking how many kisses Mr Fleming took from her on the night of the ball. Jessie pouted and complained of headache. Her mother said she would be much the better of a walk in the open air, and assured her that I would be glad to accompany her. I had really no desire for a walk with Jessie, but I could not be so ungallant as to refuse. We walked for nearly half-a-mile without saying a word, for I felt myself very much embarrassed, as I was afraid of seeming to give encouragement where I loved not. We sat down

on the parapet of a low arched bridge, beneath which flowed the mill stream, a considerable body of water. I said 'there is one thing Jessie which I would much like to know.'"

"O! Mr Bibloson," said she, "what is it, I think I could tell you anything."

"Well, you would greatly relieve my mind if you would answer the question"—I was going to add—"which your mother put to you before we came out;" but she interrupted me by saying—"O dear, Mr Bibloson, I know what you mean—I cannot refuse you, and I am sure my mother will not object, but you know I am so young, that perhaps it would be as well for us to wait a few weeks."

I was in a manner dumfoundered by this, and said, "Dear Jessie, forgive me, you are suffering"—I meant to add—from a gross delusion—but she flung one arm round my neck and said, "Don't mention it, I would suffer a delay even of months for your sake."

I tried to disengage myself saying, "Be reasonable," but she pressed her head against my breast, and said, before I could add any more, "I will be as reasonable as you please, if you think a month is too long, I will marry you next week."

I felt myself now in a dreadful position, and made an attempt to rise, but Jessie pressed so closely to me, that we lost our balance and fell into the stream. The water, though deep, was not flowing rapidly, and we scrambled out without much difficulty, the

ardour of our feelings being considerably cooled by the plunge.

I left the farm next morning, leaving behind me a letter of explanation, for I feared to expose myself to misunderstandings which might lead to even more disagreeable consequences. You may condense the moral of this case, James, into the proverb, "The more haste the worse speed," and put it down as a hint to ladies. I have now related part of my experience in courtship, but as we ought to hear the other side, I would now beg to hear what Betsy has to say on the subject.

"Me, sir, I beg your parding, but you've surely lost your senses."

CHAPTER XXXV.

BETSY GIVES HER OPINION.

Mr Bibloson evidently did not expect such a reply from Betsy, for he looked very much surprised, and said,

"Young woman, do you mean me to infer from your strange mode of expressing yourself, that you are unwilling to give us the benefit of your experience on this important subject. But perhaps you do not rightly comprehend the end I have in view. Remember that my intention is, to write a book, to show young men and young women, such as you, the most expeditious way of getting married; and without a collection of facts, such as you can give, it will be impossible for me to draw up my rules. Therefore, speak your mind freely, and tell me some of your experience in courtship.

Betsy burst into a laugh, and when the explosion was over, she said,

"Weel, weel, gin ye will hae me tae speak my mind freely on the subject, I'll tell ye in the first place that this plan o' yours is just a piece o' great nonsense. Rules for courtin'! wha ever heard o' sic a thing? Ye micht just as weel try tae mak' rules for lauchin' or greetin', or ony ither natural affection. I ken naething aboot science and fundamental facts, and a' the ither fine things ye spak' aboot;

but this I ken, that there's no twa men nor yet twa women either, that hae the same kind o' natures, nor yet the same way o' courtin', an' it wadna be nice if they had. There's Jamie Jore, wha comes tae see me whiles, he daes naething but sigh an' glower an' mak' faces. Last nicht when I was up at his mither's seekin' her to come an' help wi' oor washin', I staid tae crack for half-an-hour wi' the auld body, an' Jamie, he sat a' the time in a corner o' the room and stared at me, and whirled round his een in sic a queer way, that I couldna maist haud frae lauchin' at him. When I raise tae come awa' hame, he got up tae, an' said he wad gae down the street a bit wi' me, as he was gaun that way at onyrate. That was a lee I kent fine. He just didna want tae lat me think that it was for my sake he was comin'. But he didna deceive me. I kent as weel what the cuif was thinkin' as he did himsel'. No ae word did he speak a' the road gaun doon; but when I stoppit tae bid him guid nicht at the area stair-head, he nippit my arm, an' said, 'I wonder, Betsy, how ye're no marrit.' I said, 'because naebody'll hae me.' He said, 'somebody kens that's no true;' and he twisted his een and made an implorin'-like face. Jist tae vex him, I said 'I dinna want tae be marrit.' He took my hand an' squeezed it, and lookit sae hard intae my face, that I thocht his een wad hae started oot o' his head. 'Weel, weel, Betsy,' quo' he, 'gin that be true I ken somebody no far awa' that'll hae a sair heart.' He

gave my hand anither squeeze, bade me guid nicht, an' turned on his heel an' gaed awa'. But he was sae licht i' the head, that he couldna tak' tent till his feet; for, as he was gaun tae look ower his shouther, his fit slipped on a wee bit slide the callants had made on the pavement, and he fell back ower on the broad of his back. I couldna help lauchin' at him when he lichted wi' sic a dunsh on the pavement. I didna think he was a bit waur, but he got up in an awfu' passion, and said I was a heartless woman, an' that he would never speak tae me again. Noo, Sir, do ye think it wad be of ony use tae put doon in your book, 'A lass should never lauch at a lad when he tumbles on a slide.' Na, na! Jamie's nae doot a wee offended, but if I liket tae gae up and mak' a wark an' a fraise wi' him aboot it, I wad sune gar him think that it was the most fortunate tumble that ever he got. Jamie's some-like what ye had been yersel', Sir, when ye was in love wi' Miss Burness—a great sumph.

"Then, there's Tam Downie, a rattlin', roarin', rampin' sort o' a chap. He's jist the very opposite o' Jamie. Aboot a fortnicht syne, (Miss Bibloson 'll maybe mind of it) I asked oot to gae tae see my grandmither that's ill wi' the rheumatics out at the Canal side. I hope, maam, ye'll forgie me, but that wasna my principal errand out. I had a tryst tae keep wi' Tam. I wasna leein' a' thegither either, for we did gae tae see my grandmither. We foregathered in St. Andrew's Square, an' Tam gaed wi'

me. He wasna sae quiet as Jamie. He laucht, an' crackit, an' jokit, an' plaguit me aboot my sweethearts; an' he was sae heartsome an' cracky wi' grannie, that the decrepit auld body grew quite lively, an' was perfectly delighted wi' him. On the road home he never stoppit speakin'. He said he was sure I wad mak' a fine wife; that he was awfu' fond o' me. He walkit real close aside me; and when I took his arm, an' he took a haud o' my haun wi' his ither ane, I thocht it was real nice. I didna ken weel what tae say till him, for everything he said was spoken in sic an aff-hand sort o' a way, that I wasna sure whether he was jokin' or in earnest. He didna bid me guid nicht at the area stair-head, like Jamie, but speired if he michtna come in. I kent it was against the rules, but I thocht I micht lat him come in for half-an-hour, as I kent he was a real decent lad, wi' nae ill intention. He wasna lang in, for he had just newly finished the remains o' a beef-steak pie that I gied him, when I heard you, maam (addressing herself to Miss Bibloson), coming down the stair. I hadna time tae let him oot, so I just opened the scullery closet door, and pushed him into it. Ye'll maybe mind, maam, that nicht ye came in tae ask me if I knew anything about chimney sweeps. You, sir (to Mr Bibloson), had asked her to enquire into their condition, as you intended tae bring oot a grand scheme for their enterlectual and moral improvement. Beggin' your parding, maam, but I wasna well pleased

at you that nicht (forbye interrupin' me wi' Tam), for supposin' that I, an itirenerant earthenware merchant's daughter, should know anything about chimney sweeps. When you came in, maam, I heard a crack in the closet, as of something breakin', but I made a noise with the fire-irons, and let the poker fall on the fender, and you never noticed the noise in the closet. You did not stay long, for, you remember, I was rather short with you for evenin' me tae chimney sweeps. When you went up stairs, and when I heard the parlour door shut, I looked into the closet tae see what had happened, but I couldna see Tam at first. There was a groan came oot o' the meal tub that startled me, and I looked at it, and saw twa tacketty soles sticking over the edge of it. I sune saw what had happened. Tam, wha is a heavy man, had sat on the lid o' our meal tub, which was rather thin. The lid broke, an' he fell in in sic a manner that he couldna get oot without help. It almost beat me tae help him oot, for when I saw his gude-humoured face lookin' oot at the ither edge o' the tub, I couldna' help him for laughin'; and when I took him by the hands tae pu he took sic a fit o' laughin' himsel' that he was perfectly mauchtless, and instead o' gettin' oot he sank deeper in. When at length I did get him oot I never saw a more comical pictur. The whole of the hinder part of his black trousers, up tae the lower edge of his blue jacket, was white with meal. I tried tae dust him with my hand, but there was

something sae very ridiculous about the operation that I had tae stop. I sat down on a chair, quite overcome; and though I nearly burst my stays lauchin at him, he was'nt a bit angry. He asked me to give him a brush, but I told him I could not do it. He said I looked so charmingly wicked—these were his very words—that he could not help kissing me. When I let him out at the area gate he told me he loved me better than anybody; and when the white circle with which he was marked went out of sight in the distance and the darkness, I couldna help thinkin' that it might turn oot a fortunate accident after a'; an', from what he said tae me when I saw him last, I now believe it will. It's no possible tae say what may be the turnin' point in love. Ye needna put into yer book 'that a lass, tae get a lad tae like her, should try tae gar him fa' into a meal tub,' for it micht never hae the same effect again. As I said before, yer plan o' makin' rules for courtin' is a' nonsense; an' if ye tak' my advice, ye'll gie yer attention tae something mair usefu', an' no tak up yer time wi' nonsense, like a wheen fules."

Miss Bibloson, who, during some part of Betsy's narrative, had been showing some signs of rising wrath, here, fairly lost her temper.

"Whom do you mean to call fools, you impudent huzzy; get out of my presence ye deceitful woman, ye harbourer of men at unseasonable hours, ye disrespectful impudent thing. To speak that way

before your master and me! Shame on ye! and to think that ye had a man among our meal!

Betsy was by this time going out at the door, followed by Miss Bibloson, scolding at the top of her voice. Mr Bibloson was making a vain attempt to soothe his sister. All went out, leaving Mary and me in astonishment, alone.

For two or three minutes we looked at each other without speaking. Mary at length came close up to me, and said—

"You are doubtless much surprised at the scene you have just witnessed. But such outbreaks of folly are not uncommon in this house."

"From what you said before regarding the state of Mr Bibloson's mind, I was not altogether unprepared for something of this kind. Is he likely to persist long in this project?"

"I think not. I trust not. I am thankful that, for the present, it has ended thus. Since I came in, I have been wishing for some interruption of this kind, for, had he asked either of us for our experience, we must have told him something, or highly offended him. When he comes back you must endeavour to turn his mind to something else."

"I shall try."

"I have this morning received a letter from Glasgow, requesting me to return home to-morrow, if possible. I expected to stay here for a few weeks, and with the prospect of enjoying the pleasure of your society, I should like very much to do so. But

my uncle has had a severe attack of illness, and my mother is urgent for my return. You will then, I am sure, dear James, approve of my determination to do so to-morrow."

I rose from the chair on which I had been sitting, took her by the hand, and said, "Dear Mary, you are no doubt right, but allow me to say that I am very sorry at the thought of parting with you so soon; for more than two years, until yesterday, I had neither seen nor heard from you. I had begun to think that you must have forgotten me altogether, or, at least, ceased to think of me with that tender regard which, at our parting in the Witch Den, you professed to feel for me. Our meeting yesterday on the Calton Hill seemed to me to be quite providential; but the thought that, after to-morrow, I may not see you nor hear from you again for years, fills me with dismay. Will you not promise to write to me sometimes?"

"I cannot make that promise. I assured my mother that I would not write to you without her consent. Pefect confidence is the firmest bond of affection. If you knew that I had deceived my mother, you would not be sure but I might deceive you. Though I never wrote to you during the last few years, I was always well informed in regard to what you were doing. I have, ever since I left Hilton Farm, kept up a regular correspondence with Dr Quacker, and by him I have been regularly informed of all that has taken place in the village

and its neighbourhood since our departure. It is more than a month since I heard from the doctor, and I did not know of your having come to Edinburgh until I met you yesterday. Our meeting was providential; everything that happens to us is so; but, dear James, excuse me for seeming to lecture you. I think a passive trust in providence is sinful. As our late minister of St. John's in Glasgow, Dr. Chalmers, was wont to say, we should believe that providence does everything for us; but we should act as if everything depended on ourselves. Let us have confidence in each other. There is but one barrier between us—your worldly position. I believe I could be happy with you in very humble circumstances; but my mother, who is a prudent woman, does not think so. Her ambition is not very great; and I am sure if we could show her that we had the means of living comfortably, she would not oppose us."

Mary's way of talking on this subject was quite different from what I expected. There was so little of mere sentimentality, and so much of decision, in her manner, and good sense in her words, that I for a moment doubted whether she could really be in love with me after all. I had always thought of love as a blind, unreasoning affection, full of sighing and sentiment; and it need not be wondered at that I could not at first quite understand it, as exhibited in Mary, combined with filial duty, and the cool prudential considerations of worldly posi-

tion and comfortable circumstances. There was, however, an expression of warm feeling in her eye and in her voice, that plainly indicated her deep earnestness, and which made me, after a few moments, feel that I might place in her the most implicit confidence.

"I am ashamed, dear Mary," said I, after a short pause, "of the little I have done to merit your esteem; but I am determined that, henceforth, I shall do all in my power to please you."

"To please me may do very well as a secondary consideration; but, dear James, if we wish to be happy, our highest aim must be to please our Father in heaven. He has given you good talents, use them for His glory; and remember this command of His, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

I was about to reply, when Mr Bibloson came in, apparently much agitated. He sat down without seeming to notice us, and said, "I am ashamed of myself; I have been in a violent passion, and now I am angry with myself for having been angry. What a pity it is that we cannot always control our passions. My sister, in her anger, has discharged Betsy. I, in my anger, have spoken very harshly to my sister. She has taken my words so much to heart that she has gone to bed crying, and Betsy is packing up preparatory to leaving. Go, Miss Rose, and try what you can do to make peace between them."

Miss Rose went away as directed, leaving me alone with the old gentleman.

"It seems to me, James," said he, "that one of the greatest obstacles in the way of perfect human happiness is the indulgence in anger. Do you think anything could be done to enable us to guard against falling into that disagreeable passion. I believe the majority of crimes are committed when under its influence. It is a species of temporary madness which for a time stifles the voice of reason and fills us with impulses of fiendish malignity. Do you know of any literature on the subject. Perhaps the study of the best remedies of anger would do us good in the first place, and we might then benefit the world by publishing the result of our researches on the subject."

Seeing that I had now a good opportunity of turning aside his attention from his project of writing a guide to matrimony, I took advantage of it and said,

"The ancients, Sir, were clearly of your opinion. Horace says, 'anger is a short madness,' and Syrus affirms, 'that he who overcomes his anger, subdues his greatest enemy,' and the same writer says, 'that an angry man when he returns to his senses is angry with himself,' just as you were a little ago. Perhaps you remember the passage, '*Iratus, cum ad se redit, sibi tum irascitur.*' Seneca wrote a treatise on the subject, a translation of which might effect much good."

"Thank you, James, you must have an excellent

memory. You should immediately set about writing a translation of Seneca. I will go meanwhile and search the old bookshops for works on the subject, and we will prepare a work to be called, 'The Antidote to Anger,' which, who knows, may be instrumental in bringing in the millenium."

The old gentleman departed, and in a few hours a porter came loaded with about thirty old volumes, which were intended to assist us in our labours.

Miss Rose succeeded in reconciling the mistress and the maid, and through her quiet and gentle but firm management, peace was soon restored between all the members of our household.

I saw her next morning before she went away. When she went into the coach she gave me a small bible, with a mark, on which was neatly sewed, "Gen. xxxi. 49." The words of the verse were read when I got home and have never since been forgotten. This was a little bit of serious sentimentality that I did not expect, but which gave me great pleasure as it was more in accordance with my preconceived notions of lovemaking than the rest of our intercourse had been.

I lived on in this way for several weeks with Mr Bibloson. We read, wrote and translated, and changed our plans every two or three days, undertaking many things, but finishing nothing. It was about a month after the events just recorded, that I received a very important letter from Tammas Taepiece, which will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM HOME.

What a great pity it was that Mr Bibloson did not possess a greater amount of perseverance. Some of his schemes for the welfare of humanity were of so doubtful a nature, that perhaps the world is no great loser by their not being carried out; but there were others, the practical utility of which has since been proved. His idea of forming an association for the purpose of reclaiming the young vagabonds of our large cities, by giving them food and clothing, along with moral training, has been realised in our ragged schools. His attempt to construct a reaping-machine, which would cut down a field of corn in a few hours, proved abortive, because he conceived the wild but dazzling notion of making a burning mirror that would, in a few minutes, set on fire and consume whole fleets afar at sea. Both these ideas were suggested to him by passages from the classic authors of antiquity. The account which Diodorus gives of the burning of the Roman fleet, by Archimedes, by means of mirrors, at the siege of Syracuse, caused him to lay aside the more practicable project of imitating the reaping-machine, which was in use 1600 years ago, and which is exactly described by Palladius, who lived about the year A.D. 200. The following passage, of the latter

author, interested Mr Bibloson very much at the time, and he caused me to translate it. I give it here entire, as it shows that some of our new inventions are really very old. Perhaps Dr. Bell may have read the passage, and may have been able, by his clearer faculties and greater perseverance, to turn to better account the ideas it suggested than my old master.

"In the level parts of France they employ the following easy method of reaping; and, with the assistance of men, the labour of one ox finishes the whole harvest. For this purpose a vehicle is made, which is borne on two low wheels. Its upper surface being square, is edged with boards that are inclined outwards at the top, and thus make the space they enclose larger. At the front of this waggon the height of the boards is less. Here numerous little teeth, so far apart as to admit the stalks of corn, are placed in a row, and bent backwards at the upper part. Behind the vehicle there are two short poles, like the handles of a sedan chair. Between these the ox, with his head turned towards the vehicle, is yoked and tackled—a tractable animal such as may not exceed the pace required by the driver. When he begins to propel the instrument through the corn, each spikelet being caught by the little teeth is piled up on the waggon, while the straw from which it is cut is left behind—the ox driver who follows regulating its length. Thus, by a few goings and comings, the

whole field is reaped in a few hours."—Pallad. Lib. 7, Tit. 2.

After a hard day's work employed in collecting materials, for the purpose of making a machine similar to that described above, I came home to my lodgings, and was received by my landlady with even greater deference and respect than usual. She curtsied and called me sir every time she spoke. I could not at first understand what had happened to effect such a change in her manner, but on examining a large square-looking letter that was lying on my table, I soon guessed its cause. The address was in the well-known handwriting of my respected uncle, Tammas Taepiece, and was as follows :—" To Mr James Tacket, Eisquire, at Mrs Closefist's Ludgins Little King Stret Edinboro (Preevate and confidenshial)" I saw, from the appearance of the document, that curiosity had been at work upon it ; and, before opening it, I looked in at the end to see what could in this way be read. These words only werc visible—'hair to my propirty —50,000 pounds—niver know want.' These bits of sentences excited me not a little, and explained the extra respect paid me by my landlady. I opened the letter hastily, and read as follows :—

Eskbank, 01th Jan. 18——

Deer James,—It is not above one munth sinse I wrote to you last and yet what wonderfull thinges have hapened in that short spase of time. My firesid that was then solitary and dul is now enlyvened by the tender walings of helpliss enfants. My affeckshuns that used to be wasted on the cat and the dog

and the littel kanary that hangs in the chop windo are now set upon objects that are far more prachious. From the setting of the sun to the rising of the same as Solomon says—

> 'Sleep never weighs my eylids down,
> Nor steeps my senses in forgetfulness'.

but I niver complane for to use the buteiful words of the poet Milton, by night and day, at morn and noon and duey eve I wood without a murmur watch the sweet blosoms as they groe lest the ruff winds shood blow on them two roodly. O James what a raptnris thirl it sends thrugh a man's hart when he heers for the first time, the tender wale of his own ofspring. Musik hath charms as Solomon says to soothe the savadge braste, but I feel as if I niver was ceevileesed at all until I heard the jentle tones of helplis childhud at my own firesid. It was on the morning of the 6th of Janiwary that the evant tuke place. Tibbie was not very well when I left my chaimber at the dauning of the day. Aurora had not raised his head far abuve the estirn horizun when the arrival of Dr. Quaker and Chirstie Cumins gave me to understand that somthing importint was going on. Concerned for her whom, at the alter I had voned to love and cherish, I was about to enter the room when Chirstie met me and told me that I must cary water. For three whole hours they kaipt me cariying water and ever as the tub was filed on my return I found it aimpty. What they did with all that water is wan of those misteries into which we must not too kuriously enquire. Then Chirstie came and told me that I had becum the father of a boy and of a girl. I nearly fanted when I hard the news. My kup of goy would have been fill with wan but two did almost make it overflow. I felt like wan intoksikated and even now as I write about it my speerits are so high that my brain seems burning with poatic fire. I feel myself now to be an important link in the great chain of generation which streeches bak even to the birth of time and which may be continuous till it reach the point when time shall be no more. O James if I had your flow of language I wood rite a poem on the subjeck that wood

fill the world with admiration. I have now a hair to my propirty which is but very smal, but had I 50,000 punds the child should get it all. I have nou something to work for, and I trust they will never know want. You may laff at my goy and call me fullish but yon may perhaps be able yourself, some day, to aprechiate the feelings of a father I told you in my last that Mr Benjamin Simons was. drowned to death amid the mitey isebergs of the frozen polar sees, bnt I am hapy to inform you that the nues was fals, for when the ship was krushed to death and al the krew was swalloed down beneath the raging billoes he was thrown upon an ileland where he killed a polar bare and built a snowhouse and lived a week upon its flesh and kept himself warm with its skin. He was diskovered by a ship npon the ileland which bronght him home where he arrived three days ago. The hardships he has snffered have wrought great changes on him and his aunt died the day he came home leeving him 2 thousand pounds which he has taken very mnch to heart. He says that no one can give him any kumfort but your sister Mary and I must say that the simpathy she showed for him when he was up here yestirday was very affekting. Pay great attention to your stile of writeing. I thonght your last letter drier than usual. Tibbie is not very able to write a letter but I shall let her add a postcrip to mine. Your father and all the rest send there luve. No more at present but remains—Yours truly

TAMMAS TAEPIECE.

P.S.—Der. Jims. Tamas has telt you the nus that i am lichter o' a ladie an a lasie and they are twines and fin helthie bairns; bit i nevir hade sic a hanlin for ther's maist aye ane o' them greetin an Tamas says it's the sweetist musik i the warld an am glad he thinks sae for gin hee liv lang hes likely tae git plenty ot. an i honp you got your things a safe and write shune an lat's ken whan yer kumin north and this leaves mee in a fare way of recoverie hopin it will find you the same and I remane your loven ant

TIBBIE.

Shortly after I had finished the reading of the above letter, my landlady came in to mend my fire, and said,

"I hope you have got good news from home, Sir."

"Yes," replied I. "Very good news."

"I saw by the post-mark that your letter was frae the north. Ye hae likely grand friends there though you condescend to stay here wi' puir folk like us. Our Janet was saying this mornin', when she saw ye gae out, that she was sure there was gentle blude in yer veins, and that ye are descended frae some ancient family, if we only kent."

"Yes," said I, "Janet is right; my ancestry stretches as far back as that of the noblest in the land; but perhaps the less said on that subject the better."

"You are right there, Sir; it's no my nature I'm sure tae inquire into other folks affairs. Our Janet has a rich uncle in Fife that's likely tae leave her a deal of money, but that's atween you an' me, an' there's naebody has ony business tae ken aboot it."

"I am glad to hear of Janet's good fortune; I wont mention it."

"I'm going up the town for an hour or two, but if you want any thing, Janet will serve you."

"Very well, maam; good night."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A LETTER FROM MR BENJAMIN SIMMONS.

About a fortnight after I received Tammas' epistle, the postman, one morning, brought me a letter from Mr Benjamin Simmons, the contents of which were as follows :—

"My Dear Tacket,—Here I am once more alive and well in this dull, drowsy, slow-going village. I am leading a lazy, do-nothing sort of a life, which I find to be not unpleasant after the exciting adventures I have come through, and the hair-breadth escapes I have experienced during the course of last summer and autumn. As certain circumstances are likely soon to occur which will make you feel a greater interest in me than ever, I will give you a short account of what has happened to me since I left you. Towards the end of last session when a number of our students—bright youths like myself—were receiving offers to go to Greenland as medical officers in the whale ships, it entered into my noddle that I would like to see the polar regions too. I was soon engaged to go with Captain Tavish in the good ship Fairy of Peterhead. We left that bustling little port in the month of March, and after a few days sail entered Bressay Sound and Lerwick Harbour in Shetland. We staid at Lerwick about a week taking in provisions and making up our full complement of men. Captain Tavish was a regular jolly brick, and seemed to know everybody. We had some rare rows when on shore, and caused no small degree of astonishment to the inhabitants of the queer little town. Yes, James, Lerwick is a queer little town. There is a kind of street in it which runs close along the shore. No two of its houses are in the same line. They stand back to back, corner to corner, some up hill, some down hill, and some with gables

half across the street. They seem to have been dancing a country dance and to have got ont of order, in which state they have remained ever since. There lives in the neighbourhood a repnted witch, to whom Captain Tavish gave a few shillings, that she might charm the wind and weather in our favour. What a wretched hovel she lived in! We were almost stifled with smoke when we entered; but we could see, besides the old crone, a sow in a corner, and pigs running abont the house as tame as cats. A child was lying sleeping with a pig in its arms, alongside a peat fire, at which a dingy-coloured, squat, little woman was scouthering scones on a girdle. But I will give yon more particulars of these things, and of everything else that I saw in Shetland, when I meet yon. Our crew consisted of about sixty heavy-sterned, dnll-eyed, flabby-faced, codfishey-looking fellows—capital subjects to experiment npon. There was a good deal of sickness among them at first, but I so wrought upon their imaginations by expatiating on the sovereign virtnes of my pannosotherapentic balm, that in a short time a sick man in the ship was a rarity. This balm was coloured water with as large a quantity of Epsom salts as it could hold in solution. It was really a nseful medicine, and as it operated satisfactorily both for the crew's health and my credit, I have never seen any reason to repent of having invented it. For some days after leaving Lerwick I had little to do except now and then to dispense a little of the balm. A man fell one day from the mast on to the deck and hurt his shoulder. When I came up from the cabin and was making my way throngh the men, I heard them say that he had dislocated his shoulder. I soon saw that that was not the case; but to increase my credit with the men I said nothing to the contrary, but got some of them to hold him, and gave him a pull, and told him that it was all right, and he would soon be better. This was thonght a mighty clever operation, and established among them a firm faith in my skill. You will say, I know, that such deception was very wicked, and I confess, Dear James, that I have since been led

to think so myself. On some days the little Fairy went scudding along beautifully before the wind, at other times she was almost motionless. Ou calm days the sailors went about whistling as if each had lost a dog. I could not understand this at first, but found on enquiry that they were whistling for wind. On arriving at the fishings we had rare fun killing the seals; we slew them in hundreds, and in a few days had seventy tons of them on board. We were in high hopes of great success, a speedy return home, and large profits, when there came upon us one of the most dreadful storms that the captain or any of the crew had ever experienced. We had to throw nearly all our seals overboard. For several days and nights we got scarcely any sleep, and our clothes were never dry. The vessel pitched, and lurched, and rolled, and tumbled about in such a manner that I really many a time thought it was all over with us. I used to laugh at religion and made you believe that I could do very well without it, but now I found how much I had deceived myself. In my terror I prayed; oh, how earnestly in my heart I prayed, to be delivered from the fearful death that seemed to threaten us. Our rigging became sorely dismantled; we had nearly lost all control of the vessel and were fast drifting towards the rocky coast of Norway, when the wind fell a little, though the sea continued as tempestuous as ever. We could see in the far distance a little town nestling in a bay with high rocks all around it. Our great desire was to run in there, and we hoisted a flag for a pilot. For some time no boat appeared, and we begau to fear that no one could venture out on such a sea; but at length a black speck was seen and lost sight of again as it rose and fell upon the heaving billows. At times it disappeared so long that we thought it must be swallowed up and lost, but it would again re-appear and seemed for a moment suspended in the air before it sunk once more into the watery trough. As it approached nearer we could see the forms of two men, and outstretched oars, and our hopes of safety grew brighter. At length the pilots came on board, and under

their guidance we were making for the little harbour when suddenly the wind arose once more and drove us from our course and out to sea. Next morning we found that the pilots' boat had been driven away from us, and we had now only one boat left. The captain and I were at breakfast when one cried down the gangway that the pilots had let down our boat and were making off with it, intending, doubtless, to desert us. The captain swore an oath. I sprung to my feet, and in my hurry drove over the little table and all the breakfast things. I seized a gun that sat in a corner of the cabin and ran on deck. The cowardly villains were not yet ten yards from the ship. I pointed the gun at them and vowed that I would shoot them dead if they rowed another stroke away from us. Perhaps they scarcely understood my words, but my gestures unmistakeably showed my meaning. I thought their dirty faces grew a little whiter, and, quite cowed, they came alongside and allowed themselves to be taken on board. This established my character for bravery and decision, and I became more popular than ever. It was fortunate the rascals did not know that the gun was empty. After a day or two we managed to run into Christiansund, where we staid three weeks to refit and repair. While there I lived in the house of the French Consul, who treated me very kindly. What a pretty, tantalising, little creature of a daughter he had! It would take me long to tell you how she laughed at my bad French, how fond we became of each other, and how we wept, and vowed fidelity at parting, so I shall reserve particulars till I see you. When our repairs were finished we again set sail, and as the season was not yet far advanced we made for Greenland once more, and there succeeded in killing two whales. We, however, stayed too long in the high latitudes, for the frost eame on and we got entangled among the ice. The cold became most intense, and as the water of the ocean was still warmer than the atmosphere, there arose from the surface of the sea a steam like that of a lime kiln. We laboured hard to disentangle ourselves, but all in vain, the

air gradually became clear, and the sea became a solid floor of frozen salt water. We dragged a boat filled with provisions towards the land, which was not far distant, thinking that we might meet with natives, who, with their dogs, might extricate us from our difficulties. After building a snowhouse, my companions returned to the vessel to bring more necessaries, and I was left to watch till their return. They had not been long gone when a snow-storm came on, and for a whole week I was left alone in the snowhouse. During that time I shot a bear and some white foxes that came prowling about my place of shelter. At the end of that period I was discovered by a party of Esquimaux. The storm had now abated. I tried to induce them to convey me to the ship, but they evidently did not understand me. They, however, treated me kindly, and took me with them to Discoe Island, where we arrived in a few days. There was a whaler still there, and I was taken on board and treated kindly. By a plentiful use of the ice-saw we got out to sea, and I arrived home about a month ago. If my companions reached the ship when they left me, they may be all safe; and as they have abundance of provisions they may be heard of next year. I have received great kindness from every body since I came home, but especially from your sister Mary; but this is a subject on which I will have to write to you at another time. I suppose you have heard of my aunt's death, and of the comfortable inheritance she has left me; but more of this in my next.—I am yours truly,

B. Simmons.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MOLASSES *versus* TREACLE.

Mr Bibloson had not wrought above a fortnight at the reaping-machine, when he took it into his head to attempt the construction of burning mirrors, similar to those of Archemides, formerly alluded to. The only result of his operations was a vast quantity of broken glass, which had cost him a great deal of money. Few of his schemes were so long persisted in as this one; and none of them raised his enthusiasm to such a pitch. To get me to work with him more continuously, I had to leave my lodgings, and take up my abode with him in Forth Street. From early morning, till far in the night, for more than three months, we laboured with no other result than that mentioned above. I had made several useless attempts to turn his attention to something else, and was beginning to suffer from the effects of too hard labour, when one evening at tea our conversation took a turn, which made him give up the project of the burning mirrors, and which proved ultimately of great advantage to me. How true it is that great events often depend on little things, the sequel will show.

Mr Bibloson was fond treacle. There was nothing remarkable in that. Many respectable people have a similar *penchant*. But Mr Bibloson

liked it so well that he put too large a quantity of it on his bread and butter one night. And what of it though he did: perhaps you think there was no great matter. That little extra spoonful of treacle, however, was to me fraught with momentous consequences. Had he not taken it, the whole course of my after life would probably have been different. On that small drop of molasses was built for me the superstructure of a good education, success in life and in love, and the position I now hold as a respectable member of society, and the father of a numerous and well-doing family. The flowing of that drop of treacle was the flowing of the tide in my affairs,

> 'Which taken at the flood led on to fortune,
> Omitted, all the voyage of my life
> Was bound in shallows and in miseries.'

"Take care," cried Miss Bibloson, "you are spilling the molasses on your shirt collar."

"Call it treacle, if you please, if you wish your language to be expressive; you should always use the simpler of two terms that are applied to the same thing."

"Beg your pardon, Mr Bibloson (she always called him Mr Bibloson when they differed), molasses is the proper name for it. Treacle is quite a vulgar word, and is never used in refined society."

"My dear sister, you must allow me to know better; treacle is the original name; and there is a rough, rich, racy sweetness about the sound of the

word, which makes it far superior to the soft, liquid, wishy-washy molasses."

"You need not tell me that, Mr Bibloson. Do you think I cannot use my own tongue properly. I was reading in the *Scotsman* this very day the prices of molasses. You may call it treacle when it's printed on your shirt collar; but editors would not print such a word in their newspapers."

"Keep your temper, my dear. I know you can use your tongue with great freedom; but you must allow me to doubt if you can use it properly. Editors of newspapers are not the best arbiters of taste in matters of this nature."

"It would seem they hav'nt got such a taste for treacle as you have, at any rate."

"Don't interrupt me, if you please, my dear. I was going to remark that editors are often carried away by a love of novelty, which leads them to prefer new terms to old ones, to the great detriment of our language. To appear learned, they will not use a saxon word if they can get a Latin or Greek one. Hence it is, doubtless, that they prefer molasses to treacle—molasses being derived either from *melissa*, honey, or *melan*, black, while treacle is honest Saxon, and signifies—well, I forget what is its original meaning. But the word itself is so expressive, that we do not need to think of its origin. Treacle is just treacle; nothing can be plainer. It is one of those simple terms, like bread and butter, which we never think of analysing. Do

you know anything of the origin of the word, James?"

"I believe, sir," said I, "you are mistaken in supposing it to be Saxon. It is a Greek derivative."

"Thank you, James," said Miss Bibloson. "I knew it was an outlandish word."

"Well, my dear, let us hear if James can prove his assertion. I am not one of those who are unwilling to yield when proved to be mistaken; but treacle may, notwithstanding, be the better word."

"O dear Mr Bibloson, how can you be so obstinate."

"Well, James, what is the origin of the word treacle?"

"Treacle, sir," I replied, "is derived from *therion*, a Greek word, signifying a viper."

"There, now, didn't I tell you it was not a good word?"

"If you please, my dear, let James go on. Don't interrupt him."

"It was once believed that if a viper bit a man, the best antidote against the poison was a confection made of the viper's flesh. This was called *theriaca*. The same term was afterwards applied to a supposed antidote against all poisons, which was made at Venice, and called Venice treacle. The word treacle at a later period signified any antidote, then any sweet confection, and finally its meaning has been restricted to the syrup produced in the manufacture of sugar."

"Well, James, I daresay you may be right. I remember reading in an old translation of the Bible, 'Is there no treacle in Gilead,' instead of, 'Is there no balm,' &c."

"Yes, sir; and when the poet Waller congratulates Charles II. on his restoration, and wishes to show that, not only his friends, but even his former enemies, desire his favour, he says,

> 'Offenders now, the chiefest, do begin
> To strive for grace, and expiate their sin;
> All winds blow fair, that did the world embroil,
> And viper's treacle yield, and scorpion's oil.'

Chaucer, the father of English poetry, uses the word in a similar sense, thus—

> 'Christ, which that is to every harm triacle;'

and Milton speaks of the 'sovran treacle of sound doctrine,' so that there can be little doubt but that the origin I have given to the word is the true one."

"Therefore, said Miss Bibloson, "it's a different word from molasses."

"I think you may be right, James," said Mr Bibloson in a musing mood, and not heeding his sister's remark. "There is a vast amount of instruction to be got out of words. Most of our disputes and differences are about mere words. If all men would give exactly the same meanings to words, what a mighty change for the better would be effected. If we knew the original meaning and history of every word we would know the history of the world. You have a taste for studies of that

kind, James. I think we might commence some researches on that subject to-morrow, and write a book on the 'Origin and History of Words.'"

"A book of the kind you propose would be very interesting and very useful," said I, "but to do anything like justice to such a subject one would require to know many languages. I know only English and Latin well. My Greek is defective, and I do not know even the letters in Hebrew, so that the aid you would get from me would be very small."

"Well, James, there is truth in what you say, but we may entertain the scheme; and as soon as the college re-opens you must attend the classes. The acquirement of languages will be your principal object, but you may study anything else you have a liking for. I will pay your fees, and you will stay here and give me your services as formerly, when not otherwise engaged."

"I am very much obliged to you, Sir, and if you agree, I should like to attend the medical classes."

"You have my full permission and approval. We may yet complete our 'Book of Medical Precepts;' and your services will for this purpose become more valuable if you study medicine at college. Do you approve of sending James to college, my dear?"

"Yes," said Miss Bibloson, "you are talking very good sense now. Will you take a little more of the molasses?"

"Treacle," said Mr Bibloson.

"Molasses," screamed Miss Bibloson.

"Well, well," said the old gentleman, "as the old song says—

> 'Nought's to be won at woman's hand,
> Unless ye gie them a' their plea,'

and—

> 'A wilfu' woman will hae her way;'

so we may just call it molasses to please you."

"It's not to please me; it's because I'm right."

"Very well, very well."

Mr Bibloson did not change his mind, and when the college classes opened, I matriculated as a medical student.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BRIGHT PROSPECTS.

I shall not in these chapters give an account of my college career, but shall proceed to relate those circumstances which had a more immediate influence in bringing about the happiest event in my life. During the four years of my college life, I continued to stay with Mr Bibloson. Miss Rose paid us a visit once a-year, and generally staid with us for a fortnight at a time. These were the happiest periods of my life, for there was always around that girl an atmosphere of happiness and cheerfulness that had an invigorating and elevating effect on the minds of all who came within its influence. It was generally in winter that she came to our house; but we all felt as if it were summer. There was a warmth and a sunny cheerfulness about her smile that made the darkest day seem bright. Her merry laugh, and the gentle tones of her voice, were more gladdening to us than the music of swcet singing birds. These opportunities of holding sweet intercourse with the object of my affections were always eagerly longed for, and keenly enjoyed. They were—

"Like angels' visits, few and far between."

To me Mary's beauty and goodness seemed quite angelic; and so deeply was I enamoured, that sometimes, when soliloquising, I called her my good

angel, and always thought of her as such. In our intercourse we were respectful, but very loving and frank. Mary's influence with Mr Bibloson seemed to grow greater every time she came to see him. She talked to him in such gently persuasive tones, that he gave himself up for whole days to the pleasure of her society.

"I am of opinion, James," he said to me one day, "that there is nothing in the world half so pleasant as the kindly intercourse of lovely and loving women. I think if the human race is to be elevated and improved, it must be done by women. They are rightly called the better half of humanity. Woman may have been the first to fall, but she has preserved more of innocence and purity than man. I never feel so happy as when in company with Miss Rose. If we could discover some means of making all the women in the world as good as she, human happiness would be much increased. But, James, I have already tried many plans for the improvement of my fellow-men, and have been successful in none of them. I have now, however, resolved to act a more selfish part. Would you be willing to assist me in carrying out a scheme for the increase of my own happiness?"

I said, "If I can be of any service to you in that way, you may depend on my hearty assistance."

"The scheme I have in view cannot be carried out at all without your aid; for, in the first-place, I would like you to marry Miss Rose."

"I should like very much to do so myself, sir; and I have reason to believe that she would have no great objection; but you know Mrs Rose would like a rich husband for her daughter, and though I am now an M.D. of Edinburgh University, I have still to acquire a position and a practice. Without these requisites Mrs Rose would not consent to give me her daughter; and Mary is too dutiful to act in the matter without her mother's consent."

"They are both right, James; maternal prudence and filial duty are virtues which we must respect; but I think both these obstacles may be overcome. You know that I have no nearer relatives than Miss Rose. Bibloson cottage, with the farm beside it, is worth about five hundred pounds per annum. If you have no objections to assume my name, and marry Miss Rose, I shall adopt you as my heir, and put you in immediate possession of as much property as will satisfy Mrs Rose."

I need not say that this proposal pleased me; nor need I tell how grateful I felt to the kind old man. I, without any hesitation, agreed to call myself James Tacket Bibloson, and to be known to the world as Dr. Bibloson.

"But, sir," I said, "you spoke of doing something to increase your own happiness, but what you have now proposed mostly concerns mine."

"Yes, James, but I am not so unselfish as you think. When you and Miss Rose—the future Mrs Tacket Bibloson—are once established in Bibloson

Cottage, I look to spending much of my time in that sweet place with you. A great change has come over me during the last fortnight; and I now feel sorry that much of my time has been spent in schemes that have all proved abortive. Miss Rose seems to have a charm about her that does me good; and perhaps, under her kind treatment, my mind may be kept from becoming too much absorbed by vain pursuits. If, therefore, you will allow me to visit you at times, and to share, with yourself, a little of Miss Rose's love and kindness, I shall consider myself happy, and highly favoured. My sister is quite delighted with this scheme, and thinks it one of the best I have ever proposed. Say nothing to Miss Rose about this in the meantime. Her mother comes here to-morrow to take her home. I will contrive to let you have an opportunity of a private interview with Mrs Rose, and you might then ask her daughter's hand. She may refuse to consent, but I will make it all right by afterwards explaining to her the nature of your prospects."

I promised to do as he desired, and on the morrow afternoon we were left alone in a room together. Mrs Rose's manner towards me since her arrival had been civil, but too polite to be cordial. Now that we were alone I felt my heart beat violently; for I knew that a great crisis in my life was at hand.

"I am glad to hear, Mr Tacket," said she, "that you have been successful in your studies. Mr Bibloson tells me that you are now a Doctor of medicine."

"Yes, ma'am," replied I, "thanks to him, I am now in a position to make my way in the world; but while grateful to Mr Bibloson, I shall never forget the kindness of you and your daughter, in encouraging me with good advice and loans of books, when I stood greatly in need of both. Indeed, I have Miss Rose to thank for all my good fortune. She advised me to learn Latin—she taught me to have confidence in myself, and faith in God. She rescued me from starvation, introduced me to my kind benefactor, and has since encouraged me with kind words and an approving smile."

"Mary could not but feel an interest in you, Mr Tacket, after the great service you did to her in saving her life at the risk of your own, and if we could do anything now to advance your interests we would do it willingly."

"You could do much towards making me happy."

"In what way?"

"Miss Rose loves me and would marry me, but will not do so without your consent."

"And I cannot give my consent at present. You are not yet in a position to maintain a wife."

"But would you consent if I were?"

"I cannot enter into any engagement nor permit Mary to make one. If she is free and loves you, when you are in a position to keep her comfortable, I will listen to your proposals; but not till then. In the meantime your intercourse with

her must end, and we need say no more on the subject."

There was nothing said by either of us for a few minutes, until Mr Bibloson came in. He looked at us both with a roguish, good-humoured smile.

"Why are you two looking so serious?" You are as grave, Mrs Rose, as if the Doctor there had been proposing for the hand of your daughter."

Mrs Rose looked inquiringly at Mr Bibloson, and said,

"So he has, and it appears as if you knew about it and had encouraged him to do so; but I cannot allow my only daughter to marry one who has not a penny."

"You are quite right, Mrs Rose, I honour you for your prudence, but allow me to tell you that Dr. Bibloson there—

"Dr. Bibloson! what do you say?—whom do you mean?"

"I mean that Dr. James Tacket Bibloson is not so penniless as he seems. He has adopted my name and I have adopted him as my heir. He shall have Bibloson Cottage and the rents of Bibloson Farm as long as I live, and he will become owner of the same, and of all my property when I die, on condition that he marries Miss Rose."

"Indeed," said Mrs Rose, "that alters the case entirely. Of course I have no objections."

Mr Bibloson hurried out of the room, and he and Miss Bibloson soon returned leading in Miss Rose.

The old gentleman placed her hand in mine and said, "God bless you both." He then led us to Mrs Rose and said, "Give them your blessing, and may they prove to you dutiful and loving children, and to me, kind and true-hearted friends."

There was not in all the world that night a happier family circle than ours. Everything was satisfactorily arranged, and it was settled, that, in three months, Mary and I should be made one in the holy bonds of wedlock.

CHAPTER XL.

CONCLUSION.

It may be generally true that "there is many a slip between the cup and the lip;" but in my case there was none. At the expiry of the appointed three months Mary Rose became my wedded wife, and, as my uncle Tammas said on another occasion, "my cup of joy was full." All the pleasure I anticipated from that happy event was more than realised, and during the many years that have flowed by since then, the gentle current of my domestic bliss has never once been interrupted. I am now well advanced in years. My step is less elastic than formerly, and grey hairs, and wrinkles have rendered me less comely than I was, but Mary loves me still. She, too, is changed in appearance. The once golden hair has now a silvery hue, and the active movement and ringing laugh of former days has now sobered down into a staid, matronly gait, and a quiet smile; but my affection for her has not changed, except in so far as it has become deeper and stronger. The longer we lived together, the more was I led to admire her noble qualities of head and heart. The native loveliness of her character was much enhanced by the beauty of holiness which ——. I intended to depict her character simply and truly; but she has been looking over my

shoulder for the last five minutes, and she positively forbids me to say one word more about her, unless I be pleased to mention a few of her faults. I cannot at the present moment remember any of them, unless it be, that her present conduct reminds me that she is somewhat wilful and likes to have her own way in most things; but then she is so often in the right, when she is determined, that her wilfulness ought rather to be deemed judicious firmness than unreasonable obstinacy, and, therefore, more a virtue than a fault.

I once intended to give a few more chapters descriptive of our married life, but Mary thinks, and I agree with her, that it will be more judicious to close my narrative at the period of our marriage; for many of the later events of my life have been of such public interest, and are so well known, that the fictitious names of persons and places assumed in these chapters, might not be sufficient to conceal our personal identity. Suffice it to say, that, since our marriage, for more than a score of years, we have lived at Bibloson Cottage, during the greater part of each year. I am proud to say, that, in the estimation of our neighbours, we have done much good, both in a public and in a private capacity. We have brought up a family of ten—fine, healthy, well-behaved children. Our eldest son occupies an honourable position in the City of Glasgow, and is a captain in the Rifle Volunteers. Mary, our eldest daughter, was like her mother, and is a minister's

wife in the neighbourhood of our parish. Annie, the youngest, is a quiet, thoughtful girl of seven years, not unlike the Annie that died long ago, but healthier and stronger in appearance. It is several years since Mr Bibloson and his sister went the way of all the earth. After our marriage, they continued to live in Edinburgh, but often spent weeks with us in summer. They were very fond of our children, and were much beloved by them in return. Miss Bibloson died about a year before her brother, and he spent the last year of his life with us. The scheming mania entirely left him about the time of our marriage, and during the latter years of his life the action of his mind was sound and healthy. The nearer he approached his final rest the clearer and more confident became his anticipations of future blessedness; and so tranquil was the close of his life, that he seemed literally to fall asleep. I became heir to all his property, which was considerable, and so well has it prospered in my hands, that I have now a goodly heritage.

It now remains for me to give some account of the other characters that have been mentioned in these chapters. My grandmother died at the age of 93, and was buried. The miller of Waterha emigrated to New Zealand in the year 1840. He was among the first to go to the gold diggings in Australia, where he made a few thousands, with which he returned to this country about seven years ago, and bought the small farm and mill of

Waterha, his old residence. He built a new house not far from the mill, where he now leads a quiet, easy life. His belief in kelpies is still as strong as ever; and oft' on winter nights he makes his grandchildren's hair stand on end when relating to them tales of the mysterious doings of that wicked goblin. My father has now for many years slept with his fathers in the village churchyard. My uncle and aunt, Tammas and Tibbie, still survive. They are both very old and frail, but are supplied with every comfort which their situation and circumstances require, by their son, my namesake, who is a surgeon in the East Indies, and who distinguished himself greatly during the late mutiny, by his coolness and intrepidity in the midst of great dangers. Tammas is proud of his son, and has even written several poems in his praise. The last one he sent me, he thinks is very beautiful. It begins thus—

> "Where Indian floods 'mid purpled snow,
> Through torrid plains in torrents flow."

Tibbie says, "she has nae patience wi' Tammas an' his pottery;" but, notwithstanding what might be called the incompatibility of their tempers, they manage to get on wonderfully well together. Their daughter married a farmer, and is the mother of a thriving family.

Mr Benjamin Simmons went another session to Aberdeen College after his return from Greenland, and obtained a surgeon's diploma. Dr. Quacker died shortly after, and Ben became village doctor in his

stead. Finding my sister Mary, as he said in a letter to me on the subject, "well-favoured, good-tempered, and absolutely necessary to his comfort and happiness," he married her, and, I have reason to believe, that, upon the whole, they have had a fair amount of domestic happiness. Ben became a very serious character, and conducted himself so discreetly that he was made an elder of the kirk, and he is now highly honoured and esteemed by his parishioners as an upright, pious man. Upon the whole, I have no reason to be ashamed of my brother-in-law. Saunders M'Siccar and Chirstie Cummins are no more. Betsy (Mr Bibloson's maid) became Mrs Downie, and bore to her husband fifteen children. The last time I heard of them, Mr Downie was a cab-driver, and Mrs Downie was making great efforts to bring up her numerous family respectably, and was adding as much as possible to the weekly income of the household by keeping a mangle.

While thinking of these the friends of my early days, I cannot repress a feeling of sadness. Many of them have gone to their long home, others are about to go there, and I myself must soon accompany them. Thus it has ever been, and thus it will ever be. We play our little parts upon life's stage, and then we disappear to give place to others. Too seldom do we think of that other life—that real life—that endless life, on which we soon must enter. I have lived in the world for nearly threescore years, and have found it to be a better world

than it is generally represented. Even the worst men are not so bad as they seem, and in the most hardened hearts there is always a soft part sensible to the gentle touch of true kindness. In reviewing the past, I find that I have more to be grateful for than to complain of; for, verily, "the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places"—but all my dear friends are passing away, and every year the ties that bind me to earth are becoming fewer. It becomes me, therefore, "So to number my days that I may apply my heart unto wisdom."

But now, my dear readers, we must part for a time; and I trust it will be only for a time. I am very sensible of the defects of my narrative, but, notwithstanding, I have reason to believe that it has given pleasure to many, and I would fain hope that it has done harm to none. To give innocent enjoyment was my aim, and if I have in any degree succeeded, I am sufficiently rewarded—ADIEU.

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