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J. Pitman

THE
LIFE AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF DR DUGUID.

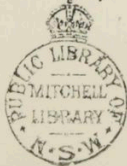
THE
LIFE AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF
DOCTOR DUGUID
OF KILWINNING.

*WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, AND NOW FIRST
PRINTED FROM THE RECOVERED MANUSCRIPT.*

EDITED BY
JOHN SERVICE, L.R.C.S. & P., ED.

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BOOK I.

THE
LIFE AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF DR DUGUID.

ERRATA.

NOTE.—The Author, being at such a distance from the Publisher, has been unable to revise the proof-sheets, and a few typographical errors have consequently crept in. The reader is asked to kindly correct the chief ones, as below :—

- Page 9, line 22, for “aequs” *read* “aequo.”
- Page 38, line 1, for “Mab” *read* “Mal.”
- Page 44, line 18, for “Sus” *read* “Suo.”
- Page 49, line 23, for “gauched” *read* “ganched.”
- Page 53, line 13, for “obieceted” *read* “obieceted.”
- Page 54, line 8, for “eresken” *read* “eresken.”
- Page 74, line 26, for “fangled” *read* “fankled.”
- Page 75, line 11, for “na” *read* “nae.”
- Page 89, line 8, for “Logati” *read* “Togati.”
- Page 103, line 18, for “faukled” *read* “fankled.”
- Page 106, line 16, for “rossin” *read* “roosin.”
- Page 106, line 16, for “oure” *read* “owre.”
- Page 107, line 14, for “coosy” *read* “cosy.”
- Page 117, line 2, for “sweishtered” *read* “sneishtered.”
- Page 124, line 23, for “of” *read* “aff.”
- Page 131, line 18, for “bonet” *read* “booet.”
- Page 155, line 16, for “rouns” *read* “ronns.”
- Page 163, line 2, for “guattery” *read* “gnattery.”
- Page 168, line 22, for “Liddles” *read* “Tiddles.”
- Page 169, line 7, for “smokit” *read* “snoakit.”
- Page 186, line 7, for “Bungs” *read* “Bungo.”
- Page 215, line 5, for “Sweeshton” *read* “Smeeshton.”
- Page 250, line 9, for “their” *read* “thir.”
- Page 254, line 4, for “rancle” *read* “raucle.”
- Page 254, line 23, for “Gizzy” *read* “Girzy.”
- Page 268, line 12, for “youthe” *read* “zouthe.”
- Page 268, line 20, for “ye tarfe” *read* “y^r turfe.”
- Page 268, line 21, for “ye spirites” *read* “y^r spirites.”
- Page 268, line 21, for “never” *read* “neuer.”
- Page 268, line 22, for “youthe” *read* “zouthe.”
- Page 269, line 3, for “crowd” *read* “cloud.”
- Page 287, line 1, for “awee” *read* “ance.”



THE
LIFE AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF DR DUGUID.

BOOK I.

PRELIMINARY—THE FINDING OF THE
MANUSCRIPT.

IN the summer of Eighteen hundred and sixty-five, the editor of these interesting and undoubtedly authentic memoirs, was a curious boy of little more than fourteen years of age, imbued with a love of antiquarian lore, and drinking in eagerly, from any one who would repeat them to him, the hoary traditions of his "own romantic town."

Like the quaint and ingenuous old doctor of the following pages, he was no doubt sometimes sadly imposed upon by wags who were aware of his *penchant*, and, it must also

be confessed, that at times, his own zeal was liable to lead him astray, and make him see the ancient Roman axe in the fragment of a rusted hoe. But in an old conventual town like Kilwinning, green with the moss of storied centuries, and in a district full of interest and rich reward to the industrious archæologist, it would have been somewhat surprising if he had not chanced

“—to light on something fair,”

for he never heard of an old cupboard or chest, or of any one who had anything curious in his possession or in his memory, but he was uneasy and restless until he had ferreted the thing to the bottom. Among much that was chaff, he got a few good grains of wheat.

In the July of the year we have named, a very old house, dating it is believed, from the early times of the monastery, and which stood in the Main Street, a little to the west of the Cross-Brae, and on the opposite side of the street from the Cross, was being pulled down to make way for a modern erection. When the mouldering thatch was stripped from the rafters, and the light of day let in on the astonished spiders, whose ancestors

probably for many hundreds of generations, had no tradition of such a startling phenomenon, there were found sitting in the garret some six or eight curious old leathern bottles, wide enough in the neck to admit the whole hand and arm, and tightly closed with wooden bungs. Two of these bottles passed into the boy's possession, and he lost no time in forming a plausible theory about them to himself, and a probable history of their vicissitudes.

At first, he was inclined to credit them as being the gourds or water bottles of some pious pilgrims of the middle ages, who had brought them as trophies from the burning plains of Palestine, whither they had gone for the sake of their God, to slay the unspeakable Paynim and his brood. And then again he thought they might be the dead men that once contained the rosy wine with which old Nigellus and his monks made merry. But, in the absence of anything like confirmatory proof thereof, he could not well sustain these points against the incredulous, and proceeding therefore to deal with the affair on its own merits, it occurred to him at length to take the internal evidence that

was obtainable in the case. And well it was for him, and we trust the reader will hereafter say for *him* also, that he thought of doing so, for at the bottom of one of the bottles, a mass of mouldered papers was found, wrapped closely together and tied with a piece of coarse and yellow tape. At first he could make nothing whatever of the faded ink and crabbed characters, but his curiosity was thoroughly aroused, and after a long and patient study of the papers, aided by the experience and better learning which came to him with later years, he has at last succeeded in deciphering the yellow leaflets. The writings belong to a much more recent date than he originally surmised, and it must be added hoped, being without doubt the production of some now forgotten "medical" of the latter part of the eighteenth century. Some who have seen them say they are likely to be Dr Thom's or Dr Coulter's, and that the name of Duguid is doubtless assumed, but it is not surprising that, being the literary recreations of an educated man, in a somewhat illiterate community, and never evidently exposed to, or seriously intended

for, any eye but his own, the identity of the individual himself should have been lost and forgotten.

It may be objected in this latest and most fastidious decade of the nineteenth century, that some of the doctor's expressions and stories are of a broader type than the taste of the age will approve, but for this we cannot surely be expected to be held responsible. They are the mannerisms and ordinary language of his day, and when the writings of such authors as Fielding, Smollett, and later still, of Burns himself, are borne in mind, the doctor's mild offences will appear as trifling indeed, when compared with the liberty and licence of these exalted geniuses. But if it be further urged that it is unnecessary, and unbecoming in this present year of civilization, 1887, to add to these objectionable non-drawing-room details, we can only crave the reader's indulgence, and ask him seriously, when he has finished, how he could have separated the wheat from the tares, and whether, after all, for the sake of a few flaws, as some may call them, more blamable on the time than on the man, he

would have been more pleased to have these records as they are, or to have them cast contemptuously aside, and lost to posterity for evermore.

J. S.

NEWTOWN, SYDNEY,
NEW SOUTH WALES,
September 1887.

CHAPTER I.

MORALIZING BY THE GARNOCK SIDE, I CONCEIVE
THE NOTABLE PROJECT OF MY BOOK.

DAUNERIN' up the plantin' by Ringan's Isle in the hinder end of last year, I was mair than ordinarily struck with the signs and omens of nature's decay. The drumlie Garnock gave tokens of a coming spate, and the tinted chestnut and plane-tree leaves were fluttering sadly to its surface with every bit sough of the autumn wind. It was dour and cauld, and the short October day, sunny in the morning, and even beeking warm at twull oors, had noo dookit doon to a very wint'ry like nicht. Coming to Gaun Paterson's yaird, I halted a blink on my step, and looking over to the Weaver's Holm, I fell into a kind of dwaum of moralizin' on the sadness and uncertainty of human life, the utter insufficiency of all things mortal to pleasure

or even content us for long, and more than all, the terrible loneliness that begirds an old man who has seen all his youthful companions fade for ever from the world's ken, as one by one they took their eerie way into the unknown and inscrutable eternities.

Ringan's Isle! the name was nothing to me but a name, even in my boyish days, and I never heard, nor can even now conjecture, who Ringan could be, nor why it should be Ringan's Isle at all, seeing that it was but a laigh seggan bankin' where we used to dook. But what ploys could I not remember there! And in winter time too, when the river was frozen, what roarin' rippitin' fun there was on the dam, playing shinty wi' John Paiks, Robin Rummies, Stair Whalbert, and mony mair, alas! now deid and awa in the mools this mony a lang year!

And Gaun's yaird, where now in the plantin' a bit grozet-bush only remains to tell of the human habitation long since passed away—could I not remember how the Irvine road ran past his door and away by Dirrans and the Lugton Lint Mill, and how, ance, on a Whupsday, I had seen with a crowd

of others in Gaun's yaird, where I now stood, a Hielan' sodger lashed with the cat for stealing a barrel of herrings in Saltcoats, and how, when he had bravely taken his two hundred lashes, he looked over to his captain and said he would take two hundred more to get his discharge, and how Nanny Fulton was so ta'en with the sturdy reaver, that when he asked her, she married him oot of haun', and gaed awa with him to Glasgow.

And there was the Weaver's Holm, too, where Earl Sauners of wonderful memory had shot the wild ducks, and, according to Robin Cummell, firin' his ramrod by mistak', had strung them a' thegither by the een! Romancing Robin! was't nae of that same Earl Sauners too that you used to tell, how "he had sae muckle siller lying in the castle, that he had to turn't noos and t'ans wi' a shool, juist to keep it frae moolin', ye ken"?

But, alas!

"Pallida Mors æquus pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
Requmque turres."

"Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crookèd scythe and spade."

Both Robin and the Earl have long gone to their rest ; and though I smiled to myself at these and siclike diverting recollections of Robin, yet the spirit of sorrow was strong upon me, and I sighed to mysel' like ane who is a stranger in a strange land and has lost his way. The yellow leaves sooming down the river seemed to me in their garish tints to be the melancholy type of days and joys long dead, and floating away to the sea of everlasting forgetfulness. I am an old man, I thought, and these leaves, though bonnie, are as the leaves of my life, well enough to look at and wuffle owre for a meenont, but the playocks, withal, of an indifferent fate, and fleeting away, alas ! for ever. And when I thought of the green forests whence they came, and all the young pride and strength thereof that ance had been, the likeness seemed to me the greater, and I sighed, " Oh ! that I could arrest the leaves of my life ; oh ! that I could stamp them on something more stable than this wandering stream ! "

It was somehow here that the first bit inkling and notion of the plan of this book

came into my head, for daunerin' sadly hame-wart by the Craw-Brae Heads, in by the Spoot and the Pethfit, I fell to dreaming to mysel' what a glorious thing it would be if I could juist hae a nicht wi' John Paiks and Robin Rummles ance mair. And why not in imagination, I thought, if not in very truth? And then, all at once it came to me like a revelation,—“I'll write them doon, the recollections of my life, and so live over once more, in the only way that ever I can, the happy auld days of langsyne!”

And so I have spent the lang nights of this last winter at the fireside, hearing in the midnight blasts the dear voices of the dead, and conjuring up the ghosts of the glorious years that are gone.

CHAPTER II.

MY FORBEARS—MY CHILDHOOD—MY GRANNY.

I HAVE wauled three several times through the Scots Almanack, forbye consulting the manuscript of that most learned and curious book by the Laird of Craiglands, the which I hope to see yet in print, and which contains “a most full and accurate account of all manner of particularities anent the decay of the ancient families of the west country,” and I cannot say that I have been able as yet to get the least inkling or insight into the ancient origin of our family. Sanny Duguid, a second cousin of my grandfather’s, whyles, when he got fou’, used indeed to descant on the family pedigree, and said he had heard his father tell that we came with King Haco from Denmark. In fact, he went so far as to say that ance in Paisley, he had seen a very ancient print of our coat-of-arms, with the

motto, so far as he could mind it, of "Oukum wunkum sane podavia." "I'm no a vera guid Latin scholar," quo' Sanny, "but the general meanin' o't, I believe, is 'Strong in the strength o' the Lord.'"

It was always my private opinion that Sanny lee'd like a mill-shillin'; and now that I have learned the Latin tongue myself, I feel sure of it. Hoosever, we'll let that flee stick to the wa', and I would merely make the observe here in passing, that for some hundreds of years back, as it would appear from the books of the Kirk-Session, my forbears have been sma' bits o' tradesmen, cottars, feuars, blacksmiths, and siclike, in the west kintra, and chiefly aboot the toon and parish of Kilwinning itself. I find them scattered athort the parish from Dalgarven and Monkcastle to the Bogend, and from the Aishenyairds to Auchentiber. My father, who was a tailor in a sma' way, leaved at the head of the Woodwynd, near to Robin Craig the droggist's shop, and that, along with the fact that my granny was a howdie, perhaps as much as anything determined me in the choice of a profession.

I never go into my own shop to this day, and see the mortar and bits o' bottles that I bocht at Robin's sale when he dee'd, but the auld time comes back to me with all the freshness and smell o' the springtime o' life, when I played as a bairn in Robin's shop, an' cowpitt his jar o' leeches, or trintled the pills along the flure, while he swat wi' consternation in case I should lift ane o' them and swallow't for a sweetie. But haith! I kent a ploy worth twa o' that. Wasna there Nanny Blackmann's shop, fu' o' aipples and tablet, sugar-taps, and riches uncountable, never to speak o' Mr Parley the baker's, wi' the snap polismen, the wee currant laifs, and the pies? I have a great partiality to Mr Parley's pies to this very day, and I would submit that, with a hue o' Robin Smith's best porter, they are juist prime, and, indeed, very hard to beat.

One of my earliest recollections is wauken- ing in the middle of the nicht and peering oot into the blackness to see my granny go off behint a man on a horse. She was takin' a wean, I was told, to a wife at the Fergushill, or maybe the Darmule, but that wean was

aye a mystery to me, and where she hade it I never could jaloose. Mony a time, when she was sleepin' through the day, did I secretly explore the pooches of her goon, and the leather ane forbye that she wore at her hainch, to see if by ony chance I could solve the riddle. I remembered long after that, and smiled sadly to mysel' at the thought when I compared it with my own like experience, that the shillings in her pooch were few and far between.

A scene which once occurred has also sometimes amused me when I have called it to mind. One dark winter night, a farmer body riding into the toon, had mista'en Robin Cummell's door for ours, and after a terr'ble tirlin' at the pin and chappin' on the window-brod, he got Robin up, and as sune's he put his head oot at the window, gaspit—

“Does your wife gang oot amang folk?”

“What's that you say, you dyvour?” quo' Robin.

“I say, man, does your wife gang oot amang folk?”

“Lord!” quo' Robin, who was fire and tow, “bye till I get my breeks, and—” when with

that my granny, who for some time had been lyin' beside me hotchin' and lauchin' to hersel', got up and spoke to the man, when things were explained, I suppose, to Robin's satisfaction, and my granny gaed off with the man on the horse.

My father dee'd when I was but a wee callan', and I canna say that I have ony very clear recollection of him, and my mother had been dead long before that. My granny after having helpit half of the parish into life, and, as I have heard her say, kind o' bakit wheens of them into existence, departed this life when I would be about ten years auld, and I was left to the care of my grandfather and auld Auntie Lily. Dear auld Auntie Lily! how much do I owe to your kindly care! Who tied up my wee hackit taes in the winter time? Who beggit me aff a lickin' that I weel deserved, when, galrevitchin' at my grandfather's honey-kaimbs, I had gotten the colic? and who, when I had fa'n and cut my wee heid on the grun'stane, would plaister't up but you? How weel do I mind how you would spread me a bit butter and bread wi' your thoomb, or maybe gi'e me a wee cappit

bake and jeelie to keep me frae greetin'!
And though you did mak' me gang to the
Greenside Kirk three times ilka Sabbath Day,
forbye the Fast Days, and the prayer-meeting
nichts too, albeit I slept the ae hauf o' the
time, and spent the ither in pyking oot leddies
and parasols on the bookboard wi' a preen,
yet I ken you meant it a' for my guid, and I
like you noo for the same. You're ane o'
them, ane o' the vast crowd that have passed
over from the strong glare of day, where we
couldna weel see you or ken you, to the shade
of the past, where your guidness is fixed and
mair clearly visible to our een.

Speaking of the Greenside Kirk,—but I
maun tak' anither chapter for that.

CHAPTER III.

THE GREENSIDE KIRK.

OF a' the bodies whose chief pleasure in life seems to be to rant and howl and ring bells, and mak the first the dowffest day in a' the week, surely the Antiburghers are the drollest and the stiffest in this worl'. They mak a fair bauchle o' God, and seem to have the same notion of His taste that the callan' had who was makin' exercise in his room ae Sabbath morning, at the tap of his voice, when his mother cried up the stair to him, "Guidsaff's, John! tou's surely no sawin' buirds on the Lord's day?"

My grandfather, who had little liking for Mr M'Clumpha and his cauld harrangues, seldom gaed to hear him, but when he did, he was sure to come hame and say, "Weel, if he was weavin' and sent wark like that to me, he would get back his wab every time.

The fac' o' the maitter is," he would add, in answer to some rebuke from auld Auntie Lily, who was ane of the faithful, and could never gree with him on this affair, "it's nae great enterteenment gaun to the Kirk."

But to me, at times, it *was* a great entertainment, for when Mr Birzethembraid frae the 'Shaws would rise on a Sacrament Sabbath day to fence the tables, and, lowping up in a holy rapture, would cuff the Bible, and maybe cowp it at last on the head of lang Wull Mair the precentor, dingin' aff his red wig and his specks, or better still, when auld Johnnie Thrums the elder, on a prayer-meeting day, would give us ane of his droll and inimitable cracks with the Almighty, it was juist as good as a play, and I whyles had a terr'ble facht to chirt in the lauch. Johnnie was ane of God's roughest diamonds. He had the finest auld-fashioned and familiar way that I ever heard of talkin' awa to the Lord, and the rude spate of his eloquence had always for me a far greater charm than a' the cauld orations and classical harrangues of the learned Mr M'Clumpha. Johnnie was a hard working weaver. I mind o' him ance saying to

my grandfather, "Ay! man John I was aye keen o' the wark,—I've heard my faither tell that twa three nichts before I was born, when my mother and him were lyin' in the bed, they heard the lay gaun, and the shuttle fleeing, and the beam turnin' in the shop ben the hoose, and they lay and trembled, and aye considered it was a sign that the wean she was gaun to hae would be a great worker."

Johnnie was ane o' the heid bummers in the kirk. I can never forget his prayer on the occasion of my Lord Eglinton's funeral, when, at the service of the cake and wine in the Masons' Lodge, a' the tenantry were gathered thegither, and he was asked, as being the auldest elder present, to put up a few words:—

"O Lord," he said, "may it seem guid to Thee to bless the late catastrophe to the young members of this illustrious family, whase faither we hae juist been layin' bye for a wee till Thou come. O Lord, Thou knowest everything,—ay! Lord, there's no a preensworth but Thou kens, and this young fallow wham Thou hast seen guid to lippen wi' sae muckle gear,—we have heard, O

Lord, that he has been raither gaun oot o' boun's this while back, but show him the error of his ways in time, bring back the reister with a yerck of Gospel grace to Thy fauld, and mak him liker in some respects what his illustrious faither was afore him!

“O Lord, we are but haverals afore Thee! but onything we have requeeshted that's daft-like, juist shape it roon to something else ye ken would better ser' oor turn. And dinna, Lord, diseirish us a' thegither for our shortcomings, nor even skelp us owre sair, as at this time, with the taws of Thy wrath. Ye ken that, frae his mither's milk, man was aye a wilyart sorrow and a vaguin' dyvour. And, though a sarkfu' o' sair banes for the sins of ilka meenont of the day would be nae mair than we hae wrocht for, Lord, let us a' aff haill scart at the last if aiblins it be within t'e compass o' Thy power!”

But not only did the regular ordinances in the Greenside Kirk furnish me with abundant food for curious observation,—some of the by-play was of interest too. There was the loosie auld farmer body who sat in the seat abune us, he was deaf as Ailsa Craig, and his

big hairy lugs were aye gaun like a cuddy's, to my immense delight. Then there were Jenny Jawper and Hughoc Thrums, a brither of Johnnie's, who, without Johnnie's ability, had a' his ootspokenness. He usually put a question or two to Mr M'Clumpha from where he sat, such as, "Ye haena tell't us wha's to preach in the afternune?" or "What's the collection for the nicht noo?"

Jenny Jawper, frae the Muirside, was a kind of half natural, who came to the kirk every Sabbath day with a good supply of hard boiled eggs and rough banes in a pock, which she sat and mummled when she wasna sleepin'. One day when Mr M'Clumpha was mair than ordinarily weariesome, and was toilin' on to his thirteenthly, after which had to come the practical application of the subject, Jenny, who had been chewin' a paperfu' o' lozengers, smellin' loudly at her aipple-ringe, and finally returning for more solid distraction and comfort to a bane, fell sound asleep in the front of the laft, and snored like Gabriel's trombone. The bane in her haun drappit owre into the body of the kirk, and waukened Hughoc Thrums, as it fell with a

clatter beside him on the seat. The minister paused in great distress, and in the silence Jenny waukened up, but, taking in the situation at a glance, she just raxed owre the beukbuird, and said loudly to Hughoc, who had pickit up the bane, and was glowerin' unutterable things up at the laft, "Dinna fash your heid, Hughoc, it's only a pykit ane!"

My grandfather, as I have said, had no great love for the Whig Kirk, nor for ony of its belangings. He took a great interest, however, in any movement of social reform about the toon, and was for many years the *preses* of the Victualling Society. On one occasion, Mr M'Clumpha had a pig to sell to the Society, and said he had not weighed it, but according to the rules of mensuration it should be so and so,—would they call it that? Of course, it was thought very ill-mannered, if not indeed absolutely sinful, to call the minister's word in question, and the pig was just taken at his valuation. Afterwards, however, it was found to be much lighter than he had represented, and though the Society were terribly scunnered, they were quite helpless in the matter.

When Mr M'Clumpha dee'd, and the Rev. Mr Curl ringed in his stead, some ane said to my grandfather ae day—

“Whatna kin' o' minister's this they hae gotten in the Greenside Kirk noo, John?”

“I canna tell you,” quo he, “he hasna sell't us ony swine yet.”

CHAPTER IV.

CHILDHOOD—STAIR WHALBERT AND HIS
MOTHER—ROBIN RUMMLES, ETC.

SURELY Stair Whalbert was the hardest and the meanest callan' that ever leaved. I canna tell what we ever had in common, him and me, but that we were cillins, and toddled thegither as bairns through his mother's flure. He was an only wean, a suckered gaste, and spoiled from the first,—no' but that he inherited from baith of his forbears that pea-splittin' dealin' nature which kythed when he was but a callan' to a spirit of scarting and haining that I never could abide. Indeed the guidwife to this day whyles tak's somewhat needless occasion to towt me with the opposite qualities, and mair than hints that I am tarred wi' the leaven o' wasterie, an observe the injustice of whilk nane who ken me can without prevauration mainteen.

But though Jenny Whalbert and her man were middlin' ticht o' the grup, Stair fairly oot-Heroded them baith, and could cheat his faither at a bargain, as the pridefu' body braggit, when he was but a wean. Jenny indeed had some real guid points aboot her, and was withal a couthy motherly body, aye keepin' aff the siller itsel', and when ye were seekin' naething frae her. Weel do I mind how she would gie me caurcakes and black-puddin's, or maybe a daud o' treacle scone when she was bakin', juist as if I had been ane of her ain, and her aul' worl' cracks and stories aften mak me snirtle and laugh to mysel', when I think of them whyles to this day.

“Jenny's hoose was weel frequented,
 News she gat frae ilka where,
 And by some 'twas even hinted
 That the Clashin' Club met there.

Matches mae than five and twenty
 Had been made by her fireside,
 There the brows and trinkets dainty
 Had been shawn o' mony a bride.

Jenny aye was in her glory
 When the hoose was crowded fou',
 Weel she lo'ed a kittle story
 Owre a wee drap royal blue.”

But to return to Stair,—I verily believe that, had sic a thing been possible, he would have skinned a loose for the creesh o't and socht candy for the banes. He grabbit at every maik, and the only time I ever kent him to fecht, was ance when auld Habkin o' the Pethfit, who was a pliskie body, scartled a wheen scadded pennies on the street at his dochter's waddin', and Stair warsled for them among the stoor, and plowted his fingers wi' the lave. He was a terr'ble callan' for doos, and didna swither lang, I am sorry to say, aboot girning ony strange anes that cam about the doors. I was mair for rabbits, for which Stair was aye trying to swap peeries and bools wi' me. We had argol-bargoled for half an oor ae day about a fine big Rooshian ane he wanted to sell to me this time, and we had nearly gree'd about the price o't, when I remembered to ask the very important question, "Ah! but is he a he ane?"

"Ou ay!" quo Stair, but not without some evident hesitation, "he's a he ane," when, seeing as he thought some expression of disappointment on my face, he quickly added, "But, ye ken, he's no vera he either!"

Amang ithers of my youthful compeers that come back to me as I think regretfully of life's young day, are Robin Rummles o' the Lylestone, Benjie Rattles his cousin, and ane John Paiks, a fine ramplour lad,—his faither keepit a bit shop, and sell't nits and tea, caunles, spunks, and siclike, at the end of the brig. John was juist the clean contrair of Stair Whalbert,—rash and generous to a faut, though aiblins a wee thocht tintured with the narrow-mindedness and bigotry of the Anti-burghers, his faither being ane of the leading elders in that wee body.

We took terr'ble traiks on the Saturdays, awa up the water-side, burning whins on the Gilly-flower-bankin', dookin' at the Swallow Hole, or maybe doon at Ringan's Isle, bigging great tannles on the holms o' the Garnock, or maybe herrying nests, or gathering black-byds at Montgreenan or the Blair. I have mony a time thocht since then that it was naething short of a miracle that we werena a' drooned in the Garnock, or kilt in the auld heuch at Mossmulloch, as we raxed owre the mouth o't to hear the stanes we flang down stottin' frae side to side till they fell wi' a splash

in the water at the bottom, or as we hearkened to the yowls o' an unfortunate mad dog that had been left to dee in the pit, and tell't ane anither it was the ghaist o' ane of Cromwell's sodgers who had been murdered there langsyne! We certainly ran mair risks in a day than the daft collier body Tammie Tile on the Crossbrae, whom I have seen tumblin' the wulcat a' the road to his work oot at the Craw-Brae-Heids.

I can picture myself noo,—a sturdy wee dyvour wi' a bit rumpy-bum coat on, the pooches o't stuffed wi' peeries and bools, string, nails, peem-poms, and siclike callan's gear,—aye in mischief and trouble, an' if he wasna gellin' frae the last lickin', warm wi' the thochts o' the ane that was to come.

CHAPTER V.

BOYHOOD AND SCHOOLTIME—ANDRO CAUK,
THE SCHULEMAISTER—MISS FROST—JOCK
CLAMFF AND LEEZIE FIZZ.

I NEVER was very biddable as a bairn, and though I canna say that I was very sairly doonhadden at hame, yet mony a gowl I had to get frae my grandfather, and mony a flowff i' the haffet frae auld Auntie Lily, before I was handed owre to the tender mercies of Andro Cauk, the schulemaister. Terrible things had been told to me of what I might expect from Andro, and whether it was the halsome dreid thereof, or whether it was that I was but wee, and no very lang at his schule, I'll no venture to say, but I never got my paiks from him. It wasna but I whyles appeared to stand sairly in need of them, as when I brunt Willie Drysdale's haun with the het poker, or when I filled the dominie's

snuffers wi' pooter, and, but for his specks, would have blin't him when he opened them owre the caunle. But for a' that, he reishelled the main author o' thae tricks weel, who had made me the innocent cat's paw as it were on both occasions, and that was Stair Whalbert, whom he never could byde with his hiddlin' kind of ways. Willie Drysdale and Stair and me were sittin' on our hunkers ae morning at the fire, when some rippit getting up at the ither end of the schule, Willie Drysdale lookit owre his shooter while he continued to spread his loofs owre the lowe. Stair Whalbert, observing that I had drawn oot the poker, with which I had been powtering in the fire, and was looking round also to see what the gell was aboot, suddenly gied my arm a dunsh, and the het poker brunt puir Willie's haun! He lowpit up of course with a yell, and in the sudden quietness that fell owre the schule, the awful voice of the dominie was heard as he flung them at Stair Whalbert, "Bring me the taws, sir! And what were you lauchin' at to yoursel' the noo," quo he, "Stair? it was surely something very funny to gar Willie Drysdale speak so loud."

“Johnnie Duguid was kittlin’ me,” quo he, “and made me lauch.” “Weel, Stair,” quo Mr Cauk, who had seen the whole affair, and kent he was the fautor, “you’ll hae to lauch a little at the ither side o’ the mouth noo, for I’m gaun to kittle you a wee too.” Indeed he made Stair scart for the rest of that day where it wasna juist yeucky, and I ken that at twull oors he did not sit doon to his chack o’ dinner as usual. Mr Cauk had aye a sweetie for the wee anes, or would come jokin’ roun’ to us with a snuff. I can only mind of ance that he quarrel’ me for a faut, and that was for pappin’ bits o’ paper at him when he was sleepin’, from a bootrie-gun my grandfather had made to me oot of ane of his auld pirns. Flingin’ the taws at me, he ordered me to bring him that bootrie-gun, which I did of course with fear and trembling. He dropped it into the fire, and made me stand beside him till it was consumed. Then lifting the aizle o’t with the tangs, “Hae, Johnnie,” quo he, “haud your pooch, here’s the bootrie-gun!” I had to do as I was bidden, and as it fell through in pieces on the floor, he said, “Eh! man, it’s broken Johnnie,

but your grandfaither can mak ye anither ane when ye gang hame, and a new pooch tae!"

So he did, but it was after he had licket me weel for getting the first anes burned.

I had been but a year or so at Mr Cauk's schule when I got the ringworm in the head, and notwithstanding the saw which my granny made in secret from some yirbs she had gathered in Montgreenan, and the two cups of Rabbierinniehedge tea which she made me drink every day to a scone which had been juist bakit on the coals, the heid did not mend, but, like the tod's whalp, got aye a day aulder a day the waur. At a consultation with Robin Craig the droggist, it was at length decided that my heid should he shaved and then tarred, and Jean Sape, who plied her calling as a barber in the hoose nearly opposite to us at the top of the Woodwynd, performed the operation. Behold me then with a Kilmarnock nicht-cap on, and privileged, partly as an invalid, and partly because I was really an oddity both in my ways and looks, to play many pranks in the toon which would have brought other boys into more trouble than they did me.

Out of consideration for my supposed blateness at having to wear such an unusual substitute for a bonnet, I was sent to a leddy's schule instead of Mr Cauk's, and it was here I may say that I got my first rudiments of knowledge. Miss Jeanie Frost and her sister Eliza were two old maiden ladies, who, to eke out the slender living that their father made as a tailor, had opened a bit schule at the Brig en' some two years before. They were really kindly, gentle bodies baith, and deserving of better treatment than they whyles got from Robin Rummles and Jock Clamff and me. There were more lasses than boys at their schule, and indeed, forbye the three of us that I have just named, I cannot call to mind another callan'. But there was a wheen braw wee lassocks, and I was owre my lugs in luvè wi' them a'. But Leezie Fizz of the Clumbeith was the universal favourite. Weel do I mind the proud glint that I got of her dark melting een, and the bonnie moss roses that mantled on her cheek, as with one voice from us a' she was proclaimed our Candlemas Queen.

But the ramplosity of my young bluid could

not be altogether tamed by contact with these gentler influences. Jock Clamff and Robin Rummies were steerin' callan's too, and we toozled the bits o' lassocks mony a time, till they fyled their bonnie wee faces and said they would tell the mistress. But they never did it. Haith no! they liked the wee dyvours owre weel for that. I mind of ance, when I was gettin' a loofy frae Miss Frost, catching the taws oot of her hand, and to her astonishment casting them owre my shoother to the ither end of the schule. For this most flagrant contempt of her authority, I was condemned during the play oor to solitary confinement in a press on the stairhead. But, poor leddy, she had forgotten that in that same press she had laid bye a new cheese and a when farls of guid new oatmeal cake. I need hardly say that I never wearied the whole hour.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIT FROM THE GROZETS.

CURIOSLY enough, it was illness again that cut short my career at my second schule. I was aye fond, as the reader may have already observed, of a' the guid things that were gaun. "*Carpe diem*" seemed to me no contemptible kind of philosophy, and dinner was after all the serious business of this life. But ane may be a wee thocht rash in his zeal when carrying out *any* system of philosophy, and so it happened to me. My grandfather was a great bee fancier; indeed, auld Cautherwood the shoemaker and he had, I suppose, the greatest number of skeps and the biggest hives in Ayrshire, and in my grandfather's garden, forbye all sorts of honey-flowers, marigolds, pansies, roses, clover, and what not, there was a plentiful supply of grozets, cherries, jargonelles, plooms, and other fruits

at which I was for a constancy galrevitchin, in season and oot of season, forbye paying my respects to Nanny Blackmann, whenever I had a penny in my pooch. Weel do I mind asking Nanny ae day for a bawbee's worth o' bashed ploods, and when she said she had nae bashed anes, saying, "Weel but, Nanny, ye ken ye can bash me a bawbee's worth!"

But, as I was saying, I paid the penalty, for ae day when I had convoyed Robin Rummles hame to the Lylestone and was coming back doon the Peth, I fell in a fit and knew nothing more till I waukened ae morning and saw my granny from Glasgow, who seldom came to see us but when there was something special to do, as at this time, bending owre me and saying, "Bless me, the bairn's wauken." I put my hand to my head and found it was shaved again, and my granny let me see a Keelivine that I had all but bitten through in the fit. But I was speedily consoled by the sight of a wee green box, which she had long promised, and which she had now brought with her at last.

My granny was an orthodox Antiburgher. I remember about that same time that my

sister Mab had gotten a new hat, with some ribbons and ither falderals in't of which, lassie like, she was geyan proud. She was takin' a glint at the head-gear ae Sabbath morning in the glass, when my granny, in a tantrum of holy indignation, whuppit the hat aff her head, strippit the ribbons from it in a moment, and made her go to the kirk with the bare straw. I used to visit her a few years later on, and I have seen on a Saturday, when she would hear me whistling about the hoose, she would say, "Wheesht! laddie, wheesht! I say, is that a way to prepare for the Lord's Day?" Speaking of my granny, I never think of her yet but the lines in ane of her father's school-books which I have seen come into my mind, and they will fitly conclude this chapter as the sentiment which *ought* at least to have imbued me at this time, when I was about to take a new departure towards a higher education,—

"John Morton aughtt this book,
God give grace thereon to look,
Not only to look, but to understand,
For learning is better than housses and land,
For when housses and land all is spentt,
Then learning is most excellent."

MILMANOCH,
Decr. 1703 years.

CHAPTER VII.

THOMAS KYTE, THE PROVOST OF IRVINE, AND
THE NEW SCHULE—JOCK BULLET—AULD
FULTON—JOHN SHEARS—THE EGLINTON
POLICIES — EARLY AMBITION — DANNIE
STUART AND MR BAREBROD—THE LUMP
OF KNOWLEDGE.

ABOUT this time there arose a terr'ble sough through the kintra side anent the grand new schule or academy that Thomas Kyte, the provost, had biggit on the Toon's Moor, to perpetuate his name to posterity in the ancient and royal brugh of Irvine. Thomas was a pompous, prideful body, and didna ken B from a bull's fit; yet he had a commodity of sense and mother-wut about him that was remarkable, and had some guid notions, it must be admitted, which he carried through with a maisterful dourness of his ain, and against great odds in the Toon Council.

This new schule was ane of them, and it was now at length clockit, and carried to a maturity.

The schools of Irvine, like those of Kilwinning, had been owre lang in the hands of lameters, stickit ministers, and siclike orra dyvours, and it was now resolved to get a proper teacher, or maybe twa of them, from Glasgow College. So to make a long story short, it was decided to send me to the new Irvine school. Mr Paiks couldna weel byde to see the like of Johnnie Duguid's oe gaun by his son, as it were, on the highway to knowledge, and so John was sent with me to Irvine. It wasna lang till Stair Whalbert, Jock Clamff, Robin Rummles, James Jawper, and some ithers played at fallow the leader; and indeed it soon came to be considered "the thing" to send the callan's of the toon to "the academy." Nor was our clachan singular in this respect; in fact, had it not been that the example was first set by Dundonald, Dreghorn, the Troon, and ither places, I question if the Kilwinning folks would ever have lootit to notice the purse-proud Irvine bodies ava, with whom they had always, if not

an open feud, at least little or no traffickings or kindly dealings.

I daresay we were neither muckle better nor waur than the lave o' callan's at our age, but it seems to me now, when I look back to that far-awa time, that we were sorrows indeed, and that Jock Bullet's invariable salutation to me when he met me on the road came very hard upon the heels of the truth: "God! Johnnie," quo he, "is that you? Hae ye gotten't yet? No? Weel, it's high time ye had it; but, as sure's death, Johnnie, ye'll get it when you gang hame!"

Our tricks are no' to be told on a lang simmer's day, from the time we set auld Fulton's lum on fire at the Dirrans, whenever he had one and sugar, as he said, and that was owre aften for himsel', to the time we arrived at the Irvine toll and helpit John Shears to cule his parritch, as they sat oot on the window-sole, by heaping the plate fu' of snaw.

John had been oot in the 'Forty-five, and receiving a shot in the neck, he had lost his voice in consequence, and was now as hairse and roopit as a craw. But though he could

only whisper loud threats to us of "the Fiscal," he was the best at hainching a stane, young or auld, that I ever saw. He was a very hard man, and keen to mak siller. He dee'd during the first winter I was at the Glasgow College, and Murren, his couthie auld wife, whom I mind of weel, with her fine lauchin' face and Roman nose, told me when I was oot at New'earday that his end was like his life, and in death he was quite consistent. It seems he had ta'en a stroke, and lay for some days in a dotrified and unconscious condition. But at length he rallied a little, and seemed to want to speak. The family were gathered round the bed. There was Murren and his dochter Jean, forbye Gibby, a ne'er-do-weel hellicate thing, that was the get of a son who was deid. John, as I have said, was far through, but the spunk of expiring life had spluttered in the socket, and bleezed up for a meenont at the last. He glowered like ane who has waukened from a dream and tried to point to the door, and then to the window. They asked him what it was, but he seemed fashed and impatient. At length he got so excited that he managed to burst out

into a loud whisper, "Wheesht! I hear a cairt!"

But the effort was too much for him, and nature claimed the toll.

The Eglinton policies, through which we had to pass twice every day, were a perfect mine to us of treasures and wonders, and mony a happy thochtless hour, I am sorry to say, found us fugieing the schule to herry nests in the Leddyha', or gather ea'rnits or rasps in the Craw-Wood. But though there was muckle waste of our precious time, which makes me chawt when I think of it to this day, there came at length a period when it was needful for me to pull up my breeks, and when Ambition touched me on the arm, as it were, and pointed forrit to better things.

I recollect ance that my grandfather, looking ben the years no doubt to some dream of his ain, speered at me what I would like to be. Never shall I forget the look of scunnered indignation and astonishment which cam owre his face when I said, "A flunkey," or "An usher," I forget whilk of them. He took me a flowff i' the haffet with his loof, and stottit awa like a birsled pea!

But Dannie Stuart of Irvine, who learned me the Latin tongue, soon waukened within me the wonder and thirst for knowledge, and a spirit of speering into the causes of things, that kythed belyve into a settled purpose and resolve that I would be a doctor.

But Dannie merits mair from me than the mere mention of his name in the bygaun. He was a man of guid natural parts, and an accomplished scholar forbye. Being terr'ble fond of the pipe, and having a dreamy kind of poetic genie, he whyles fell a wee thocht sleepy in his chair, and would answer us no' juist to the point as we read our Virgil or Horace to him. But ae day, when John Paiks had been asked a question and answered to Dannie as he was nodding at the fireside, "Sus,—pigi,—gruntum,—hogere,—"
"Ye swine!" quo Dannie, as he lowpit up and cuffed his lugs, "had ye pork to your supper yestreen, and are ye no wauken yet?"

John was terr'bly ta'en, but he was bent on some revenge, nor was it lang till he had matured a scheme. Dannie had gaen hame every day for years by a footpath through the playground that led to a door opening

through the dyke on to the banks of the Irvine. On each side of this narrow track, which was in an unfrequented place, the grass grew lang and strong. So what did John do but tie twa pickles of the grass thegither from each side of the fit-road, and when Dannie, poor man, cam daunering alang, thinking mair of Greek verbs and the loves of Queen Dido than of ony present concerns, he stooved blindfold as it were into the trap, and fell with a great cloyt on his face!

In curious contrast with the solid sense and learning of Dannie, was the manner of Mr Barebrod, the English teacher. He keepit a wheen boarders, whom he starved, and who used to tell us how he counted the tattows that were to go to the table. I ance had to call at his hoose about something, and saw them at their dinner, or rather feeding their fancies on the dinner that should have been there, for the dishes were cleaned stoop and roop, and the very cat was gaun aboot wi' its ribs sticking to its curpan.

He was, besides, a conceited, bragging body, Mr Barebrod, and used to blaw to us at the schule about the great things he had seen

and dune, and the immensity of his learning, which, after a', was but a wee affair when compared with Dannie Stuart's, who didna brag ava. There never was a foreign sailor cam begging to the schule but Dannie could crack awa to him in his ain mother tongue, as if he had kent him, and been ootowre at hame with him a' his days. But Mr Barebrod's attainments, like a Corsehills shop, were a' in the window, and I dinna think he kent ony tongue but his ain. He had a great muckle laigh stool, on which he used to mount his chair, and hold forth to us in his most flatulent moments. Ae day John Paiks and me managed, by slow and unobserved degrees, to draw the chair to the very edge of the stool or throne from which Mr Barebrod was delivering to us his fousy utterances. In the fulness of his pride, he sat down with the words in his mouth, "Here sits a lump of knowledge!" when what we had ettled and hoped for came to pass—chair and lump of knowledge and a' thegither cowpit up and wuntled on to the flure, to the ill-concealed delight of the whole schule.

I was seven years at Irvine before I went

to the college, but of the events which led up to that great occasion, and of the manner and amusements of my further upbringing, I must now speak more particularly and at greater length.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCALING THE AULD TURRETS — ROBIN CUMMELL
—ROBIN THRUUGHSTANE—THE PAPINGOE.

IN the magnificent southern gable of the transept, which is almost all that now remains of the Kilwinning Cathedral, there may still be found by the curious, the broken steps of a turret stair. It is plainly to be seen that it ance led up the side of the gavel, but where it came from, or what its connections were below, there is nane to tell. Robin Cummell, who wrocht with my grandfather in the Lane shop, used to say it was the entrance to a vowt which led awa below ground through the Bean Yaird and below the Easter Chaumers and the Leddy Firs, and then aneath the Garnock and on to Eglinton Castle. He spak of other vowts too in the Howegate, whaur it was said the monks had hidden their golden caunlesticks and cups.

Though whyles, in my later days, I had my very grave doubts about Robin's veracity on these and other like points, yet at the time I speak of, and that was shortly after I gaed to Irvine, I had the strongest and most unquestioning faith in a' he said; and in proof of it there were to be seen ae winter morning at that time, about five o'clock, three callan's with a ladder in their grip clinging like cats to the auld turrets, and trying to speel to some spot from which they could descend the broken stair. It was John Paiks, John Rigging, and me, but we were doomed to a double disappointment, for, by the light of the tarry rape we had let doon the hole, we could see that a solid wall of masonry stopped the way; and when we had juist resolved to scale the turret upwards as far as the first hole that bored the gavel, what should we hear but the terrible voice of Robin Thughstane the bethral, as he cam swearing through the kirkyaird to the foot of the ladder. Robin gauched a good deal, and especially when he was excited. He was a great oddity, and had some very droll notes. "Mony a ane speaks o' my drinkin'," quo he, "bu—but

few ken ocht o' my drooth!" A strange minister, whom he was helping on with his goon ae Sabbath morning in the vestry, threw oot some gey braid hint about the drink, which he could see that Robin then had.

"We-we-well," quo Robin, "I—I—I was *thinkin'* there was a smell o' speerits amang us!"

He was always head and front at the Papingoe, carrying the Doo round the toon on tap of a painted pole, that was also decked with many medals and favours that had been gi'en by the captains of previous years.

Ane of the Aishenyairds family, who happened to be in the kirkyaird on a Papingoe day, was very angry when he heard the cries of "Heids! Comin' arrows!" and saw the rampaung of the callan's ower his family burial place, which is juist at the steeple-root. He spoke to Robin on the subject, who answered with an air of astonishment and remonstrance,

"I'—i'—it's the heartsomest grave in the kirkyaird!"

But the Papingoe that I can mind of long ago was a very different affair to what it is now : a brave and gallant show indeed, with all the pomp and air of an old-time military pageant. It has now come to a very low pass, having long fallen into the hands of the colliers, or, as Dumbie Hogg has christened them, "The phials of wrath." Speaking of them, it is told of Robin how that once, when he was burying ane of their weans, the father o't wouldna pay him what he wanted for the job.

"We'—we'—well," quo Robin, "i'—i'—it'll be back at the Doura before you!" which, as he said of it afterwards himself, "was t'—t'—too bad,—ah! dash't!"

But I left him waiting for us in wrath at the foot of the ladder.

"Who ga'—ga'—gave you authority to go up there? Jui'—jui'—juist come your wa's doon!"

John Rigging gaed first, whispering to me, "I'll lowp on him, or do something, and then you maun fallow me quick and rin." A better thocht seemed to come into his heid the next meenont, for rubbing his haun along the wa',



he kindled again with a spunk the bit of tarry rape we had left, and stappin't suddenly in Robin's face, singed his beard and fairly bamboozled him. We werena slow to tak the chance, and fleeing doon the kirk-style like a judgment, we got fairly awa before he had gathered his wits to win after us.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PAPINGOE.

I SUPPOSE the Papingoe is the dim shadow in our peaceful times of the ancient gatherings for deidly war, when the clanging horn sounded through the green plantings of Ayrshire, and summoned the bowmen guid and true to the standard of their king.

Mony a battle has been focht, as I have heard and read, along the sea-board from Culzean to the Largs, and I myself have gathered a gowpenful of flinty arrow-heids on the sands of Ardeer, "quher indeed," as old Timothy Pont tells us, "there are maney Knoppes vpon sands that lay obieeted to the wind vpon the sea shore, and hard by it ther is a grate knoppe or moll of earth, quherone as is constantly affirmed ther hath beene of old a grate castell seated, the place retaining the name of Castell-hill to this day."

And of "Ardrossen Castle" he says:—

"In this castle ther is a touer, named the read touer, and in it a vaulte called Wallace lardner. For this castell being in possessione of the Englisch, Wallace vsed this stratageme, he set a house hard by the castell afyre, that these quho keipt the castell not suspecting aney fraud, came out to the eresken of the house quhich they (imagined) by accident to haue taken fyre. Bot Wallace with a veill armed companey gifs them a hote velcome and kills euery mother's son, and furthwithe forces the castell and vins it. In this deepe vaulte in the bottom of the read touer flang he the carcatches of these Englisch, vich to this day gaue it the name of Wallace lardner."

But the time when the armour joints were spied from the window-slits in the castle-wa' had lang gaen bye, and there were nae mair deidly engagements noo than the attack on Papingoe day on the cruds and cream at the captain's invitation, and the knocking doon from the steeple of the painted wooden doo. And yet I doubt if the auld time warriors ever felt a more martial fire than burned in our bosoms as we marched to the music of fife

and drum, and Robin Thruughstane carried the halbert through the toon, gay and gorgeous with its coloured benns, and glittering with the medals of many years.

Robin used to lay down the law to us at the steeple-root of "no cursing nor swearing," and lifted the stakes of one penny each from the competitors after the captain had gi'en the word of command—"Archers, stand to your arrows!" and the shooting began. Every archer must have a cockade of red and white in his bonnet. He who knocked down the bird was, in olden days, rewarded by a benn of taffetie round his waist three ells long and three-quarters broad, of many brilliant colours, and valued at twenty pounds Scots. This, in course of time, was replaced by a silver arrow, and, lastly, it has been the custom now for some years to make the prize a medal, which is hung upon Dauvit Mure's siller arrow, and also on the string of a bow, which was added at a later time.

"Heids! Coming arrows!" was the cry through the kirkyaird as the feathered shafts returned to earth. They were often splintered on the heidstanes, or skailed the wee

callan's who were playing at bonnety on the thrughstanes or keeking hespy round the auld turrets and the kirk. Then came the paraud through the toon, and the halt at the various hottles and inns, till the landlord brocht oot the bottle and the captain's health was drunk. When they came to the Cross, the captain pledged them again in a flowing bowl of toddy, and a circle being cleared on the causey, dancing began. Mony's the braw lass was swurled roon at the Cross, and nane of them, as I hear, hae been more constant for some years now in her attendance, or a greater favourite wi' the gentlemen, than wee Sybbie Glen of the Bean Yaird.

On the day after the Papingoe, came the shooting at the Butts. A light green rosette with a white border was worn in the coat, and the archers shot at a target for some useful prize. Their place of meeting is doon by the Leddy Firs, and under the shade of some fine auld plane-trees that were planted by the monks.

I will here chronicle just one more story about Robin Thruughstane. He was very droothy one morning, nothing at all unusual

for him ; but what was unusual and unexpected, as it was also welcome, was that he met with a stranger in the toon who gave him a dram. In the fulness of his gratitude at the moment, Robin is reported to have said,—

“ Man, I’m vera thankfu’ for that, an’ I—
I’ll maybe dae as muckle some day for you!
Ye ken I’m the sexton here ; dae—dae—dae
ye like your heid heich ? ”

CHAPTER X.

ANTIQUARIAN ASPIRATIONS—THE BLAIR COVE—
ROBIN CUMMELL AND SANNY LEECH AT
GLENGOTTRICK.

ALTHOUGH, as I have related, my first attempts at antiquarian research had been anything but fortunate, I was not overly discouraged thereby, but, stimulated and eggit on by Robin Cummell, who was indeed a past-master in romance, I contemplated fresh adventures and dreamed of kistfu's o' buried treasure and wonderful subterranean chambers and passages. Robin's stories of the Blair Cove and the dog that gaed in there and came oot at Loudon Castle a' scadded owre with milk parritch, fairly roused and kittled my curiosity, and I honed on at my grandfather to take me to see't. Never shall I forget our first journey there with Thomas Young. We daunerred slowly away up the Peth, bye the

Gilly-flower bankin' and the Thread Mill Brig, and as we passed further on by the Pear Tree and the Brusten Man's Brae, I experienced what I suppose must be the feelings of the explorer in foreign lands, who sets his foot for the first time on soil that the white man never trod before. When we got to Auchenskeigh, and I pickit the bonnie wee shells out of the heaps of limestone on the road-sides, but, more than all, when arriving in the green bosky glen of the Dusk Water, I saw the yawning mouth of the cave before me,—a new and mysterious worl' seemed to be dawning on my een.

We had brocht some caunle-dowps and a box of spunks with us, and by their feeble licht we gaed ben as far as "Smith's Room." Who Smith was,—whether a hermit, a smuggler, or a covenanter,—I cannot say, but his room, dreeping as it was with damp, could not be the most comfortable in the world.

This was my first, but it was not my last of many visits to the Blair Cove. John Paiks, Robin Rummies, and the rest of us made many a pilgrimage there and to other places of note ower the kintra-side, and mony a time

did we creep bellyflaucht through places that I couldna win through now, and cam oot to the daylight so draigled with glaur and dirt that oor ain mothers would not have kent us till we were washed in the Dusk.

But the place that roused my curiosity and envy maist ava was the Blair Museum, where a' kinds of uncos from hereaboot and farawa are to be seen. There were mummies and birds, sacred clocks and ither crawling ferlies, idols, savages' heads, shells, butterflees, coins, and what not.

A burning desire took hold of me there and then to possess something of the kind mysel'. I got a wee hammer and a pock, and gaed round the kintra-side chappin' a' the big stanes I could see, powtering about auld turrets and castle keeps, and I suppose there was not a heuch or a quarry hole for ten miles round that I had not been to the bottom of. Mony a time might I have been seen stauch-erin' hame on a Saturday nicht with a stane in my pock that would have made a grun'-stane or a wee door-step at the least. I ken now that, like some aulder folk who have been overly fond of "auld nick nackets," I was

whyles sadly imposed upon, but I wasna aware o't at the time, so I was perfectly happy in the possession of my treasures. Such spurious articles were "Some of the hair of the camel that carried Mahomet across the desert" (it was a wee pickle rabbit 'oo' that Robin Cummell had brocht frae Eglinton); "A bit of the Gates of Gaza that Samson the strong man carried up to a hill that is called Hebron;" and "A bit of Pharaoh's dochter's sark," that had come oot of her mummy case in Egypt. Robin brocht me a roosty pin ae day that had been howkit, he said, from the foond of an auld hoose near the kirkyaird. It was birzed braid at the tap o't, as if it had been ca'd when it was het.

"That," quo Robin, "you may tak my word for't, was a pin that was driven red-het through the heart o' some puir fallow langsyne who laid hauns on himsel'!" And as such I had it docketted and laid on the shelf with ither uncoss—"Pin from a suicide's grave." It was no little shock to me, therefore, when Tammy Tether the herd, whom I had ta'en in ae day to see my curiosities, said to me,—

“ Man, whaur got ye the pin ? my cuddy’s tied to anither the very same o’t ! ”

But Robin had not aye the best of the lauch. The simmer of the dear year brought a time when little could be got to give to the pigs but boiled green kail. As the autumn came on, Robin’s wife Bell, who was vexed aboot their soo, got a bag of dust from Miller Kennet, and, in excess of kindness, gied it too much ; the consequence was, that in an hour or two the pig was found in the sty a carcass. When Robin was informed of the calamity, he donned his long-tailed green coat, put on an old chip hat he had gotten from the Hayocks, and, demanding a pound which he had lying in one of Meg his dochter’s drawers, vowed that he would not stop another night in the house ! My grandfather persuaded him to send for Thomas Harrigals the flesher first, to see what had been the matter wi’ the pig, and setting out himself for Thomas, gied him an inkling how the land lay. Thomas said he would soon mak that richt, and calling for water to wash the pig after he had skinned it, he ingeniously, by a small opening in the belly, got two or three jugfuls in when he was

washing it, and then ripping up the whole belly with an air, let the water doon on the floor with a great clash, thus proving of course that the pig had dee'd of the dropsy!

Robin was a great fisher. I mind of him telling me that Sanny Leech and he gaed doon ae day when the Garnock water had been opened after being closed for seven years to a hole called Glengottrick, a wee bit abune the Lugton Lint Mill. Robin said he waded in there and found "a perfect schule o' saumon;" he saw a prime ane with a black spot on the cuff o' the neck o't, so he juist put the leister through't and brocht it oot. Sanny cried in to him, "Bring oot ane to me tae!"

"Na, na," quo Robin, "there's the leister to you,—there's anither the very same o' this ane,—come and tak it oot for yoursel'!"

CHAPTER XI.

AUCHANS HOUSE—DR JOHNSON AND LEDDY
SUSANNAH MONTGOMERIE—JOHN PAIKS
ON DR JOHNSON—THE CORSEHILL MUIR—
THE STORY OF BESSIE GRAHAM—*VERSES*,
WITCH BESSIE.

AMONG other notour and celebrated places to which our Saturday's stravaigings aften took us, were Stane-Castle, with its yellow wa' flower breathing of the sweet nuns of langsyne; Dundonald Castle, where the Bruce had dee'd; and the Roman Camp on Warley Hill, which led our fancies back to a far earlier time. I mind of ance when we were rovin' in the plantin' round Auchans House, that a great big ill-faured, coorse-traited man, with knee-breeks and rig-and-fur stockings on, came suddenly across us as we were thrang herryin' a pyet's nest. There was an auld leddy with him of surpassing loveliness.

“ Her cheeks were lilies dipped in wine,” as Robin Burns has said of ane of his dawties. We stood, bewitched and blate, kennin’ we were in a faut, and yet unable to rin.

“ Well, my young savages of the north country,” quo the man, “ how many hearts have you succeeded in carrying desolation to this morning ? ”

As we said naething, “ Madam,” quo he, addressing the leddy, “ in the whole economy of nature, as I have observed, the young untutored animal is ruthless, nay, delights in cruelty, and, so far as man is concerned, his after education and polish are but the hiding and the dressing of the barbed hook with the bait ! ”

“ Oh ! doctor,” quo she, with a sweet smile, “ dinna be too hard on the poor bairns ; they’re owre young to ken yet what the sorrow of the widow and the faitherless is ! ”

“ We’ll never do’t again, sir ! ” quo John Paiks, thinking that things were beginning to look a wee serious.

“ Sir ! ” quo the doctor, “ your fear is not repentance, yet, out of the deference that I have to the wishes of this lady, I will forego

and deny myself at this time the pleasure of castigating you on the spot. But, tempt me no longer with your folly. Hence! Begone!"

This, as we afterwards learned, was the great Doctor Johnson and Leddy Susannah Montgomerie, the dochter of Culzean. She was the same Leddy Susannah who used to tame the white rats in her bedroom, and who, to preserve the marvellous fairness of her skin, syned her face every morning in a lug-giefu' of sow's milk.

John Paiks had been a good deal impressed both with the birr and the sense of the doctor's moralizin' observes to us, and I noticed that all the way hame, as we gaed doon through the Sourlie Burn Wood and the Pyet Bog, and in through the Corsehill-Muir, that he had fa'n into a dwaam of study and thocht. At last, as though ane had been kittlin' him in the oxters, he fell to the guffawing and lauching in the road.

"That's it, man! that's it, Johnnie," quo he.

"Although Dame Nature, ootwardly,
Wi' him took little pains,
To mak it up, she shovelled in
An extra claut o' brains!"

The Corsehill-Muir, which was then, and is still, a thick planting of fir-trees, was ane of our favourite howffs and haunts. Mony's the basketful of blackbyds I have gathered there, and wandering ben its dark green aisles, I can mind of the terror yet with which we saw the auld lowin' heuch, or searched in awe-stricken twas and threes for the bare spot where Witch Bessie was brunt. But that's a story which, though now abune a hunder years old, will bear the telling again.

Bessie Graham was a terr'ble tairge, and had a tinkler tongue in the heid of her that was aye gettin' her into het water. She was for a constancy rippiting and gelling with her neebors. She leaved someway aboot the Brig en', in a wee thack hoose by hersel', and forbye being auld and no very weel-faured, she had, from lang leevin' by her lane, gotten the common enough habit of muttering and confabbing to hersel' as she gaed aboot her hoose-turns or daunered with her heuck and pock at the dyke-sides scutching a when nettles for her swine.

Weel, it happened ae day that a neebor woman, whose name has been forgotten noo,

and Bessie had a terr'ble wap. There were dauds and clinks and a fouth of flyting and randy talk gaun, and at last Bessie jawed a cuitty-boyneful of sapples on her neebor, muttering some ill-wish about her at the same time, and then she gaed in the hoose, clashing the door in her face. Strangely enough, in a day or twa after this shine, and about the same oor o' the day, the neebor woman took an ill-turn and dee'd! This wanchancie affair was looked upon with great suspicion in Kilwinning, and the haill clanjamphrey of the toon and kintra-side cried oot that Bessie Graham was a witch and should be brunt. Accordingly, she was thrown into durance vile in the steeple. Mr Fergusson, the parish minister of that time, who was a man of no little cleverality in some things, having written "A lowping-on-stane for heavy-dowpit believers" and other godly tracts, examined strictly into Bessie's case, and from her whole manner and declarations was inclined to acquit. But, in the mean time, Alexander Boag, a notour witch-finder in Kilwinning, searched Bessie for the mark, as the poor ignorant bodies ca'd it, and which every witch was

supposed to have. This search was neither more nor less than the jagging of her all over with lang sharp preens, to see if peradventure ony painless part could be found, and which wouldna bleed. Alexander, who, it will be observed, had both the bowels and the bent of a lawyer, discovered a spot on Bessie's back which looked very suspicious, and Mr Ferguson, with Sanny Simpson (the Robin Thruhstane of the period), went a second time to look better into the affair. The poor body, as we may now picture to ourselves, left her leafu' lane in the dark laft of the steeple, after dreeing such pain and shame, would very likely in the course of nature try to relieve her mind by grumbling and greeting to hersel'. This the wise minister and the bethral, who was anither of the same, like the Psalms of Dauvit, heard when mounting the stair to visit her. They halted on their step for a jiffie to hearken, and their imaginations rinning awa wi' ony bit haurll o' sense they ever had, they blessed God for giving them such a clearance of Bessie's guilt as to let them actually hear her in confabulation with the foul thief!

And so poor Bessie was furthwith convict and brunt! Dag on't! it was a black burning shame; but the times were kittle, and men's minds were but slowly struggling through the mists and mirks of superstition to the brighter day.

We found certainly bare spots enough in the Corsehill-Muir to reflect much credit on the zeal and industry of Alexander Boag, that notour witch-finder; but in thinking of the thing since then, it has whyles occurred to me that, inasmuch as there is no record of any burning but the one, and the bare spots were more than one, there might after all be some reasonable doubt as to the cause. But in these days I was troubled with no such misgivings, and my simple faith found vent in the following lines, which, among other bits of lilt, I wrote about the time I gaed to the college. It will be seen that I put the date of Bessie's case awa back beside the monks; but, doubtless, if they didna compass her deid, they did that of others in a similar way:—

WITCH BESSIE.

Young Leddy Susannah she sits in her bow'r,
 Whaur the faemy waters o' Lugton pour,
 She thinks as she quilts o' the noble wooer
 Gaed huntin' at dawin' o morn.

Through the plantin' his bugle-horn toots in her ear,
 Wi' the wind it gaes far, and now it is near,
 Its echoes are chasin' the noble red deer,
 That's breathless, and bleedin', and torn !

It's soundin' sae sair i' th' Sourlie Burn Wood,
 And its echoes are ringin' sae loud, sae loud,
 They've waukened the Abbot and hoolets that brood
 In haly Saint Vinnen's Cell !

The Abbot got up, donned his cassock and shoon,
 The hoolets they screeched as they heard the loud din,
 Quo the Abbot, "Ye loons ! will ye sleep yoursels blin',
 And sic sport ere the vesper bell ?"

The Corsehill-Muir ! the Corsehill-Muir !
 Whaur hirples at nicht the spotted hare ;
 Whaur linties, ever sighin' sair,
 Mak piteous mane,—

There they've haurled "Witch Bessie" wi' speed,
 Awsomely set on her instant deid,
 They heard her croon the Devil's creed,—
 Mercy they've nane.

Noo the leddy she heard their loud gurlin' strife,
 And it gaed to her tender heart like a knife,
 "The wretches," she cried, "want some puir body's life ;
 Saddle my steed, I may save her !"
 And "Now by my dear mither's saintly saul !"
 She cried, and looked to their turrets tall,
 "The morn shall yon pile of iniquity fall,
 If of harmless life you reave her !"

The leddy she fleeched, and the leddy she flate,
Till the folk who had come from far up the gate,
Sae eager to see auld Bessie's sad fate,

Turned roun' wi' the leddy and pled.

"I'm sure the auld body's dune ye nae harm,
And the marks ye tell me ye've seen on her arm
Hae nae mair meanin' or mair o' a charm

Than dwalls in your boasted 'Corsned'!"

"O bless ye! bless ye for the word,
The guid God guide thee, bonnie burd!
And wi' his sharp almichty swurd

My bluidy murd'ers hunt!"

Richt lood that sturdy Abbot leuch,
And answered wi' a taunt her sich!

In judgment dour, but no owre dreich,
She was tried, convict, and brunt!

There's heighs and there's howes in the wild Corsehill-
Muir,

And lang feathery fir-trees grow now there,
But the spot where the auld witch was brunt is bare,
And shall ever sae remain!

The linties sing saft in their thorny retreat,
And aye in their sangs the auld story repeat;
I've heard, when a callan', their owrecome sae sweet,
In the Corsehill-Muir heart, my lane!

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAIRD OF LINN AND JOCK O' THE SCALES.

THE water o' Caaf is a burn that comes doon from the Baidland Hills, in the parish of Dalry. About a mile abune the Garnock, it lowps owre a bit scaur with a great breenge and brattle on to the green foggy stanes below, and then wimples quietly awa', like a blustering body who has had his say. This is the Linn Spoot, and it was here, or hereawa, that the famous Laird of the Linn and Jock o' the Scales leaved and had their rippits langsyne. But I will tell the story as Robin Cummell told it to me when I was a very wee callant. I mind o't fine, as it were but yestreen. Robin rypit the dottle oot o' his pipe ae nicht, took me on his knee, and looking into the fire for a meenont, began in the eerie voice of ane who is looking a lang gate awa back into the past.

“Noo I premeese,” quo Robin, “that the Laird of Linn wasnae the ill chiel that mony ane believed him to be,—he was juist a thochtless young fallow, who had gottin’ owre muckle siller amang his hauns when his faither dee’d. But there were sorners in plenty round about him, who were for ever egging him on to some wasterful extravagance and herryin’ him oot o’ hoose and hame. Nicht and day, there was a coming and gaun about the place of ne’er-do-well dyvours and licht limmers who leaved at hack and manger, birling for a constancy at the wine and the cairtes, and gavalling at the laird’s expense.

There was ae ill-deedy rascal who had snooved in by inches as he saw the gorbies pyking at the banes of the young laird’s patrimony. That was Jock o’ the Scales, who had ance been his father’s gaemkeeper, but who had now gotten gear enough amang his fingers to mak him set up his gab with the best of them. As the laird grew needfu’ Jock grew croose, though he tried to hide it too, and pretending great sympathy, lent him his siller, and even forced it upon him whether he would or no. Weel, little by little, he so fangled the laird’s

affairs, and drooned him in diffeekwalties and debts, that soon he had the impidence to offer him a sma' soom for the estate, and in an evil hour, the laird consented and sold him his birthright. "He that does you an ill turn, will ne'er forgie you;" and so it was with Jock o' the Scales and his tinkler wife Jean, who was a coorse, muckle sumph, the very marrow of her lord.

"I wad let you to wut," quo she, "we'll hae na troggers here at oor yetts!"

So the Laird of Linn went his sorrowfu' way, and there was nane to say a kindly word, or to offer him a bite or a sup. It was then that his faither's face cam up before his een, and he suddenly had mind o' the wee key he had gi'en him on his death-bed, saying, "My son, when a' things fail you, gang up to Coal-heuch-glen, and this wee key will get you there a freen."

Sadly he dauner'd through the woods to the lanely spot in Coal-heuch-glen, and there, in the thickest of the plantin', he found a wee theeket hoose so overgrown with trees and busses, that it was all but hidden. He cleared away the thorns and nettles from the path,

and, forcing in the frail planks of the door, for the key wouldna fit the lock, he entered the place, wondering a' the time to himsel' why his faither had asked him to come here. But what was his horror when he gaed ben to see a wuddy hingin' frae the laft, and the three words clearly caukit on the roof, "Your last freen!"

Sadly, but with a sense, bitter though it was, of their justice, did the Laird of Linn obey the unmistakable instructions of his father. He put his heid in the noose, and kicking the stool from below his feet, expected to dee, but, to his surprise, he fell heavily to the flure, and saw beside him a daud of plaister from the roof, and, sticking to it, a letter in the writing of his father. Lowping up with a new hope, he tore the letter open and found his wildest wishes mair than granted. He was told that, in a certain corner of the cottage, he would find twa loose stanes in the wall, and that on removing these, he would get more gowd than he had ever seen, but he was warned at the same time to take a lesson from the past, and be wise for the rest of his life.

With feverish haste, he tore the stanes from their places, and there, sure enough, opening to the wee key, were the kists full of silver and gold. He filled his pooches with siller, and carefully putting back the stanes, made all to appear as it was before.

Jock o' the Scales was making merry with his freens; the clattie gaste of a body was as fou's the Baltic, and he received the Laird with a kind of mock civeelity when he tirmed at the pin.

"He that tholes owrecomes," quo the Laird to himsel', as he stooved awa ben among the rioters.

"Puir fallow," quo ane; and,—

"Here's a merk for thee," quoth anither; but when they were a' tittlin' thegither and talkin' in this form, Jean o' the Scales set her broos and gowled to him whaur she sat,—

"Ye's neither hae bite nor sup to weet your thrapple frae me, no nor the brock frae oor table, sae dicht your neb and flee up when you like!"

"Hoot! guidwife," quo John o' the Scales, "dinna ye see that the Laird has come juist on a friendly visit, and though ane shouldna

be overly pressin' with their civeelity, yet I maun say that I would be glad to gie him back the Linn for what I gied for't, or even we'll say for forty marks the less. Come, Laird," quo he, "is't a bargain, or will ye tak a tack o't frae about the back o' the auld term?"

"I chapse ye!" quo the Laird o' Linn, "we'll wat thoombs on that bargain!" and he birked his godspenny on the table. Then he took a' the gentlemen to witness that it was fair, and paid doon every plack o' siller he had gotten for the Linn, a' but the forty marks.

Jock o' the Scales and his near-begaun wife glowered as they had heard the deid chap, and their faces would hae speaned a foal to leuk at! But the Laird of Linn had clean gotten the better of them, and he set them aff with a flea in their lug before he was an oor aulder.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHOICE OF A PROFESSION — THE MUSEUM —
VISIT TO BONNSHIE—THE DEPARTURE FOR
THE COLLEGE.

It will be in the recollection of my readers that from an early time I was noculated as it were, both by my granny and by Robin Craig, with the idea and notion of being a doctor. My grandfather also eggit me on, as I think, in his own peculiar way, by taking an interest in all my antiquarian and scientific speculations. I mind of how, when I had read in the *Scots Magazine* of a leeing taid being found in a stone somewhere about Beith side, we cotch ane in the kailyaird, and he sealed it up for me in ane of Robin Craig's wide-neckit rhubarb bottles, but the poor beast only leeved a week, deeing of starvation I think as much as from the want of air. My Uncle Sanny, in the Seagate of Irvine, too,

whom I often gaed to see, and who was a man of a great mechanical genie, gaed me an electric machine, which, with various harps, turnin' lathes, and siclike, he had made for himself in his younger days. My grandfather and I got the electric machine riggit up in a bit garret room which I had claimed for my ain as a laboratory and museum, and mony's the ploy we had with the machine. I mind of Robin Cummell daudin' my haffets for jagging him with preens as he said, when the twa knobs of the Leyden jar touched his arm, and gied him a shock that dinnled to his finger ends. I have mentioned at various times already some of the uncos, both spurious and genuick, which I possessed, but it would take a lang time to catalogue them a'. Never shall I forget the excitement in the house when the curios cam from Ardrossan, that Captain Tholepin had brocht hame to me from the South Seas. When the twa big boxes which Robin Rory the carrier fotch from Ardrossan were opened in the presence of Robin Craig, Robin Cummell, Auntie Lily, my grandfather, and me, I was juist beside 'mysel' with joy, and the wealth of the Indies

seemed to be pouring out at my feet. There were shells and feathers, great big eggs and bonnie wee skeenclin' stanes, forbye corals, and snakes steepit in wine. Then in the second box were a shark's jaws, and the snoot of a saw-fish, also twa birds bigger than a bubbly-jock with terrible nebs on them, and which Robin Cummell declared to us were albatrosses. Captain Tholepin, indeed, afterwards confirmed Robin's opinion on this point, and tell't us he got them south the Line some gate, at a place he ca'd "The Roarin' Forties." John Paiks and me took a pilgrimage with them the next Saturday up to the Torrenyaird and left them with Willie Essnick the stuffer, John giving him at the same time a four-foot eel he had cotchan doon at Dotchen's Lowp in the Garnock.

I mind that day that from the Torrenyaird we went on bye Auchenharvie Castle into Stewarton parish, to ca' on a curious auld body who leaved at a farm toon they ca'd Bonnshie, and who, we were told, had

"A fouth o' auld nick nackets"

that had even been coveted by Captain Grose

himself'. Never since I had been to the Blair Museum with Thomas Young and my grandfather, had I seen such a collection of auncient and curious concerns. He had garden seats made oot of auld moss-oaks from Auchentiber, leather bottles two hunder years old, his grandfather's Ferrara with which he had focht at the battle of Drumclog, the first pair of fanners and the first tea-pot that ever were in Stewarton parish, forbye a lot of most curious implements of his ain contriving, such as a stomach-pump for horses, a lang brog or wumple to take a potatoe out of a cow's throat, a' kinds of cunning door snecks and bells to catch rubbers, etc., etc. Then he had Earl Sauners' stirrups that he was riding wi' at Ardrossan, when Mungo Campbell the gauger shot him, and mony mair rarities and extraordinar things which I have clean forgotten noo. Bonnshie itself was a curious place. In a park near to the house was a round humplock, or hill supposed to have been biggit either by the Druids or the wee Pechs, and in a bit planting near it, we saw the place whaur ane Sanny Watt, who was oot in the '45, hade his

siller when he had to flee the country to Ireland.

But I have wandered far awa from the point, and would juist come back to my observe, that from a very early time I had somehow gotten the notion that I was to be a doctor. I had made very fair progress during the seven years I was at Irvine, and, by the time I was seventeen years auld, Dannie Stuart declared to my grandfather that I might now venture to the college, and in time haud my ain with the best of them. But he strongly advised me to stick to the humanities for a year or twa at first, before trying the pheesick. Indeed, I would have been owre young when I got my diploma had I started at ance, and, as I found out in time enough to my vexation and disgust, there's no mony folk that can byde a beardless callan' at their bedside. But of this belyve.

My grandfather, with a worl' of ettling and pains, had toiled late and air at his lume to gather the needfu' bawbees for my learning, but I ken it took some sair scarting at times, and I was obligated to work hard at my beuks and ca' as canny as I could in the matter of expense.

Though feckly forty years sin' syne, it seems to me but as yesterday that mellow October afternune, when auld Auntie Lily set oot with me to Beith on our way to Glasgow. The wirning win' of a grand hairst time was steering amang the stooks and playing with the pear-tree leaves in oor auld kail-yaird, while the sun was beeking warm and bonnie owre the haughs and holms of the Garnock. As we gaed up the Woodwynd and on bye the Wood to Dalgarnen, I thocht I had never seen the kintra-side looking better; but though I was full of the hope and the wonder of the career that was before me, a sadness cam owre my speerits as I looked back and got the hindmost glint of the auld turrets through the trees. Ah! it was but the erles and the shadow of the mony regrets that have now gathered owre my heid with the gathering years!

But we pushed on through Dalry and arrived in the Whang of Beith by the gloaming. We stopped there that nicht with Mr Chaps, a faur oot freen of John Paiks' father, and next morning we were up by the skreigh of day to get the coach into Glasgow. Mr

Chaps was a leading elder in the Beith Kirk, and took the Beuk of course nicht and morning. Partly from the dreighness of his morning exerceese, and in part also from the win'ysome screeds of advice, which he thocht it incumbent upon him to give to me or we parted, anent the pitfalls and snares of the big city I was gaun to, we were taigled so long, that the coach was starting from the door of the Cross Keys as we got oot to the causey. Kenning that Aunty Lily wasnae very guid at the walking, and I never saw her rinning in my life, "Hi! woman, hi!" I cried to a body who was coming along the street, "is that the last coach?"

"Hoots! man," quo she, "the'll be coaches when you're deid!"

However, we got the coach after a', and booled along at such a topping rate, that in four hours we were set doon at the Tron-gate of Glasgow, where Jean and Lily Duguid, cousins of my grandfather's, met us and took us awa up Portland Street to whaur they leaved. They had found good lodgings for me on Balmano Brae, which was juist the next street to their ain, and

quite convenient to the College. So thither I got my kist convoyed in course of the afternune, Robin Rory the carrier having timeously arrived with it in the Trongate just as it chappit three o'clock.

CHAPTER XIV.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF GLASGOW—THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS—*VERSES* TO LUCONOE.

“It would be a fine place Glesco,” quo Auntie Lily to me the next morning, as we dauner'd doon the High Street, “if it was oot in the kintra;” and I was somewhat disposed to agree with her, for, what with the smeekit ham I had ta'en to my supper, the eerie tramping of the watchman up and doon the plainstanes below my window, and his droning, “Twa o'clock, and a starry morning,” I never boo'd an e'e the whole nicht. There was the smell of frost too in the morning air, and the yellow fog which came up from the Clyde, tasting in the mouth like burning brumstane, together with the posies which cam oot from some of the jaw-boxes and reeking closes and stairs in the High Street, kittled

my throat and made me beigh, as I had the keenk-host. Tinkler hizzies, with basketfu's of speldrins, rizzard haddies, and ither fish on their heads, were crying from mornin' to nicht —“ Haadies and whiteys!” or, “ Lowpin' and leevin'! wee saumon! as thick as your thie, and as fresh as the flowers o 'the forest!”

But I sighed for the bonnie forests of the green shire of Ayr, and for a lang simmer's day to gather gowpenfu's of wild roses in the Pyet Holm, or ginnle trouts with John Paiks in the Roughburn!

Auntie Lily was hardly size enough in her ain estimation to go with me to the Professor's house, but Robert Pirr, who is now the draper in Beith, was then a journeyman carpenter in Glasgow, and he, having all his lifetime a good gift of the gab, arrayed himself in his Sunday's best, and went with me to Mr Boyd's in Blackfriars Street. Robert having taken speech in hand and introduced me in proper form, the Professor looked dubiously owre his specks at my short stature and country-made claes, but, after some question-
ing as to what I had read, he handed me a Horace and bade me sit doon and give him a

connect English translation of the eleventh carmen of the first book of the Odes. But I jaloose that he was mair than a little dumfoun'ert when, in less than half an hour, I presented him with this rendering of the thing in verse. He was pleased to say, "That'll do, Mr Duguid; you can attend in your place with the *Logati Seniores* on Monday morning." I thanked him kindly, and went out from his presence a handbreid heicher in my own estimation.

ODE XI.

TO LUCONOE.

Luconoe, cease to plague the gods
 Anent thy fate or mine,
 For an unfitting thing it is
 To know decrees divine.

Scan not thou the mystic numbers
 With th' Babylonian sage,
 As eagerly he ponders
 O'er the dark, the future page.

Better far will it be to bear
 Unyielding fate's stern fiat,
 Than weary heaven with a pray'r
 The very winds will laugh at!

Whether Jove benign doth give us
 Many happy winters more,
 Or this the last, that wastes the wave
 On the rocky Tuscan shore.

Delight in wisdom, strain thy wine,
From life's brief span cut off long hope ;
Even while we speak speeds envious time,
No human pow'r its course may stop.

Call this present moment only thine ;
Luconoe, oh ! enjoy it ;
Trust thou nothing to a future time,
For worlds of wealth can't buy it !

CHAPTER XV.

CRONIES — WILLIE NANDSENSE AND JAMES
BLAMEIT—CROOKSTOUN CASTLE—A DIS-
SERTATION ON MUSICK—LANGSIDE—THE
MARTYRS OF POLMADIE.

I DO not intend to taigle the reader owre lang by dwelling at ony very weariesome length on the events of my college career, and the more so as I myself could never byde the bragging ways of some who shall be nameless, and who are for a constancy clattering to every ane they meet of “When I was a student in Glasgow,” “When I was at the College,” and siclike fosy talk, as if nane had ever been there but themselves. They aye bring to my mind the words of Robin Burns—

“They gang in stirks and come oot asses.”

But yet I will note doon a few of the uncós and remarkables which could not fail to

happen to ony ane in the lang period of eight years during which I leaved in Glasgow.

Though I wearied desp'rately at first, it wasna lang till I got acquaint with plenty of fine young fallows of my own age, some of whom were steering blades, and many of them endowed with a cleverality that astonished me, and which was surely nothing short of genius itself.

We used to go out on the Saturdays for a snoak of the caller air, taking some fresh gate every time, and there was not a neuck or corner from the Cowcaddens Wood and Kelvin Grove to Ruglen or even Bothwell Brig on the ae hand, or from Kirkintilloch to Langside on the other, that we hadna explored.

Willie Nandsense and James Blameit, who are baith now doctors, the ane in Perth and the other in Dumfries, were the twa who were aftenest my companions. Willie Nandsense was a real aff-tak, and crackit mair guid jokes in a day than Robin Cummell ever thocht of all his lifetime, and James Blameit had the high-flown poetic genie to a remarkable degree.

I mind of ae day that we had daunerred awa

oot in the Paisley airt to explore the ruins of Crookstoun Castle, which was ane of the auld keeps biggit by the Earls of Lennox langsyne. Meeting a drove of stots that were rowting and rampauging on the road, and kicking up a terr'ble stoor with their cloots, Willie Nandsense said to us, "That's the Hielan' Fling," and his observe led on the crack to dancing and musick, a theme on which James Blameit was aye ready and keen to expawtiate with an eloquence that was a' his ain, and which I for ane was never tired of hearkening to. We sat doon on a great daud of stane and lime as big as the side of a hoose itself, which had fa'n from the castle wa' into the grassy moat; and here let me remark, that the auld time masons surely had some bye-ordinar guid way of mixing their lime that has noo been clean forgotten; for though the stanes of their biggings may moulder with eild, the lime hauds firm to the very last, and great walls may be toppled over and lie bellyflaucht on the ground without the bits of them lowsing from ane anither's grip. This I have seen in Hardyknute's auld keep at Glengarnock and also at Dun-

donald Castle, no to speak of our ain auld turrets at hame. But we sat doon, I say, to tak a reek of the pipe and ca' the crack for a wee about musick. The time and place seemed very appropriate, for as we cooried doon in the lown beild of the dyke and listened to the sough of the winter wind as it waved the trees to and fro round the battlements of the ruin, visions of the unhappy, lovely, sakeless Mary rose before our een. It was here that she came to spend the honeymoon with Darnley, and here too that she was courted by him first. She could not, however, have seen the battle raging at Langside, as some have said, from the turrets of Crookstoun, Langside being four or five miles away, lying in the howe of the kintra, and, therefore, no possible to be seen from here.

Some ane of us remarking in the course of crack that Mary was said to have played bonnily on the spinnet, James Blameit broke oot at ance about the new-fangled instruments and sangs, misca'in' them up hill doon brae till he was oot of breath. I hae nae broos of them mysel', and though I could not help greeing with him in my own mind in every

particular, as I do to this day, yet, to carry him on for the nonce, I said,—

“ But you man aloo, James, that to ane as is educat in their gamut, there may be some beauties in their musick after a’ that we dinna un’erstaun.”

“ Na! na! Johnnie,” quo he, “ it’ll no potty ava! What are a’ their French or Itawlian ‘ turry, wurry, wurry, wureets ’ to a guid auld Scotch ballat like ‘ The Flowers o’ the Forest ’ or ‘ Auld Robin Gray ’? Man alive! they are as the puddock pies or the herrin’ puddin’s o’ Mounseer himsel’ to oor guid halesome parritch of Scotland, fit to scunner ony decent man and mak him bock with disgust! But a bonnie lilt of the kind I have named, with the sang of the mavis, the scent of the clover, and the breath of the simmer morning rippling and rinning through its rise and fa’, why, sirs, I tell you, it steers the heart’s bluid till the milk of human kindness fairly reams to the mouth, and we feel on the very point of learning some nameless secret that’s no of this worl’ ava! It seems to speak to us in a tongue we dinna weel un’erstaun’, and, as I consate, it’s mair like

something we *ance* kent and are trying to mind again, than onything we can ever learn or fairly get a grip of the meaning of here!"

I mind of anither day when we were at Langside that James gied us a glowing account of the battle as we stood on the Castle-hill from which Mary is said to have viewed the struggle. As we gaed through the clachan of Crossmyloof, he said,—

“It was here that Mary, on the night before she lost, was counselled by some of her nobles to retire and not to risk her bit handful of men against the opposing forces of the Parliamentars. Taking aff the gowden cross from her neck, and laying it oot on her haun, she said, ‘As sure as that cross lies on my loof, I’ll fecht the morn!’ And fecht she did, as a’ the worl’ kens, and lost. She fled to Workington Hall, in Cumberland, halting a day and a nicht near Cumnock, then at Dumfries, and lastly at Dundrennan Abbey. Bothwell escaped to France, it is said, and perished at last a Spanish pirate, and some say he dee’d in Denmark.”

When at Langside, too, I mind that we visited the auld kirkyaird by the side of the

silver Cart, where we saw the graves of the three martyrs. There is a long account of their murder on the stone, but I only mind of the last few lines :—

“ Many like in this land have been,
Whos blood for wingance calls to heaven :
This cruell wickedness you see
Was don on lon of Polmodie :
This may a standing witness be
’Twixt Prisbytrie and Prelacie.”

CHAPTER XVI.

HOLIDAYS — THE SCHULE IN THE BYRES—
ANDRO CAUK AND DAVIE MILLER—*VERSES*,
MARY HAY—NEBBIN'—JENNY WHALBERT'S
CRACKS—*VERSES*, GARNOCK'S BANKS HAE
MONY A FLOW'R ; WHEN A WEARY WORL'
IS SLEEPIN' ; THE WITCH WOOD.

DURING my first few winters in Glasgow, I stuck to the Humanities, as Dannie Stuart had advised ; and in the simmer time, to eke out the siller that was needful, and which my grandfather had whyles a sair facth to get a haud of, I opened a schule in the Byres. It prospered beyond my expectations, and I had a bit haul o' fifty pounds to carry me on for the next winter. Andro Cauk was now getting very frail, but he was aye a chirpy body Andro, and in his auld days he was lifted up to an extraordinar' degree to see me carrying the worl' so weel before me, for I must

mention that I had ta'en a prize or twa at the College, and was now weel spoken of by every ane. Andro, however, had aye been very fond of the dram, and noo that he had gien up his schule, he never forgathered with Davie Miller but the maut was sure to win abune the meal with the twasome of them. Andro and Davie had baith a great crack of me, and I whyles had a terr'ble ado to keep clear of them when the bung was a wee shoogly.

Davie's favourite sangs were "The Miller of Drone" and "The Whinny Lea," baith of which he used to tell me he had sung with great success before old Earl Hugh on a Whupsday. But he was garrulous to a degree, and had a tongue, when it was loosed, would deave a miller. Aften had the Dominie to break in on his discourse with "Ay! be sheddin't noo, Davie, be sheddin't, and we'll hae anither frae the doctor!"

It may have been somewhat of a speculation to the reader why I have never so far spoken of having a lass, but in my opinion it doesna do to eat the dumplin' first. In an early chapter of this book, indeed, he may get

speerings of the fact that my heart was but a sleeping aizie, that was ever ready to burst into a lowe when a lassie cam near me. Leezie Fizz was the first who fanned the spunk, and though I have had mair than ae terr'ble stound of love since then, there is nane that bleezes so clear and steady to this day.

I haena forgotten how I gaed clean aff at the nail about Heelan Toorietap of the Troon, and wee Mary Hay of Irvine. I sent a valentine to Mary, with the lines—

“I've tint my wits, I've tint my peace,
My heart is gane astray,
And whaur it's gane fu' weel ye ken,
My bonnie Mary Hay!

Wha tyne their hearts they maun be cruel,
And work their will o' wae,
Sae I will e'en gae hang, unless
Ye kep me, Mary Hay!”

But Mary seemed to think, and I must now say myself with some reason, that there were sma' fears of that, and seeing that she was sae calloused, I thocht better o't mysel'.

Heelan Toorietap, who was cast, as I thocht, in nae earthly mould, is noo, I'm

tell't, a fat muckle hotch, with a screw of dirty weans at her fit, and three dewlaps to her chin ; and Mary Hay, who married Jamie Struggles, the weaver in the Kirkgate, has turned oot an auld hickory runt, as bad as Bessie Graham hersel'.

Leezie Fizz was ane of a hirsell of braw hizzies, who were the dochters of auld Clumbeith. They had a' lads ; indeed, half the young fallows of the kintra side were gyte about them, and swarmed roun' the Clumbeith at nicht, as though they had been a flock of bumbees gaun hame to their byke.

From bairntime, as I have said, Leezie had ta'en complete possession of me. Weel do I mind hoo John Paiks and me would go oot with our cans on a Saturday, to gather blackbyds, as we said, at the Clumbeith, but really to glower at Leezie, or play with her at tig roun' the stacks, or hespy in the barn. Auld Nanny, her mother, was a phraisin' body, with the bits of lassock weans especially, —“ Come your wa's ben, my wee pet lamb, chookie, hen, bird, doo,” she would say, “ and hae a bake !”

It has been said that it's ill to ken whaur a



blister may licht, and indeed, wha would have thocht that a fine strappin' lass like Leezie would ever have had a wee man like me. But so it was,—sma' beginnings whyles have great endings, and the Stamper's tree that now raxes oot its giant arms far owre the kirkyaird, was ance but a wee seed in an acorn cup.

I thocht that naebody kent a haet about what was gaun on, but by degrees I could plainly see that the thing had spunkit oot. Robin Cummell cam across us ae day at Peggy Boyd's corner, and juist said in the bye-gaun, "I see, Johnnie, you're nebbin'!" and Jenny Whalbert, who had seen Leezie ae Sabbath day at twull-ooors, said to me that nicht, "Na! she's a bit braw takin' lass yon, and a wise-spoken thing forbye,—do you think Johnnie, she can wash a sark to the back o' thee?"

Dod! it was like butter in the black dog's hass for Jenny to get haud of a hole in my coat like this, and she seldom saw me but she gied me a bit rub about Leezie.

I have swithered for mair than half an hour as to whether I would here set doon my

cracks with Jenny Whalbert, who was surely the drollest body that ever leaved in Kilwinning Parish ; but I have come to the conclusion that they would come better in as a kind of addendum or forbye at the hinder end of my book, seeing that the great feck of them deal with auld worl' stories of her ain, and a multifawrious multipleecity of things that are a wee taiglesome in the telling, and rather oot of the scope of this history.

Jenny had a birr and a smeddum about a' she said and did, that was juist a cordial to me, and mony a day and nicht have I spent at her fireside, takin' notes of her cracks while she, pur body, was haudin' me up to Stair as a perfect sample of industry at the beucks and the coonts. Stair had grown up into a great lang drink, and would faukled, as Robin Cummell said, if he fell. But he was juist the same meesurly cretur now that he had aye been as a callan' at the schule. It was a kittle affair the dress for Stair when he was courtin', for it was juist like twinning him of his very life to part with a plack. I can see him noo with his undockit heid, the grozet-bush on the croon o't plaistered doon

with hair oil, and his scrimpit breeks on that looked for a' the worl' as if he had stude on a chair when he put them on, and had lowpit owre far through in the warsle wi' them.

I mind of ae Bell's Day fair that Sanny Soople and Stair had cuisten oot aboot a lass,—I believe it was Betty Fly frae Auchenmade,—and Sanny was so nettled at something Stair had said, that he flew at him like a fury, and shook him as a terrier would a rotten. Noo Stair had aboot a yaird of frilling in his bosom, which he showed considerable anxiety to protect, and seeing Sanny aboot to rug at it with his neive, he spluttered oot in rage and terror what never would otherwise have been jaloosed, “Wad'ou?” quo he, “wad'ou? wad'ou meddle muddock's mutch?”

When Jenny Whalbert used to tow me aboot Leezie Fizz, whyles, to turn the crack, I would wyse her on to speak of the ploys of her ain young days, and mony an auld worl' crack she gied me, some of which I intend to set doon, as I have said, at the finis of this book. Amang ithers, she tried to scaur me with the story of the ghaist of the Leddy of

Clumbeith, but she micht hae kent that

“Graceless rogues and sair killed lovers
Mind nae ghaist, nae deil ava !”

Mony a time have I skelpit hame from the Clumbeith at twull oors at e'en, and I never saw ony ghaists that I ken of but my ain sweet visions of the loesome Leezie. Mony a lilt I wrate aboot her at that time, but James Blameit, who was aye my confidential critic and adviser, was so cowstick in his dissection of them, and they came so far short indeed of what I thocht they should have been myself, that I have burned or torn up the feck of them langsyne. However, I will conclude the chapter with ane or twa that soom up juist noo like faces lang forgotten through the dark waters of my memory :—

GARNOCK'S BANKS.

“Garnock's banks hae mony a flow'r
In beauty blushing braw,
But, near Saint Winning's ancient tow'r,
There's ane outshines them a'.

The lovely language o' the heart
Lurks in her speaking ee,
And, gin ye catch its loving dart,
Ye'll dream o't till ye dee !

Sae white her broo, her cheek sae pink,
 Her hair like ony slae,
 Ye'd tak her for a lily-bud
 That's newly blawn in May !

But haud awa frae the bonnie lass,
 I rede you tent her e'e,
 For, gin ye catch its loving dart,
 You'll dream o't till ye dee !

WHEN A WEARY WORL'.

When a weary worl' is sleepin'
 In e'enin's starry bow'r,
 And dewy tears are dreepin'
 Frae ilka bloomin' flow'r ;

When the tod's been run to death,
 And hunters in the ha'
 Are rossin' leddies oure their wine,
 The horn hung on the wa' ;

Then, miles and miles amang the moss,
 The bonnie heath'ry mead,
 The fragrant ashes o' the flow'rs
 O' thoosan' simmers deid,

Deep in the fairy munelicht glen,
 Beside the baiblin' stream,
 She glideth silent to my arms
 Like a roseate dream.

The laverock kens his mossy hame,
 Whaur gled has never been,
 And swallows aye come back again
 When simmer woods are green ;

So when the day has, dookin', gloamed,
 And nicht comes owre the parks,
 Ye'll meet me in the munelicht glen,
 Amang the siller birks !

 THE WITCH WOOD.

The starns owrehead grow sleepy
 And dimly worl'-ward see,
 'Tis time, O bonnie flower of earth,
 To lift thy lovely e'e !

There's three nests in the Witch Wood,
 The lintie's and the hern's,
 And in the plantin's midnight heart
 Far in amang the ferns,

There is a coosy nest o' moss
 The weary tod kens weel,
 Whaur, aften at the gloaming hour,
 I in my plaidie sweet,

A fluttering bird that sings fu' sweet
 In its captivity,
 Till ilka scaur and greenwood brake
 Has learned the melody !

The lintie is a weel-faured bird
 Wi' threesome sangs o' glee,
 The hern is a majestic bird
 Comes sailin' owre the sea.

Sing, lintie, till your throat be riv'n,
 Sail, hern, up heaven's steep,
 'Twill break your hearts to hear *her* sing,
 In th' Witch-Wood green and deep !

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DUEL.

IT was pleasant indeed to have the companionship of such kings o' fallows as my twa cronies, James Blameit and Willie Nand-sense. But though mony a happy hour gaed sailin' bye in their company, no' unmixed, though I say it myself, with a solid commodity of rationality and sense in our cracks, yet the collections in the intellectual kirk plates of our minds were owre aften broken in upon, cowpit, and skailed by the senseless gavallings of great gomerals and wasterful weefils who were owre het and fou, and had been lippeded with mair than was guid for them.

We gaed in ae day to a howff we had near the Trongate, whaur you get your yuill oot of fine auld siller communion cups with a pea at the bottom of them, intending to hae a little solid discourse anent the relations of the

body and mind, and other kittle points of philosophy that are hoverin' for ever round the threshold of the unknown. James Blameit had been holding forth with his usual eloquence on the insignificance of man and the uncertainty of life, likening it to the snuff of a caunle or a pluff of poother in the pan, when Willie Nandsense said,

“ But, James, will you tell me this,—what is the sense in the observe, ‘ If I be spared ’ ? To me it has aye seemed the daftness of daftness. You say, ‘ If I be spared, I’ll hae my dinner wi’ Johnnie Duguid on New’ear-day.’ Weel, if ye leeve, it’s mair nor likely that you’ll get it, and if you dee, you’ll surely no need it ! Why the tautological observe ? And haesnae ‘ *Carpe diem* ’ the maist sense in’t after a’ ? Why mak life a mair melancholious thing than it is in reality by lending your lugs to a’ the whurliegirkies with which the priests are aye deaving us, and raising such a smeek and stink of brumstane ? ”

James Blameit was proceeding to rype this kittle affair to the bottom with a great deal of learning and canny thocht, and he was juist gaun to ca’ the feet from Willie’s argu-

ment with some clincher that I have forgotten noo, when the door flew back with a breenge, and three or four hellicate students cam in on us, and put an end to a' peace and order. A cat-wuttet thing ca'd Willie Pung, cowpitt the yuill as it were by mistak, trampit on James Blameit's taes, and then sat doon with a great sadd on my guid new beaver hat. With James, it was aye a word and a lick, so, by way of fugè, he gied Willie Pung a cloor on the haffet, that garred him stot against the door like a cahootchy ba'. From less to mair, it cam to a stand up fecht, in which they seemed to be very evenly matched, and at length Willie Pung demanded the satisfaction of a gentleman. We tried to sowther the thing up, but they were raised, baith of them, and it was agreed at last that they should meet next morning in a lanely haugh of the Molendinar abune the Cathedral. Robin Ailsa was Willie Pung's second, and, after some fleeching, I consented to attend on James Blameit. Slipping cannily in however that nicht to Robin's lodgings in the Drygate, I got him prevailed on to load with poother only, and so what was like to have

turned oot a terrible and bloody concern, passed owre without mair than a guid hale-some fricht to baith of them. Willie Pung, indeed, swarfed awa when he was shot, but we got him insensed in a meenont or twa that he wasna deid, and firing aff anither volley in honour of the event, we all adjourned to Neil Cammell's shop in the Drygate, and soon healed up the breach with a wee drap of the real peat-reek.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROBIN CRAIG'S SHOP—THE BURSARY—BEGINNING PRACTICE—DIFFICULTIES AND DISCOURAGEMENTS—DR PLOOK AND GRANNY DICKSON, THE HOWDIE—THOMAS TAIGLE, THE WRITER—THOMAS BEAM, THE WEAVER—THE DOURA PITS—HE MARRIES LEEZIE FIZZ, AND FLITS INTO MAJOR BUNTEN'S NEW HOUSE AT THE BRIG EN'.

THE Byres schule had dune so weel for me, that I thocht I would try't again in my second simmer of holidays, but I then had to give it up, as I had begood to my professional studies, and Robin Craig the droggist's shop claimed my attention. But, by dint of honing on at my books, I had so far sprauchled up the brae that I had gotten a bursary of two hundred pounds, which mair than carried me through, James Blameit being second, and indeed within

twas of me, on the short leet when the marks were a' soomed up.

Robin Craig, by long experience and a hantle of guid common sense, had really come to have a commodity of skill that was by no means to be despised, and he could lay a blister or bleed a man juist as weel as Dr Plook himself, who was, however, a terr'ble troch and a wild swearin' body, seldom in a fit state to be lipped with his own bottles or lances. It will be plain that the doctor could have no great regaird for Robin, and indeed he could not thole him ava, and had aye an ill word to say of him. When he heard of me therefore going to the College, and being in Robin's shop, he was neither to haud nor to bin', rampauging at hame, they said, like a tempest, and glowering like a wulcat, and spitting curses at us whenever he met us on the causey. Granny Dickson, the howdie, who had ta'en up with him in his younger days,—though I do not think there ever was ony marriage, but juist a clash-tae,—did much by her tinkler tongue to foment the thing and fire the sair, so that when at length I got my diploma and started in Kilwinning,

I had no little odds to battle against, and had often to byde the snash and impiddence of hullockit haverals and thochtless fules, forbye the spite of Dr Plook himself and auld Baudrons his beldam. It has passed into a proverb, which, like mony mae of them, is juist a guid auld usefu' lee, that a drucken doctor is aye clever. It will not be read therefore with ony astonishment that wheens of them said they would rather hae Dr Plook drunk than me sober. But I have leevd to see baith him and Granny Dickson awa, and some forbye them who would have lauched at my doonfall, and snirtled at my confusion, and I think I may now truthfully quote the observe of Thomas Taigle the writer, who, in presenting me with the bit toddy jug and the teapat and caddy for Leezie, a year or twa sin' syne, said that I had the confidence and respeck of twa or three parishes round about, and no' an enemy, so far as he kent, on this side of the grave. The thocht of this is to me as bawm and spices in the lown gloaming of my life after the facht and heat of the day.

A practice and a guid name, however, grow very slow, and it was long after Doctor

Plook and Granny Dickson dee'd before the sough of their ill speaking fallowed them and was forgotten. They had baith of them an ill end, and indeed from their way of leeving, it was a thing to be looked for. The doctor, in a drucken deleerium, got the gun ae day to fallow his favourite sport of shooting at butterflees in the garden, but being as I have said as fou's a biled wulk, he put three chairges in the gun, stapping them doon till it was primed to the muzzle, juist like himsel', and the gun burst and blew aff his thoomb; he dee'd of jaw-lock in a week. Granny Dickson wasna lang behint him, fa'ing doon a stair and breaking the neck o' her, ae dark nicht in the green, when she was in a dwaam of drink.

Thomas Beam, the weaver in the Loch, was I think the last who daured to remind me of the "ancient grudge" that has long since passed away, till noo, I am prood to say, there is not a bairn in the toon or parish of Kilwinning that doesna toddle to meet me with its lauchin' face and wee bit haun raxing oot for a sweetie when I go ben.

Thomas wasnae a hereawa man, being an

incomer frae Piper's Haugh or the Saltcoats, and he was aye a clattie taid of an ill-speaking body. The time I refer to, was when he stude ae day at his shop door to let a funeral gae bye that I was attendin'. A wean of Nanny Forgisal's, in the Cranberry Moss, who was a smally cretur from the first, and no very robustious a' its days, took a tow't of cauld, and, in spite of all my efforts to save its bit spunk of life, it dee'd. Thomas Beam, as I have said, had left his lumestead when he saw us coming; he halted on his step, as it were to let the funeral pass, and seeing me in the crood as he expekit, he made his spitefu' observe juist loud enough to let everybody hear't, "I see, doctor," quo he, "you're takin' hame your wab!"

But it's lang since Thomas was ta'en hame himsel', poor man, and I can noo lauch at the veecious body's venom, though it nettled me sairly enough at the time. He cam in however or he dee'd, and paid me ae saxpence when he couldna thole Dr Plook ony langer. I could see that he was maskin' for the pocks, but I speered if Dr Plook hadnae dune onything for his sair throat.

“Ouay!” quo Thomas, “he rummled my hass wi’ a spune-shank and sweishtered my throat wi’ cowstick!”

Poor Robin Craig was sair failed by the time I was ready to begin, and an income he had in his knee when he was a callan’, and which aye made him a wee lame, breaking oot in a fresh place, he dwined awa and dee’d when I had been aboot a year in practice. Robin didna lea’ ony feck, and his twa maiden dochters were very thankful to me for the sma’ soom I was able to offer to them, for his drogs and shop fittings, oot of the remains of the two hundred pounds, which had now gotten sairly doon on its hunkers.

About this time the Doura pits, which had been lying idle for a lang number of years, having been little or nane wrocht since the days of Queen Mary, when they supplied Edinburgh Castle and Holyrood with coal, were opened afresh, and I had the good fortune to be chosen as the doctor. No doubt I had to get a horse and gig, and this was a big item for me in thae days, but then it took me bye the road-end to the Clumbeith, and it wasna far to slip up and hae a crack

wi' Leezie Fizz. To mak a lang story short, we took the chance of a guid hairst, and auld Clumbeith being croose and canty, to get his consent to our marriage, which took place with a rowth of rippiting fun about Hallowe'en. I'll no say but Leezie brocht me a guid nest egg, and after leeving in the hoose with my Grandfather and auld Antie Lily for about four years, we ventured on a but and ben of our ain at the Brig'en', that being a more convenient place to go oot from to the Doura. I had some thochts of a steading in George Heron's yaird at the Pethfit, but Major Bunten of happy memory, who biggit the Greenfoot Hoose in 1681, as may yet be read on the turreted gavel thereof, had a son who cam hame from the Indies, bringing a black wife with him, and dee'd in a hoose he had biggit in the Brig-en'; the wife, who was aye, I was gaun to say, blae with the cauld, but she couldna weel be that, seeing she was black already, yet who was aye chittering when you met her, wanted to gang awa hame again ootowre to her ain folk. It was a lang siller she wanted for the hoose and twa fa' of ground at the back o't, but no' to be owre

taiglesome in the telling of it, we made a bargain at last, and flitting in at the back end, we had our house-heating on Hogmanay.

CHAPTER XIX.

DREIGH PAYERS—ADVICE BY THE WAYSIDE—
MARY MILLER—LAIRD SPECKIE OF THE
TORRENYAIRD.

“Quid levius pluma? pulvis; quid pulvere? ventus;
Quid vento? mulier; quid muliere? nihil.”

I THINK that auld Catullus wasna very far wrang, though I never in my life would let ony bardy bizzum lichtlie me, but he never was a doctor, or he would have kent that there is ae ither flimsier thing in this worl' than even a hizzie, and that is the gratitude of a patient who has gotten better. If you dinna tak him with the tear in his ee, your chance of the bawbees is but a sma' ane. There is an unfortunate notion in the public mind, that doctors are a' weel aff and haena ony use for siller. In their need they will promise you the mune, if you should ask it,

but let them ance get better, and then they seem to think that the honour of having attended *them*, is ample amends for a' your trouble. And when they do pay you, it's owre aften with a grudge, and as if they were gieing you an awmous.

I mind of ance that Hughoc Gorbie of the Fleeland cam in for me when his wife was at the doon-lyin', and on the road up, I said to him, "Let me see, Hugh, was I paid for the last twa?"

"No, doctor," quo he, "but ye ken you've aye had our custom!"

A great number of wauf customers no doot cam roon' me, but with no intention in the worl' of ever paying me a fraction. This ane had strained her cuit, the ither ane had ta'en the spurtle-grup, or ane of the weans had the bowel-hyves, or maybe the speanin'-brash, or had fyled its stomach eatin' owre mony grozets, but they nane of them had ony siller till Saturday, and would I just mark it doon in my book? Saturday cam', but no them, and I had to content mysel' with takin't oot in fother for my horse, or maybe a dizzen or twa of eggs, or a casting of peats from

Mossmulloch or the Auchentiber. But gosh me! we couldna eat eggs for ever, and the peats were dirty trash compared with the guid Doura coal, and from owre mony of them I never to this day have gotten a foondit. Dag on't, sirs! it raises my corruption when I think of it. They would come rinning for me like desperation, when Laird Speckie of the Torrenyaird was bitten by an etther as the vaguin' body was daunerin' through the moss, but they never have been in ony hurry to come in and pay me for savin' his bit useless life.

And then there was owre muckle of the howking and speering at me on the roadsides, to see if I would aiblins drap a word or twa of gratus advice. I mind of Davie Miller coming in to the shop ae day with an eerand of the kind from his mither. Davie, however, had the decency to pay me himsel oot of his ain pooch, and we had a good lauch amang oursels at the auld body's canny project to do me. She had said to him,

“Noo, Dauvit, t'ou's gaun tae the toon, an' maybe t'ou'll see the doctor, and gin t'ou see him, t'ou can speak to him frae afar, and

maybe he'll mention some freevolous bit thing that 'll dae me some guid."

I am of the opinion that folk are nooadays drakit with owre mony new-fangled drogs, and though I would not juist insist upon such a hasty and oot of hand manner of treatment as Granny Dickson and Doctor Plook were so fond of, and that was a neffow of salts and a neffow of senna, and the tangs owre a boyne, yet would I counsel and advise a judicious selection and return to some of the simples that oor faithers had sic faith in, and which I am sure will haud their ain in times to come as they hae dune in the past,

I mind of ance that I was asked to leuk at a bit shilpit callan' of Laird Speckie's, who took the sma' banes from the mother of him. She had been takin' him to some doctor in Irvine, who had been dosing him oot of a' reason, and I jaloosed as much whenever I saw him.

"Has he had much in the way of treatment, Mrs Speckie?" quo I.

"Oh! no, doctor," quo she, lettin' me see the bottles, "he haesna much medicine,—he gets his draps at eleven, his bottle at twa, his

draps again at four, and then of coorse his poother at bed-time,—no, he hasna had mony drogs.”

“Mrs Speckie,” quo I, “I’m very pleased indeed that you have consulted me on this interestin’ case, and it so happens that I have a bit bottle in my shop which combines a’ in itself the remarkable virtues of thae different things you have been showing me. Send doon for’t the nicht, woman, and you’ll soon see a great change for the better in the boy.” When I gaed hame I put a hue of seerup in a bottle, filled it up with water, and than shook in a few gutts, or draps, of burned sugar, and lo! it was ready. As I had foretold, the boy got better every day. He had gotten a rest from physick and thrave, but I was a little flauchtered when the Laird was flittin’ awa to Edinburgh, and cam to me for “a bit line for that bottle that had dune the boy so much guid!”

Laird Speckie was a pridefu’ gaste of a body. He cam of Stranraer side, but he had been a year or twa in England, some said indeed with the ellwaun’ and the pack, but of this I will not positeevly speak. Hoosomever,

on the strength of his southern travels, he affected a very scunnersome kin' o' dichty water in his talk.

“What do you suppowse, doctor,” quo he to me ae day, “would be the effect of swallowin a brass thumble, thimble,—no, thumble? What do you suppowse now would happen?”

“Weel, laird,” quo I, “I have never met with a case in a' *my* experience, but the effect of brass in ony ane's constitution, so far as I have aye been led to believe, is that it helps him up with the win'.”

The Laird fell suddenly quate, and didna fash me with ony mair of his haveral quastions at that time. He was a dressy body, and gaed about with knee-breeks on, and buckles on his shoon, a pea-green coat with brass buttons on't, and a broad-rimmed beaver, while an eye-glass, set in gold, was aye danglin' from his lapelle. Ance, in the Wheat Sheaf of Irvine, at an election time, when he was gaun to be very big, and order in a great jaw of drink for the company, some ane who was there, and who didna like him, said,

“Na, na, laird! We canna aloo you to

do that ; keep your haun' in your pooch,
man, and haud a guid grip of every maik
till you can buy a windock for your ither
e'e!"

CHAPTER XX.

LEDDY EGLINTON—MR WAFT AND THE COTTON HOUSE — MISS BOWSEY OF THE AISHEN-YAIRDS—JAMES NEEP OF THE PATTERTON AND HIS GREY CAT TAM—SANNY ARMOUR'S DREAM.

BUT in my time I have met with a hantle of kindness and pleasure too, as weel as the black-hearted ingratitude and backbiting that I have spoken of. As the years gaed bye, and folk begood to see that mony things I had said were a' to-be-surely and had come to pass, and when they found moreover that though I couldna drink as deep as Dr Plook, yet, that I was aye to be lippeden on when I was sent for, the tide of public opinion fairly turned in my favour. My first han'sel of guid fortune, as I have said, was getting the Doura Colliery, and from less to mair I crap in amang the sma' lairds and gentry of the

kintra-side. I made it aye a principle, that I would never blink the richt for sellie's sake, and though I whyles may have lost a little by the evendoon bluntness of my ootspoken nature, yet I think that in the lang run I was nane the loser.

It is kintra crack to this day, how I refused to go to Leddy Eglinton hersel', when I was attendin' a cottar's wife at the Dibbs, but really I can see nae great merit in the affair, as the cottar's wife was very ill, and I couldna lea' her. The leddy sent to Kilmarnock, and Dr Paction brocht her to bed of a fine laddie bairn, the Earl that noo is since his faither dee'd. But I dinna think that I suffered ony in consequence, for her Leddyship was good enough to send for me after-hin', and speered very kindly for the woman at the Dibbs, praising what she called my nobility, and sending a very handsome soom to the cottar. I attended herself and the young leddies aye after that, and she issued a general order that Doctor Duguid was to be sent for in all cases of sickness over the policies and amang the servants at the Castle; and more than this, when Mr Waft,

the merchant from Glasgow, cam oot and biggit the Cotton Hoose at the head of the Dalry Road, she used her influence with him and had me appointed the surgeon there. I hadna muckle satisfaction, it is true, out of that job, the workers being maistly bardy jauds, the dochters of colliers about the toon, who were owre lazy to work, and aften, pretending to be ill, sat in the ase-hole and gied ye impiddence.

Miss Bowsey of the Aishenyairds was anither of the gentry whom I was in high favour with. Her father had been provost of Glasgow at one time, and some auld love affair which I have heard minted by Robin Cummell, in which she had been disappointed, touched her intellect, though it had been unable to sour a'thegither the sweetness of her gentle nature. She was however at times a little unco and fey, and would come to the kirk dressed from tap to tae in scarlet robes. I never gaed to see her when she had ane of her heich turns, but she was sure to draw herself to her full length, and looking at me with the air of a queen, put the question,

“Are you aware, Doctor Duguid, that I

am lineally descended from Gabriel, the seventh Prince of Cunninghame?"

Nor was I without my pleasures among the commonality. Mony a time when I was waukened oot of a sound sleep, and felt as I drew my een sinnery and warsled on my claes, that I would rather gie them the siller to gang awa hame, I have rejoiced afterwards, when I got oot in the caller morning air and enjoyed the walk to the Doura, up through the Sourlie-Burn Wood, that was ringing with the sang of the mavis, and sweet as a maiden's breath with the scent of the honeysuckle and roses. Or maybe it was a dark winter's morning, when the wind was soughin' eeriely through the plantin', and the baukie birds and hoolets skimming and skreighing owre the Lugton in spate, how pleasant it was then to get in to the lown of a stackyaird and in bye to the cosy ingle-neuk of some auld farm-hoose, and when the doors were a' steekit to discuss the weather and the craps and a' the uncos of the day with the couthie guidman.

I mind of ae siccan a nicht that James Neep of the Patterton cam in for me aboot twull oors. It was a fearfu' nicht. The wind

bellowed and roared doon the chimbley, the auld trees on the Dyster's Loan rockit from side to side like cradles or boats on the sea, and the rain and hail clashed and skelpit doon in torrents. The doors and windows rattled and shook, and aye abune the din of the blast, and the brattle of the burn that gaed bye the hoose-end, could be heard, like the Bars of Ayr, the roar and splash of Garnock breenging owre the mill-dam and rushing doon its narrow bed at the Watering Green.

I had juist thrawn the key in the door and said to Leezie, who was gantin' by the fire, "Weel, I'll risk it," praying that the traditional pest wasnae watching and waiting in the close till my boots were aff,—when, swith! the chap cam to the door, and I had to get my bonnet and go off with James.

We toiled on in the teeth of the blast awa bye the Moncur, the Red Boiler, the Saugh Trees, and the Fergushill, and arrived forfochen, spent, and drookit to the skin about twa o'clock in the morning. Having got a change of raiment, and I daursay I lookit droll enough in his bushle-breeks which were a worl' owre big for me, I sat doon, after

leukin' to the wife, to ca' the crack with James. He was a droll body, and having mony a guid story to tell, he was aye the best of company. The wife had a very dreigh time of it, and to cheat the auld wag at'e wa' in the corner, we took oot our pipes, and James bringin' oot the gardevin we soon brewed an excellent jorum of toddy. As I listened to the wind roaring at the lumheid and the rain blashing on the window, I drew my cheyre in to the fire and thocht I had never sat in so cosy an ingle-neuk in my life.

“Guidsaff's! doctor,” quo James, “what a nicht! they're best aff, I'm thinkin', that hae nae hame to gang to. Eh! sirs the day, hearken to that! Robin Rigging the theeker will have his wark set for a month to come. Man alive! the bits o' speugs and starlings at the lum-tap, poor things, maun be clean bumbazed, and rookit oot of hoose and hame. Lord! doctor, but let me fill your tumbler man, and I'll tell ye ane of the drollest ploys ye ever heard of in your life. Gore! it juist coves the cuddy, and the cuddy coves a'.

“Ye see our big grey cat Tam there, lying beekin’ on the hearthstane? Weel, I suppose Tam’s the biggest thief in the twa parishes of Kilwinning and Stewarton, and he whyles plagues us most awfully, stealing the hens and the doos, forbye lappin’ up ony ream the guidwife may set bye. Would you believe’t, sir, the rascal has learned to sook the eggs, and we canna get a hen to clock noo ava.

“‘Noo Tam,’ quo I to him aye day, ‘ye ken this is juist rideeklous, and clean oot of a’ reason. Hae ye nae conscience, Tam? Little or nane I’m thinkin’; but, man, ye nicht at least hae the gumption, for your ain sake, to byde till the eggs were clockit, and the ’earocks of some sonsy and sappy size.’

“But it was wastin’ my win’, he’s juist a ne’erdoweel dyvour, that ’ll hae to end or he mend. Hoosever, the guidwife was in a dreadfu’ way aboot her chookies, and as clatchin’ after clatchin’ disappeared, or rather never appeared, I grew serious aboot it mysel’. So I whummed Tam’s case through my wame ae nicht with a hue of toddy, and

determined at length on a project to cure him. The next afternune, when I cotch him in the cray, I took him and plaistered his dowp for him effeckwally with some fine fresh mustard."

"And surely," quo I, "James," when I could get my breath for lauchin', "surely that would bring the misguidit beast to some reason."

"'Reason!' quo ye? 'Na! na! doctor, ye dinna ken oor Tam,—man, juist nae reason ava,—he cursed and swure, and talkit Eerish-Gaelic a' that nicht in the Stack-yaird, and the aftener he pree'd the mustard, the mair awfu'-like cracks he had to put forrit!

"But, man, hae ye heard the bit note aboot Sanny Armour? No? Weel Sanny, ye see, has aye been a wild swearin' fechtin' body a' the days o' him, but he got a gliff the last week I'm thinkin' that'll maybe dae him some guid. It seems he had been owre aboot the Armsheuch or Annick Lodge at some rock-ing, and got terr'ble fou'; he waunered in the hame-gaun, and lying doon on the road-side, fell as soon's a peerie in less than a meenont. The brushers who were gaun to

their wark in the Doura pit about four o'clock in the morning, got him lying streekit oot on a bing of stanes by the roadside, playing a' the vauriations of an auld grumphia through his nose. They tried to wauken him, but he was owre soun', and then ane of them proposed that they should tak him doon the heuch, and there let him come to himsel'. Noo Sanny had a dream which was not all a dream; he thocht he was deid, and sinking doon, doon, to the hettest neuck of the ill place, there to be scadded and scowthered for his sins, and get naething to slocken his lowing drooth but pints and gills of bilin' brumstane. When, therefore, he waukened in the Doura pit and heard the "ough!" of the colliers, as they drave their picks into the wa', and when he saw the lights flitting aboot, and heard sic scraps of talk as this,—'Sanny Armour, said ye? Ou! man, he's deid! ouay! deid an' damned lang syne! Come on wi' anither bakiefu' o' coals!' he fairly gied himsel' up as among the lost. Hirslin' awa furrin' to ane of the lights, he saw a black being sittin on its hunkers wi' the face o't a' coomed, nae sark on, and as black's the Earl's waist-

coat. It was spuin' curses oot the mooth o't between the pluffs of tobacco reek, and Sanny, believing this to be the Enemy himsel', crap up to't on his knees, and in the most phraisin' way he could for fricht, said,

“ ‘ Bonnie Mister Deil, *pretty* Mister Deil, I'm your *ain* Sanny Armour ! ’ ”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DOURA DISASTER—THE MURDER IN CASTLEPEN.

THE Doura pits had been lying idle for some generations, and there were nane who kent how far the workings gaed ben. They had been lying fu' o' water time oot of mind, and at last, when they were pumpit dry, there was no little speculation as to what would be found. William Ralston, the ganger, was the first who ventured doon, but the sicht he saw gied him sic a gliff that he was glad to win back again to the daylight. First, in the wat clay at the pit boddom, were the stead of the tackets and sparribles of the auld coal-hewers of langsyne, and venturing ben, he found a wheen auld pit-shools, juist like hauf munes with a horn at each side to haud by, and, finally, in at the face, he got the banes of the puir fallows themselves,

whaur they had dee'd in a lang forgotten time of sorrow, but whether drooned or scomfished, wha can tell?

“Man, doctor,” quo William, when he tell't me o't, “it's a grey auld worl' this, and wha kens what lamentations and greeting there would be in Kilwinning that day for the bread-winners whose very names have noo been lost!”

But, alas! that the sorrows of ae generation are but the eidolons and shadows, or wraiths as it were, of the next ane that is to come, for it wasna lang after this crack I had with William till the great calamity happened at the Doura. After a terr'ble frost, we had a lang tack of very wat weather, and this lowsing the stanes in the shank, so chirted oot the bratticing that at last it suddenly gied way, and falling with a great stramash on to the hutch that was coming up, ca'd it to the bottom of the heuch in a moment. Pate Brogildy frae the Redboiler, Willie Forgisal o' the Tanyaird, and James Jamphrey frae the Corsehill, with his twa callan's, were in the hutch. James Jamphrey and the callan's were killed on the spot, Willie Forgisal had

ane of his legs dung a' to flinners, but Pate Brogildy, marvellous to say, got aff with a few scarts and a drookin in the sump, and stranger still, this was the third time that Pate had so escapit! He met with a waur misfortune however after that, having his arm nippit by the fly-wheel of the new engine, and ruggit clean aff by the shooter-blade. And yet here he had his ain wonderful luck too, for when I was sent for, and expected to get him bleeding to death, I could not find a single artery to tie, the twist having cleanly sealed the ends of them up!

Archie Sma', a brusher, who was coming oot bye through the waste when the Doura misfortune took place, tell't me that he heard a lang sliding skreigh doon the shank, then a crash, and then a grane, and then a' was quate!

Willie Forgisal, as I have said, cam the warst aff of the fivesome, for ane of his legs was dung a' to nonsense, and I had to tak it aff abune the knee. Waiting for the cage that was bringing him to the hill, alang with the nine-lived Pate Brogildy, I had a very narrow escape mysel', for stepping back oot

of the gate to let the hutch come oot, I was a' but doon the other side of the shank, when some ane pookit me by the coat-sleeve and drew me back.

Willie Forgisal was ane of a family of lameters, his faither and an uncle having baith lost a leg in the pits, and ane of his brithers had a very sair income from the cruells. When the cairt arrived hame, therefore, at the Tanyaird with Willie, the wife, who was, however, nane of your yaumerin' tawpies, was performing through the flure amang a houseful of her kimmers, and when she heard that the leg would hae to come aff, she broke oot again in a fresh place,—

“ Oh ! you d—d Forgisals,” she said “ will you ne'er divawld ? You would tak a wee plantin' to yoursels to keep you in stilts ! ”

The proverbs are no' a' lees, and it is ane of the truest observes that I ken of, that misfortunes never come but in twas and threes at a time. I never had a crying-oot, but there was sure to be anither ane or twa at the back o't, and it wasna lang after the Doura disaster till Kilwinning was horrified ae morning, to hear that a rider who had

arrived late at Castlepen, or the Cross Keys as it was ca'd at that time, had disappeared over night and could not be found. The house was searched from top to bottom, and then the houses and plantings round the toon. They even sent to Irvine for the grappling-airns and trailed the mill-dam, but all to no purpose, he had vanished clean awa as if he never had been born.

It was soon remarkit that William Craig, the landlord of the Cross Keys, from being in a very wee way and making aye a poor mooth, got suddenly very gash and bien, and the wife, who had been theretofore content with a plain jupe and coat, had noo gotten to hersel a fine new goon with lace ruffles to the sleeves o't, and was putting on some quality airs that the neebors couldna thole. I was nane surprised, therefore, when I heard that far awa hints and pow-shakings were gaun on, and a sough that things werena a' as they should be. And yet, the horrible truth never flashed on me till I was sent for ae nicht to see William Craig, who was in a raging brain fever. As the bluid ran into the basin from the vein I had opened in his arm,

William glowered at it in horror, and said in a hairse whisper, while he seemed to see some sicht that froze his marrow,—

“Quick! wife, quick! howk nae deeper,—below the stair,—Lord sauf’s, leuk at his een! quick, woman, quick! Come awa,—for the love o’ God come awa!”

It was the delirium of a deeing man, but Lucky Thamson, who stude at the bed-foot, gied me a wink and said very lown,—

“Juist my thocht! will you send for Thomas Taigle the writer, doctor? or think ye it would be best to send owre to Irvine for the Shirra? But whaur’s Mistress Craig?” she said oot loud as William looked at our whispered confab with suspicion. Ay! where indeed? Ane of the servant lasses broke into the room with a face like a dishcloth, crying, “Mrs Craig has hanged hersel’ in the stable!”

“No! no!” quo William, “no’ in the stable! no in the stable! below the stair I tell ye, below the stair! dinna howk deep, and woman be quick! for the love o’ God be quick!” and with that he fell back in a strong convulsion, and dee’d. It was a terrible

affair, and I need hardly say that below the stair we found the corp of the murdered man.

Strange to say, William Craig's family a' cam to an ill end,—Bob the son dee'd in the asylum; a dochter who married a writer in the Awmous Wa', who brak and gaed a' to pigs and whussles, dee'd in the Puir's Hoose; and anither dochter who was a howdie, got bitten ae nicht by a mad dog, when she was sent for to a case at Megswa's or the Cleikum Inn, and she had to be smooored in a week or sae between twa feather beds!

CHAPTER XXII.

JAMES GUE THE JOINER—GIBBY CORK THE
BOWMAKER — RITCHIE BROON — ROBIN
BURNS—JEAN ARMOUR—*VERSES*, A SCOT-
TISH GIRL'S FAREWELL TO HER EMIGRANT
LOVER.

JAMES GUE, the joiner, was as great a droll as ever leaved in Kilwinning, and many a pleasant half oor have I spent in his shop while he feathered the arrows for the papin-goe, or tackit the siller m'untin's on the coffins.

I mind of ae day he met me in the Howegate, when my heid was boo'd to the ground, as was my ordinar', and as some ane said of me as if I was leukin' for preens, that James said in the bye-gaun,—

“ Thus goes he on from day to day.”

I was doon at the Port before it dawned on me that James had been quoting from

“Death and Doctor Hornbook,” but coming up the gate again in the afternune, thinking to play him aff with something in return, he did me again. Medical men have all some everyday forms of speech, which they must often use in speaking to their patients, and ane of mine has aye been, “Well, the probability is that in a day or two we’ll have to change your medicine, but in the mean time you’ll juist go on with the bottle.”

I had to call at the Eglinton Arms, and there I got James carrying on the boose with Gibby Cork, the bowmaker.

“Now James,” quo I, seeing a chance to be a little severe, “I’m really surprised to see a man of your intellectual pairts sitting here frittering awa your time and siller, forbye wasting your health, while your poor wife is sitting her leafu’ lane at hame! You know it’s too bad,—you’ll have to stop it!”

“Man, doctor,” quo James, “I’m awfu bad wi’ the toothache, and whyles I think a hue o’ speerits does’t some guid, but it’s gettin’ aye the langer the waur this time. Doctor Plook, ye ken, would juist hae tell’t me to tak a mouthfu’ o’ water, and staun beside the fire

till it bile't, but I really think I'll hae to hae't oot!"

"Well, James," quo I, sympathising with his well feigned distress, and seeing the prospect, I may admit, of a shilling in the distance, "if it's so bad as that, you know you should really pluck out the rooted sorrow, and cast it from you; come doon the nicht and I'll soon whup it oot for you."

With that I was going away, when James cried after me,

"And I suppose, doctor, in the mean time I'll juist go on with the bottle?"

But I found a chance soon after that to hit him juist as sairly. James was keen to be a faither, but Jessie White had so far disappointed him. When therefore she did fa' that way, and James cam to me ae morning when she was heavy o' fit, and said, "Hooray! doctor, hooray! man, oor Jessock's as braid's a gavel!"

"Guidsake, James!" quo I, "no possible; but Lord, man, steek the door and speak lown, *wha do you suspect?*"

Gibby Cork, the bowmaker, was anither great oddity, whose shop was the howff of a

when other characters of the toon. Mony a kittle point of theology and politics was handled there, and Gibby's extensive reading on the subjects gied him a maistery owre the feck of his opponents that seldom failed him. Auld John Paiks was the only ane who could haud his ain with him, and it was fine to see the twasome of them at it, with the spenticles on their broos, and veesages o' terrible earnestness as they hammered awa at some obscure passage in "the Beuk," or maybe "Baxter's Saint's Rest" or "Boston's Four-fold State."

"You know, Gilbert, your remark is not juist conformable with the tenets of the kirk, you know!" quo John.

"I confess I don't see that," quo Gibby, "unless it be the taivert tenets of the *Anti-burgher* kirk that you're talkin' of!" And then John firing up like poother, they would go at it again, hammer and tangs for anither hour.

Gibby's wife was in the habit of keeping a store of onions, kidney beans, etc., in riddles below the bed, and which like every other careful house mother, she brought out now

and then, and sunned on the glowing hearth-stane, for the purpose of driving off any superfluity of damp that might have settled on them. While this domestic ceremony was being enacted ae nicht, auld Gibby made his appearance at the kitchen door, a little elevated, and demanded to know if his tea was ready.

“Ay! it’s been ready this hauf oor.” Considerable pause, the wife being thrang with the ingans.

“Am I to get my tea the nicht?” “Sit doon a wee your wa’s,” quo Mary from below the bed.

At this Gibby poised his right foot and delivered it against a riddle of onions, sending them along the lime flure like curling stanes bent for tea, saying,

“I think I’m no muckle heeded in this hoose,—if I was a sybo I would be rather mair thocht o’!”

I mind of ae day that Ritchie Broon cam into Gibby’s shop when I was there, and tell’t us he had just been to Irvine, and ca’ing for a pennyworth o’ snuff at Tammie Struggles’ in the Half-Way, had met there with a most wonderful man.

“His black een,” Ritchie said, “burned like very coals of fire, and he talkit awa to us for a lang time in the most enchanting style.”

“Wha in a’ the worl’s that?” quo he to Tammie when he gaed oot.

“Oh!” quo he, “it’s a chiel they ca’ Robin Burns, a flax dresser in the toon.”

I ken that they grew better acquaint after that, and Ritchie has tell’t me, that when Robin was the gauger and would arrive at ony public hoose, every soul in that hoose, man, woman, or wean, however untimeous the hour, would get up to hearken to his wonderful talk!

It has aye been a great heartscadd to me that I never forgathered with Robin. I have rackit my chafts lauchin’, or felt my heart grow grit at his bonnie sangs for mony a year, and I dinna think that there will ever be a poet like him again. The aulder ane gets, the mair truth and beauty he sees dwelling in his deathless words, and the deeper becomes his regret that he didna leeve to do mair. Lord! how he skelpit the dowps o’ the unco guid wi’ nettles and birzed them doon wi’ the heel o’ his contempt, and how

they hate him and fear him to this day for the same! Gore, man! is't nae fine whaur he kittles up Meg Soorploom and Miss Perjink oot o' their religious trance with the notion of a lad, and swith! when he gets them lowpin' daft and fidgin' fain wi' the thochts o't, dauds their runkled chafts wi' his loof, and shouts "Hunt 'e gowk!" i' their lug?

And then how tender and loving wi' a kindly lass! What rifling of a' nature for images and colours to tell her charms, and with what bursts of song and glory he cleids the tale of their undying loves! Na! na! sirs, I tell you, we'll ne'er hae anither lark o' the skies to compare wi' the Immortal Rabbie again!

I think it's no very weel kent, that it was at the Lugton Mill Brig, on the Irvine road, that Robin parted with Jean Armour, when about to tear himsel' awa from Scotland and from her, and go to the Indies; but so it was, for he tell't it to Ritchie Broon himsel', and I have seen Ritchie with a poem of Robin's, in which he maks Jean speak of the pairting, but as if it had been at Greenock, whaur he was to have sailed. Of course he didna gang,

and the poem never was printed with the lave of them. Indeed, Ritchie Broon kept it in his ain hauns, and gied it to me as a special keepsake when he gaed awa to be the maister of a West Indiaman that sailed from the Thames. I think this is the very first time that it can have seen the light of day :—

A SCOTTISH GIRL'S FAREWELL TO HER
EMIGRANT LOVER.

The ship is floating o'er the sea,
Her sails are spread before the wind,
I've ta'en my last farewell o' thee,
There's naught but sorrow left behind.

I little thought that e'er I'd stand
And see this boat rock at the quay,
I little thought a foreign land
Would ever had such charms for thee !

And what if all the fairest flowers
And sweetest fruits load every tree,
Ah ! can they match the hawthorn bowers
That scent our own dear Scottish lea ?

How can you ever love their streams ?
Their very names seem strange to me ;
They shine not in my youthful dreams,
Nor flow familiar to the sea !

And when you think of life's young days,
By Irvine's banks or bonnie Doon,
Say o'er what tide can play the rays
Of bonnier sun or softer moon ?



Ah! how each tree, and stone, and linn,
Speaks of the happy hours gone bye,
Of welling feelings in the heart
Whose crystal streams have long been dry!

And will you go? And must you go?
And must I say farewell to thee?
Oh! who can tell the weary woe
This bitter parting brings to me?

The ship has gained the headland now;
She feels the steady freshening gale;
Spare me sometimes a passing thought,
Farewell! a last, a long farewell!

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE POCKS—MATTIE BRUCE—THE WEIRD—
USELESS TRAUCHLES.

“SHE’S won awa! Ay! she’s a bonnie corp!” is a very common remark at a death, but there was a time in Kilwinning when it wasna true, if indeed it ever is. The pocks cam amang us, and mony a braw face that lay doon in its pride, got up again in sorrow, a sicht to be seen. It was a terrible time; they were deeing in dizzens, and such was the dread of the smittall disease, that they wouldna let them into the toons wi’ the corps, and mony a ane was dibbled in at the dyke-backs and happit owre in the plantings. There was an impatience at the burials too, which, though it didna look weel at the time, has yet noo kythed into the cutting doon of the three services of cake and wine into twa, which really, as I think, is more wysselike, forbye being a

great saving of expense, and there is less of the greedy gavaulling and menseless carryings on, which were so common langsyne, when they whyles got so fou' that the defunc' was forgotten a' thegither, and they had to turn back for them from the kirkyaird.

I mind ance of Hughoc Thrums coming up to me at Mary King's funeral, when we were a' gathered thegither, and saying,

“What's your oors, doctor?”

“Weel,” said I, “Hugh, it's exactly two minutes to two with me,” when Hughoc, at the top of his voice, cried to Robin Throughstane,

“Bring her oot Robin, bring her oot! Some of you Eglinton folk come awa forrit and carry; I'm sure there's plenty o' ye, and ye hae as guid a richt as onybody!”

San Bruce in the Port was anither who dee'd at that time, but Mattie, his widow, wasna inconsolable. She was a great Orange-woman Mattie, and being in Mr Swatch's shop about her m'urnin's, she pickit up a brave bowpot of bonnie yellow ribbons, and hauding them up to her lug, asked how she would look with that, when, casting her ee oot of the window, she said,

“ But eh ! there’s Sanny’s coffin awa bye, I maun rin ! ”

I mind of ae very tempestuous nicht aboot that time, that I was ta’en oot to see James Beetle, the henman, who leeved with Robin Bausey, the sweep, a wee bit abune the Plan, in the Corsehill. He was deeing of the pocks, having never been noculated, and I was coming hame thinking about him, and regretting that I had lost the chance of a guid operation, James being reel-fitted, and very anxious to have the sinnons cut,—when, juist as I had passed the head of Tammie Dale’s Road, and was gaun doon the Corsehill Brae, hearkenng to the rain plashing doon the rouns and flushing the syvors, I was startled to see a window shot up and a long white figure appearing at it, wringing her hauns in an ecstasy of grief, and crying,

“ Oh ! Scotland, Scotland, will nane come to your help ? ”

Stories flashed through my heid of siclike cries I had read of, that had terrified the folk in London at the time of the Plague, but, crossing the road, I gaed up into

the room and there found a pair fallow, a journeyman tailor of Mr Swatch's, whose *name* was Scotland, and who, sad to tell, was a corp before the morning.

I had a trashin time o't in thae years, never sure o' a nicht's rest, and obligated to warsle awa from day to day, as if sleep was a luxury I could do withoot, and a holiday a' nonsense, and clean oot of the quastion. And whoever was ill, it was juist onreasonable that the doctor should be sae, and a thing no' to be tholed.

And then as to their howdyings, there were juist the twa kinds of them,—the ane that sent for me five meenonts owre late, and the ither ane that was hauf a day owre sune. And they put me to sic needless fasherie too, with their crackett stools and their singed rags, their mutches on the wean's heid, their cutting of kebbucks, making of drummock for the wean, and what not? that I whyles was so stawed o't, I wished in bitterness of spirit that auld mother Eve had been a Jenny Wullock. Losh me! some of them were as feared o' a wee wean as if it was cheeny and would break amang their hauns. Mair than

ance have I had to ding some useless trauchle
oot of my gate, when I saw that her fingers
were a' thoomb's, and not only wash the
wean mysel', but put on the bit sweeler and
wyliecoat o't as weel!

CHAPTER XXIV.

LEEZIE: HER CLOOTS, DUSTERS, AND COMPLICATIONS—MICKY DROOZLES, THE DISH-MAN.

It's maybe no' a very original remark, but I canna help making the observe, that women are kittle creturs and ill to ken. They have some curious characters in common, anent which I will not expawtiate here, but may juist pass on to oor Leezie's case at ance.

Of course, like the lave of them, cloots, cloots, for ever cloots, is the aim and end of her bit butterflee life; but the remarkable thing in her case is that, in place of the bonnie red and yellow anes that they aftenest affeck, she should have such a terr'ble taste for m'urnin's and black strings of ae kind and anither. If she was the fine gawcie muckle woman that she ance was, I would think less o't, but being noo as I may say juist a sackfu'

o' ladles, the mortclaith-like goons she puts on gie her a swamp, cauldribe, full-m'unted appearance, that, to say the least of it, is no' encouragin'. Then she's uncolies afflickit with a diarrhoea of words, and aften the spate of her eloquence is like the gush of the lade at the Brig-en'. But Guid be thankit, it stots! I'm used wi't, like Wull Spear with the tacket, and I have gotten the faculty noo through lang practice, and I may say second nature, of letting it a' in at the ae lug and oot at the ither.

“ They say! Quhat say they ? ” quo ane of the auld Abbots, “ Let them say ! ” When Leezie dees, it'll be with a duster in her haun',—she has carried cleaning to sic a pitch, that I am really of opinion that to some extent it has touched her intellect. This last winter, her scoorin' and her soopin' have been juist untholeable, and a perfect fasherie to me. I write this chapter, I may say, juist to let aff a little steam, since I discovered this morning that the lass has lichted the fire with some papers and bits of notes I was thrang with yestreen, and forgot to lock bye when I gaed to my bed. But, Leezie is really a

very peculiar cretur. She is never so happy as when she has a guid gaun grievance, and that is nearly always, seeing that it is a fore-gone conclusion with her, that I never could do onything that was richt a' my days. It also pleases her very much to gie me fashious directions anent my claes,—directions which she kens very weel I will not follow, but which, for a' that, she never misses gieing to me when I gang oot or come in. If I get a new big coat, or a pair of spats, or anything at all that is new, she is for ever telling me to tak them aff when I come hame, so that I may say the ae hauf o' my life is spent warsling oot, and the ither hauf o't warsling into my claes. Now I never all the life of me could byde to be fashed aboot cloots, and I will tak an aith at this moment that I couldna tell you the colour of Leezie's goon the day, or whether indeed she has ane on ava. But Leezie would be in misery if she couldna hae her cloots. She is for ever getting what she ca's bargains at Mr Swatch's shop, a when trash o' ribbons and falderals she has bocht, no' that she needs them, but juist because they were "cheap." The next I see of them

is in the nieve of ane of the callans as he carries them oot to Johnnie Cunnachie's barrow for candy. And then there's the hunder and one complications she has to go through every nicht or she gangs to her bed. The chairs have a' to be carried into the entry, the hearth-rug has to be turned owre with the face o't doon, the fender has to be carried to the kitchen, the knock has to be rowed up, the cat has to gang oot to the close, and the hoose generally has to be put into a kind of curl paper condition for the lass in the morning. But do you think that's a'? Then you ken little aboot it. When she gangs to her bed, puir woman, and she has never missed a nicht that I ken of for forty years, she has to hae her heid sweeled in flannen, and mittens on her hauns after she has creeshed them weel with saim for the hacks. There's nae frost to hack them in the simmer time, nor cauld to gie her toothache then either, but she creeshes them a' the same, and couldna sleep withoot her beloved cloots.

Oor Leezie's a very minute historian. Mony a time have I been lulled to sleep in

my arm chair, or maybe in the night-time when I have been waukened by ane of the weans, or was daft enough to rise and leuk for a man she was sure was below the bed, by the droning claver of “he said,” and “she said,” and “q’u I, Mary,” and “quo she, Mrs Duguid,” and so on in ae never ending stream and hum.

And then, forbye the daft bargains at Mr Swatch’s, she is for ever wasting the penny caunle leukin for the bawbee, by pottying a’ the broken cheeny and tumblers in the hoose till there’s no a dish on the dresser that doesna bear the marks of her honorary surgical skill.

“Hoots, Leezie!” quo I to her ae day, “ye ken this is no fair to Micky Droozles, the dishman, ava,—the body maun leeve, ye ken;” and I dung doon a dizzen or twa of her plaistered bowls and plates, breaking them into so mony wee bits that it was clean beyond the compass of her power to potty them ony mair.

CHAPTER XXV.

WILLIE AND JAMIE—TAM CAMELL, THE POET
—*VERSES*, TO A BEAUTIFUL JEWISH MAI-
DEN.

BUT Leezie has dune some guid in her day, and though whyles her guattery tongue is a desperate fash to me, I cannot forget that she has gien me my twa wee callans, clever wee chiels baith of them, though I say it mysel', who maybe shouldna. Jamie has somewhat of her flichty nature, but Willie, who is now an advanced student in the College of Glasgow, and in a fair way to come hame and help me with the practice, has a commodity o' solidness and sense about him that I like, and which I think will carry him bravely through. He is very anxious to put to his haun', and has a great crack to me of some of the new-fangled notions and theories in physick, with which we are be-

ginning to be deaved. I dinna like to discourage him, but, when he speaks of this new lug-horn and ither playocks of ane Doctor Layneck, I am whyles obligated to smile to mysel' at his sanguine expectations. I'm a wee feared, for my pairt, that owre mony o' thae things are juist like a chip in parritch, or a blister on a wooden leg, no' ony guid or use. I'm fleyed that I dampit Willie's ardour owre sairly ae day, when Chappie Boyd cam in to me with a cloored heid he had gotten in a fecht with Rab Paik, and when I said,

“Come here, Willie, my man, put your bit bobbin on the man's heid, and tell me what ye think's the maitter wi't!”

I whyles tak a bit turn with him at the books again mysel', and really it astonishes me to see how weel he's takin't up. I asked him ae day for a definition of a shut sac, such as the peritoneum or the pericardium, and he said it was juist like a flypit stocking, or rather a Kilmarnock nicht-cap, or a puddin' that has twa blin' ends, ane of them being doobled in to the ither. I am pleased to see, mair indeed than I think it juist judicious to let on, that he has inherited my taste for books,

and what they nowadays call the *belles lettres*. I ken he scarts the paper a wee himsel', and he has a great crack of ane Tam Cammell, who, if a' he says be true, maun be a greater genius than even James Blameit was himsel'. Here is ane of this Tam Cammell's pieces, which I got the ither day in ane of Willie's note books, and which he read to me himsel' in such a fine roon deep voice, that at times I halfins suspect and jaloose that it's maybe his ain :—

TO A BEAUTIFUL JEWISH MAIDEN.

O, Judith, had our lot been cast
 In that remote and simple time,
 When, shepherd swains, thy fathers passed
 Through dreary wilds and deserts vast
 To Judith's happy clime,—

My song, upon the mountain rocks,
 Had echoed of thy rural charms,
 And I had fed thy father's flocks,
 O Judith of the raven locks,
 To win thee to my arms !

Our tent, beside the murmur calm
 Of Jordan's grassy-vested shore,
 Had sought the shadow of the palm,
 And blest with Gilead's holy balm
 Our hospitable door.

At falling night, or ruby dawn,
 Or yellow moonlight's welcome cool,
 With health and gladness we had drawn,
 From silver fountains on the lawn,
 Our pitcher, brimming full !

How sweet to us, at sober hours,
 The bird of Salem would have sung,
 In orange or in almond bowers,
 Fresh with the bloom of many flowers,
 Like thee, for ever young !

But ah ! my love, thy fathers' land
 It sheds no more a spicy bloom,
 Nor fills with fruit the reaper's hand !
 But wide its silent wilds expand,
 A desert and a tomb !

ALTONA, 1800.

Wee Jamie, as I have said, being raither a tap of tow like his mither, and being now sixteen year auld, I thocht it best to article him to Mr Bungo the writer, no' that I have ony broos o' the law mysel', but juist that a contact with it may sober him doon a wee, and that I have always observed that, whoever doesna get his siller, the Writer aye maks sure o' his.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TROUBLOUS TIMES—THE SOUGH OF WAR—THE
RESURRECTIONISTS—THE VOLUNTEERS.

THE day that Willie cam hame to Kilwinning an M.D. with honours, was, I think, the proudest and happiest in a' my life. I gaed in with Leezie to Glasgow to see him cappit in the Common Hall, and Dr Blameit from Dumfries being there with his son too, we had a right merry time of it, I can tell you. I mind that we a' gaed to the play that nicht and saw "Patie and Roger," and getting a hue of toddy when we gaed hame to the hottle we were staying at in the Trongate, we were quite joco owre the auld-time cracks. Mony a famous ploy of our ain student days did the doctor and me call to mind, and Willie wasna behin' haun' either with his tales of the snawba' battles in the High Street, and the rippits of him and his cronies

with the Watch, and how they ance took doon the washer-woman's sign of "Mangling Here," and tied it to Dr Catlin's door in the Rotten-row.

When we arrived hame in the Brig-en' by the coach, and I heard the weans on the causey speak to ane anither of the "young doctor," it was to me as the first minting and hint that my day had gaen by, and I experienced a curious kind of mixture of relief that I would now get some rest, and a regret that my day had dookit doon, and was near to the darkening.

Willie was a favourite from the first, and I think there never was a better contradiction gi'en to the proverb, that a prophet has nae honour in his ain country, for the wark flowed in upon us like winking, and soon we were as thrang as a skep at the casting.

Laird Colville had opened twa new pits, the ane at the Dibbs and the ither at the Liddles. Forbye them, there was an ingaun e'e at the Goldcraig, and so mony wild Eerish cam about the toon to work in them, that Sanny Facht the polisman never had the snitchers in his pooch. Smuggling and

poaching were everyday events, and there were owre mony stravaigin' gangrels and sturdy sorners. A spirit of restlessness, like the bizzing of the midges and cleggs in the simmer time, seemed to be in the air, and some of the far-keekin' politicians of the lumestead said they smokit the breath of the battle from afar. Indeed, we had already had the glorious victories of Nelson at the Nile, and the lamentable news of his death at Trafalgar Bay; but the time I speak of was a few years after that, when Buonoparte was near to the end of his tether, and the great Duke gaed oot to scourge him at Waterloo. But there was a barming and a working among men's minds at hame that was to me as the omen and the forecast of some tremendous stramash. The wastery and wickedness of the times seemed kything, and posting on to some awfu' retribution. I overheard a crack ae nicht as I was takin' a smoke in the garden that opened my een to what was gaun on. Twa colliers' wives frae the Benslay had forgathered at the corner of the New Road that gaed by the hoose-end; ane of them, who was a great muckle haul of a dirty

fum, says to her kimmer, who was rather mair presentable, being toshed up a wee to come to the toon,—

“An’ hoo are ye comin’ on, woman, this lang while? Oor Sanny an’ me were juist haein’ a wee hauf mutchkin o’ Robin Smith’s best, but he would hae mair, an’ I cam awa and left him to come hame by himsel’. Na! that goon o’ yours sets you aff! Do you think, woman, that Mr Swatch has ony mair of the same wab?”

“Oh! the goon’s weel eneuch,” says the second ane, “but I dinna think that there’s ony o’ the wab left. But hoo are ye leevin’ yoursel’, woman, sin’ we got the big wage?”

“Oh! woman,” quo the first ane, “no vera weel ava. I never kent the like o’t. Oor Sanny an’ me have shortbread an’ ham to our breakfast every mornin’, and yet, would you believe’t? we canna get it a’ spent!”

“Jenny Whalbert,” I groaned, “Jenny Whalbert, lie still in your grave!”

But, speaking of that, it was a time too when the very rest of the dead themselves was broken in upon, by the misleart and misguided dyvours, who have brocht disgrace on

the profession, and are kent by the name of "Resurrectionists." I keppit twa of them mysel' ae morning, as I cam doon through the Vowts from the Green. The yowff yowffin' o' a dog had unsettled my cogitations, and feeling that it was spittin' through the win', I quickened my step to win hame to the Brig-en' or the plump would come on, when, juist as I got to the Burgher shop, I cotch the twa dyvours in the very act. They were so thrang confabbing among themsel's, that they never saw me or heard my foot, so, slipping in behin' the Burgher stair, I thocht I would juist watch the whole performance. Their faces were coomed, and they had on a coorse kind of carsackie owre their claes, but I'm sure I kent the word of ane, if no' baith of them. Ane o' them gied the ither a backie up on to the wa', and he again pu'd the first ane up by the haun, and then they baith drappit owre into the kirkyaird. I thocht of slipping caunily back to the Green to raise some help, but considering to mysel' again, that there nicht no' be time, I gruppit my stick firmer in my haun', and resolved to hae a finger in the pie, if it was possible. I hadna

lang to wait for them, for presently I spied them haurling up a white thing on to the wa', which I could plainly see was a corp with the chowks o't a' tied up as usual. Juist at the richt moment, when the first ane of the spoliautors was looting owre to get some directions from the ither ane, I suppose anent the comfortable conclusion of the job, and when, having the wecht of the body pretty much to himsel', his breeks were fine and ticht, I brocht doon my guid aik rung with sic a soonding skelp on his dowp, that you could have heard the crack o't in the Green! He drappit the corp with an aith on his companion, and tumbling after't himsel, I heard them baith fall with a great clash on the ground. From my side of the dyke, I could hear a good deal of graning and swearing, and the words as they scored awa owre the kirkyaird, "H'mph! there twa poun' again wi' a thrash!" When I was quite sure they had ta'en their dicht, I gaed doon the road lauchin' to mysel' like mad at the thocht of begunkin' them so finely. I'll wadd the hurdies of ane of them at least gelled for the rest of that nicht, though I would rather that

his thrapple had fand their wecht, as they undoubtedly did of my guid aik stick.

What with the Resurrectionists and the sough of the wars, it will not be surprising that, forbye the watch that was set on the kirkyaird, volunteer corps should have arisen in Kilwinning, as indeed they did through the length and breadth of the land. Some of the would be sodgers, however, were after a' but wafflers and pretenders, who could better fecht a bowl of parritch, than go oot to face the French, and they came indeed to be kent as "The Soor Milk Jocks." Allan Lamont of the Cockenny might be taken as a fair sample of the class I mean, when at the first paraud he said to Jock Wurzel, "Lord, Jock! I'm no vera sure about t'is sodgerin ava! Man, what in a' t'e God's worl' would oor auld folks say, if they thocht we were up here, at t'e vera hip o' war?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FALL OF THE STEEPLE.

AT half-past five o'clock on the morning of the second of August 1814, the old steeple of Kilwinning fell. It was the last of the "seven goodlie touris" that Timothy Pont has written of, and it was so familiar to me from my childhood upwards, that I grieved when it fell as for the loss of a dear auld freen. Some sax years before that, it had been struck by lightning, and in the rent that gapit doon its side, a colony of crows from Eglinton had made their howff and hame.

I was waukened by the stramash, and rinnin' oot to see the cause thereof, I was blin't by the stoor of the ages coming doon with the steeple. It was a bonnie simmer's morning, but the crows were rippiting dreadfully, as I have heard them doing before a storm, and they were careering and soving awa hame to

Eglinton, like the black messengers of doom. Anither portion of the steeple fell about ten o'clock same morning, and the rest of it was blawn doon by poother three weeks after that. Twa barrels of poother were used, but only ane of them gaed aff. William Cork, a brither of Gibby's, whom I have spoken of already, said to Captain M'Gown that such was the case, but the Captain juist lauched at him, and said he nicht hae't to himsel' if he could fetch't oot. And he did bring it oot, and it lay that nicht in the Kail-yaird and was sell't, as Gibby says, the next day for whiskey.

Lord Eglinton had strengthened and beautified the steeple in 1789, but he had been putting new wine into old bottles with the usual result.

There was a soo kilt when the steeple fell, but though all the rubbish was cleared away for the foond of the new tower by the beginning of December, there never was a vestige of grumphie seen. That was the only life that was lost, but it was a remarkable affair, that in half an hour after the steeple fell, some masons were to have begood to the repairing of it.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE DEATH AND FUNERAL OF THE EARL.

WHEN the auld steeple fell and the crows flew awa hame to Eglinton, it was remarkit that they were like the sea-gulls that flee landwart to tell of the coming storm, and lang after that, when their calamities cam doon like cleggs on the noble house of Montgomerie, the thing was sorrowfully called to mind.

Earl Hugh, who, though stricken in years, had ta'en a great interest in the volunteer movement, gaed oot ae day to the Irvine Moor to drill some raw recruits, and a thunner plump cam on and drookit him to the skin. He gaed hame to the Castle chittering with cauld, and took to the bed. Willie and me were sent for baith, and finding him the next day in a raging fever, we had a consultation with Dr Paction of Kilmarnock, and Dr Hykerie of Dundonald,

but the rheumatism had gruppit him by the heart, and in less than a week he gaed awa hame to be with his faithers.

Since the days when John Rigging, John Paiks, and me, had been speeling about the auld turrets, my curiosity had never been gratified about the Eglinton Vowts that lay beneath the kirk, and it was with no small interest therefore, that I now lookit forward to the chance of exploring them. I had only ance before had a keek doon, and then only for a meenont, and that was when the father of Leddy Mary Montgomerie dee'd in 1796. Robin Thughstane had noo lang been deid, and it was Peter Trowell the mason frae the Corsehill, who was raising the flags in the kirk, when I dauner'd in on that dark December day, to see how the wark was coming on. There were in reality two vowts, ane of them a good deal below the level of the other. In the smaller and shallower of the two, which was reached by a stair that gaed doon from a common landing-place, lay the coffins of some auld Earl and his Countess, on trestles, and round about them, on sma'er kind of cracketts, a when wee

black boxes with their weans. In the deeper vout were seven or eight coffins, ane of them containing the body of Earl Sauners, who was shot at Ardrossan by Mungo Campbell the gauger in 1768,—the lead had gien way somewhat, and I saw the shape of the features through the cerements. It was of him that Robin Cummell had so many wonderful stories to tell, and how, when he would go oot hunting of a morning, he would knock on Robin's window-brod and cry, "Will ye go, Cummell?" and how Robin would answer, "Ay! my Lord; juist byde a wee till I sup my parritch!" His coffin is biggit into a kind of brick space, and lies nearest to the poopit.

In the tier abune him, is Leddy Susannah his mother, the same bonnie auld leddy whom I had seen at the Auchans langsyne with John Paiks, when we got the fricht from Doctor Johnson. She was celebrated for her beauty, and from having gi'en to the family that peculiar and graceful carriage which has now come to be kent as "The Eglinton Air."

In the topmost tier of a', and farest awa from the poopit, lies Archibald, the father of

Leddy Mary Montgomerie, who, as I have said, died in 1796.

Some older coffins were buried beneath the pavement, but, except that the inscriptions referred to the auld monkish times, and were mair nor likely the epitaphs of the Abbots, maybe of Saint Winning himself, I couldna read the lettering on the stanes.

Peter Trowell seemed very much impressed, as indeed I was myself, with the vanity of pomp and the poor draigled look it puts on when it tries to gang doon into the vera grave.

“Man, doctor!” quo he, “they would like to believe in Charon’s boat! Ay! nae doot they would pay him weel, but, man, it’ll no potty ava,—the deid claes need nae pooches!”

But, for a’ that, the Earl was ta’en hame next day to the kirkyaird, with a pomp as though he had been gaun to his waddin’.

We took up our positions on the causey fornent the Mason’s Lodge, and waited his coming from the Castle. We waited and wearied a lang time. Polismen from Irvine paced up and doon. Gentlemen arrived, were set doon from their carriages, and

daunered up to the kirk, some going in immediately, others doing the polite to each other in the usual style of the *haut-ton* of country life, and then govving about the kirk-yaird looking at the heid-stanes. All this I could see from my stance at the kirk-yett. Among others, Mr Sairbelly, from Irvine, gaed up with his usual smirk ; Mr Getready from Pierceton, with his son, a stiff old boy ; Fulton from Kerelaw ; and wee Jackie Creighle from the Linn, who toiled up the kirkstyle on his pookit wee pins. There was a constant coming and gaun of Weirston the factor, indulging in much pantomime and gesture, and the words every now and then of " Twelve feet apart."

A constant stream of callans and lassocks, " phials of wrath " and their wives, and labouring Eerishmen red with clay, passing up and doon, always on the move.

The slow solemn boom of the bell from the new steeple every meenont gaed mournfully owre the hum of the street. But, by and bye we are enlivened a little by the coming of the tenantry, real and fagot, " bonnie fated," as James Gue said, and fictitious.

Ae stream approaches from the Lodge, another from Gibby Cork's shop. The Lodge boys have the start, and the ither party halt, and pose themselves on the croon of the causey till their compeers wind through the kirkyaird yett. Persevering and sturdy attempts are made by Weirston to make them march four abreist. The first file contains Mr Steen and three other reverend looking caufs; a few more files come in regular order,—the last of them has old Frost the tailor on the outside of the row, hurrying, and very much distressed, poor man, as he takes the turn to enter the yett, for he is on the outside, and must march quick to make the sweep of the circle; then comes the ruck of muirland nowte, and Weirston, in despair, fairly gives up the attempt to marshal them. My eye, flitting from old Andrew Olive, who cannot comprehend what Weirston would be at, rests upon the Byres contingent, and there beholds, among others whose tenancy is a thing of buckram, William Bregham the saddler, from the Howegate, etc., etc. I miss, however, with regret, the immortal king of lears and courtiers, Willie Wyth,

not that he was absent, but I fail to pick him up. He has such a fine high-flown aristocratic style wi' him, both on the booling green and when he's sooping the ice up to the tee for a curling stane, that the genuine article is nae place in comparison.

Now they have all joined in, and a close machine hurrying up from Ayr, vomits oot the Bishop in his wee short hat and black daidly, who is to read the Dregie; then comes a pause of expectation, and then Robin Boyd and James Nicoll from Eglinton, walking up the street hurriedly, hold close converse with Weirston, and we learn that the funeral procession must be near, as they were not to leave the gates of the policies till it had passed. In fact, as they speak, the hearse just appears in view. In front walk two baton men, and there are two or three mutes at each side of the hearse, which is a richly decorated affair of the sort of Gothic architectural order, with angels blawing their trumps at the corners, and drawn by four Flemish horses as black as itsel'.

The solemnity of the moment cannot awe into silence the tinkler tongues of Jock

Jawper's wife from the Port, and Tulloch's wife from the Green,—bardy scoots baith of them,—who keep on clavering at my lug with a sort of idiotic persistency,

“Eh! sic a horse!” “That's your noble Lord!” etc., etc., droning and accenting in a different key every repetition of the silly chime. Considerable difficulty is experienced in raising the Earl in his lead from the hearse. James Gue, getting impatient that his talents in the undertaking way should be hidden below a bushel, steps oot after twa or three meenonts as if to help, but is waved back in a lordly way by Weirston's son from the Auchans, and, shortly thereafter, the last mansion of the nobleman defunct emerges from its gloomy cave, gay in all the gorgeous array of silk crimson velvet, and glittering with golden knobs, coronetted handles, emblematic gules, and inscriptive plates.

Slowly, through the kirkyaird path, is borne off to its last resting-place, ane of the sturdiest and noblest shoots that ever sprang from the stem of Montgomerie, and ere we can heave a sigh of regret to the memory of one so highly esteemed, a living torrent of

Eerish and tacketed vulgarity, comprehending men, women, and weans, rolls up the centre of the street, revenging itself by dooble licence for the constraint and silence of the last ten meenonts.

At the service of cake and wine afterhin' in the Lodge, Johnnie Thrums, as being the auldest elder there, was asked to put up a few words of prayer, and he acquitted himself in raither a remarkable and characteristic way, as I have already set doon in Chapter III. of this book.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCLUSION.

BUT I am warned at times by a bizzing in the heid and a whirring of the wee wheels in the knock of life, that I maun draw to a close or the streck of the oor.

“ Eheu fugaces,
Labuntur anni :”

It seems to me but as yesterday or last week when I was a happy wee callan ca'ing the girr on the street, sooming my peerie on the Dyster's Loan, or maybe sitting on my hunkers playing at the bools, and getting my knuckles dumpit at the taw. And now I am near to the gloaming of a lang lifetime of thrangetty, having weans of my ain who are grown to man's estate, and in a fair way to do for themselves.

Leezie and me hae leeved to see baith of the boys weel settled. Willie's driving a'

before him, as I kent he would; and as for Jamie, he's flourishing like the green bay tree, having ta'en up the business of Mr Caption, the writer in Dalry, who dee'd a whyleock sin' syne, and left a fine feck of gear to his wife and weans.

Mr Bung's misses Jamie very much, and I think it maybe grieves him to see and hear tell of so mony guid law pleas gaun bye his door to Dalry, for ae day when I met him in the Howegate, he said,

“Eh! eh! doctor, I'm proud to hear that Jamie's doing weel; eh! eh! he'll be a rich man yet if he's no' watched!”

It is some years now since I took a very active share in the practice, and though I am happy to say, that some of the auld residenters dinna think that ony case can be gaun on as it should do without me, yet I am proud to think that Willie has also a brave following, and that he is ta'en oot amang the gentry to an extent that I never dreamed of. He has his troubles too, poor fallow! the latest of which has been the coming to the toon of Dr Ailsa of Campbelltoon, a very different kind of competition from what I had in auld

Dr Plook, for Dr Ailsa is a man of presence, and has a couthie kind of way with him, forbye a commodity of good sense and skill that is sure to commend him to some. But, as I have said to Willie, it's a wide worl', and there's room for us a'. Kilwinning is no' the wee clachan that it ance was, and really I think that there's wark enough for twa.

Willie has inherited my ootspokenness to a remarkable degree, and full of the enthusiasm of a young practitioner, he whyles as I think maybe tells them juist a wee thocht mair a' at ance than is guid for himsel'. In cracking with him the other day on this very point, I wound up by making the observe,—

“Abune a' things, Willie, let your utterances be Delphic, and dinna forget in practice as in private life the advice of the immortal Rabbie—

‘Aye keep something to yoursel'
You hardly tell to ony.’

A year or twa sin syne, as I think I mentioned before, I was presented by some of my auld freens in the toon and country with a bit toddy jug and an address, Thomas

Taigle, the writer, making some very wysse-like observations on the occasion. I will not here come owre them a', lest ony ane should tow't me with vanity, nor be like Pate Parley, the baker, when praising the Lord ae morning with a' his birr at the open window, and Jock Bullet lookit in at it, and said, "Pate, I say, Pate! the Lord's no deaf!" but I will juist go on to say that we spent a very happy nicht of it in the Cross Keys, William Purpletop telling us some wonderful stories about his hunting, that were worthy of the imagination of Robin Cummell himsel', and Hugh Cochrane, the weaver, repeating to us twa droll poems he had written', the ane being a description of a rocking when the barber was made fou', and his garret explored by some curious freens, and the other the petition of ane Dr Twang of Kilwinning Steeple, that was the auld crackit bell, to Hugh, the Earl of Eglinton. But Robin Rory, the carrier, who was noo a very auld man, cappit the thing with the toast, "Gowd, guid yuill, and rowth o' freens!" and in saying some very kindly things of me, Robin wound up with the quotation, which he

gied with a sly twinkle of fun in his e'e that sealed my pardon of the thing on the spot,

“ Though his pheesick sometimes fails,
His pleasant humour aye prevails.”

But Robin's deid and awa noo too, and mony mae of them forbye him, who were crouse and canty then, so that I come back in sorrow to whaur I began. I am an auld man, and in the course of nature havena lang to leeve, but I am laith to let them awa,—the auld freens of the happy langsyne; so I thocht I would write doon a few of my recollections, and leeve owre again for a wee the scenes and remembrances of

“ Youth's blest lapse of summer time.”

When Leezie has gane to her bed, and I'm tired of the ggem at the dambrods with Willie, I tak the pipe and draw my cheyre to the fire, smiling or sighing to mysel' at the scenes of the past floating bye amang the reek.

And when I hear the mooing of the kye in the gloaming, while the sound of the sax o'clock bell is floating owre from the Bankheid and mixing bonnily with the murmur of the mill-dam, I am awa back again with

John Paiks, gathering gowans and gelly-flowers in the Pyet Holm, howking ear'nits in Grey Pate's planting, or dooking and diving in the S'nacre Mill-Dam.

Dovering for a meenont, I can see my grandfaither toasting his cheese at the fire, and auld Auntie Lily taking the wee pat aff the swee, while she tells me to steek the trance door and sit doon, no' to be caurry-haun't, and no' to be a perfect Rab Ha', but to eat composèdly, and forget for a wee about John Paiks and the bools if I dinna want to choke.

I hae been consoled, as I expected, in the writing oot of thae bit notes, and though I dinna think that ony ane else will ever be fashed to waul through them but mysel', my write being noo very crabbit and ill to spell, yet I like to wuffle owre the leaves and con them to mysel', as I cast my mental e'e awa back owre the delicious, though whyles, alas! dowie memories, of the dear auld days of langsyne.

BOOK II.

WHICH CONTAINS

JENNY WHALBERT'S
CRACKS.

BOOK II.

JENNY WHALBERT'S
CRACKS.

THE EDITOR'S APOLOGY.

AT various places throughout his memoirs, and notably in the sixteenth chapter, the doctor makes reference to the droll cracks of Jenny Whalbert, an old woman with whom he seems to have spent much of his early time, and in that chapter we are promised a rehearsal of these dialogues "as a kind of addendum or forbye" to his book. What was our grief therefore, on perusing the yellow leaflets to the very end, to find that the latter part of the MSS. was ruined by mildew as well as by the mere age of it, and that past all redemption. Indeed, it has been with no small amount of difficulty that we

have managed to decipher the two or three preceding chapters and several others which will follow the present book, while of Jenny Whalbert's cracks we could only make out a word and a sentence here and there. The little, however, that we could read was sufficient to give us some inkling and notion of her character and style, and also to convince us that the encomiums passed upon the latter by the doctor were nothing but just. Entering into the spirit of his undertaking therefore, as we had done already in the editing of his "Recollections," we formed the resolution of trying to restore some semblance of these cracks, and handing them down to a posterity that we trust will be grateful. It will be evident, however, that with such fragmentary materials and obscure hints at our command, the task was no easy one, and quite hopeless to carry out in the fulness of its original intention or perfection, an imitation even being a very difficult affair. We have judged it expedient, therefore, to post-date in a few particulars, and have taken for our sampler, of which Jenny was the inimitable prototype, a curious old body of our own acquaintance

who used to tell us stories about Burns, and many an old world tradition and anecdote of her own young days, which could not be long after the times of the doctor. These she would recount to us at broken intervals as she went about her house turns, and we remember that we behaved exactly as the doctor tells us that he did himself, in pretending to be busy with our school sums and exercises, while in reality we were jotting down her quaint remarks.

Burns and the Doctor were of course contemporaries, while the Burke and Hare horrors did not come to light till many years after these "Recollections" were penned. The sagacious reader therefore will know how to apportion the authorship of the various parts of the following sketches.

With these few remarks by way of a preface, which, however, we are painfully aware must be as much inferior to what the old Doctor himself would have said, as our imperfect attempts to restore the *hiatus* in his book must be to the original articles themselves, we go on now with the *quasi* cracks of Jenny Whalbert.

CHAPTER I.

THE LASSES—A BURNS STORY—SHE ADMONISHES THE BIT LASSOCK.

“JOHN, is tat your lass awa bye t'e windock?”

“Ay! is she no a fizzer?”

“Sary sowl! sary gaste! aha! ha! ha! Man, I wudna gie a guid muckle rough red tatto for her. Tu's owre young,—baith Stair and you yet; see ye, there's nane o' ye twa needs a wife this ten 'ear. *Wife!* By the Geordie, a lade o' meal wad ser' 'ou better! Ay! clever ye, Jean, tou's ahin' wi' thy wark. Ay! *Wife!* ha! ha!”

“Ay! woman, and Burns courted your mother?”

“Ouay! she leeved wi' her auntie, ye ken, in Crosshouse, an' Robin Burns was juist in the next farm, Mossgiel, an' dod! the dyvour,—for he was naething but a dyvour, an' heronious tae, like you,—see ye, thocht

naething o' makin' a poem on the Lord's day! an' he cam aboot Crosshouse, ye ken, an' lay aboot 'e kitchen,—wudna byde awa,—an a' tae leuk at Martha, tat was my mother, ye ken. But, faith! she wad hae nocht tae dae wi'm, an' her auntie was *wil'* at Burns, an' lockit her but i' the spence whenever he cam aboot 'e hoose. Ay! an' when he wad 'a gotten her oot aboot 'e stackyaird or 'e barn, he wad say, 'I ken what tou's feared for, Martha, but I'll never write a poem on thee, lass!' The sary gaste, ye ken, gaed an' made poems on folk!—ay! he made ane on Mal Flanders, a companion o' my mother's. But, though he did mak a fule o' Mr Steen,—tat was 'e cauf', ye ken,—my mother would let naebody speak an ill word o' Robin Burns. Ouay! she would 'a said when we were a' pleain',—'Noo, weans, if ye be a' quate, I'll tell ye a story aboot Burns,' or maybe 'Claverhoose,' anither dyvour. Ouay! man, *she* was a great Burns woman. If she had been leevin', she could 'a crackit tae ye o' him. But she was a wee dotrified afore she dee'd, ye ken, and Stair there, that was juist a bit wean, would lead her ony place. Ouay!

an' Uncle Davie, man, was *Burns-daft*, juist like yoursel', an' could 'a crackit ye blin' aboot him, even on 'e Sabbath-day! Dod! tat was what I was *mad* at him for, but he's deid an' awa in 'e mools noo tae. Ouay! my mother had a twullsome family. Ay! ay! Clever ye, lassie," etc.

CHAPTER II.

THE FLEAS—MRS WATT'S DOMESTIC TROUBLES.

“DOD! John, are ye there 'is mornin' *else*? What made Stair an' you byde oot sae late for on 'e Sabbath-nicht? I wearied desp'rately.”

“Awa seein' the lassies.”

“Lassies!!! Sary gaste! Sary sowl! etc. Man, an' ye had brocht me a wee bit auld cheese frae Eglinton. See ye, it's 'e gran'est thing, they say, as can be for fleas, an' I'm uncolies fashed wi' 'em, ever sin tat nasty 'Clyde' cam about 'e hoose. Dod! I fin' ane creepin' up my line e'eno! Come an' catch't Jean, an' I'll maybe gie ye a fairin'. In t'e nicht time, when they creep up my legs an' owre my body, I whyles say 'Sshoo! g'wa' owre tae him, I don't want ye ava!' Man, did ye hear 'at Mrs Watt's cauf had tingg't itsel', tat's brustit t'sel o' t's, ye ken, eatin clover?”

“ No.”

“ Ay! on 'e Sabbath-night, I saw't mysel'! See ye, Mrs Watt has a sore time o't, wi' her beasts an' tat nasty, clatty servant o' hers rinnin' athort wi' lads! Na! t'e clatty, nasty gaste! it'll row, see ye, wi' lads amang folks' corn an' spile't. Dod! I wad be *mad* at 'at!”



CHAPTER III.

A HINT TO THE BIT LASSOCK—MARCHLAN JOCK—HER GRANNY.

“MAN, it’s awfu’ kin’ o’ meigh an’ warm-wise! Ay! this day’ll dook doon vera sune. Man, I was juist considerin’ the day on some stories my mother wad ’a tell’t us on a simmer nicht, juist sic anither as this, but I’ll boo my hough a meenont and tell ye o’ *her*. Ye ken she was alooded to be a wonnerfu’ braw woman, the mair she never had a wean like hersel’, an’ my granny never liked her,—said she was ‘*changed*.’ Weel, see ye, she was that ill tae her that my mother ran awa when she was juist a bit lassock tae her gran’faither’s, twa mile oot o’ Beith, an’ bade there twa days in hidin’ (clever ye, lassock, an’ no staun an’ gape there in my face like a muckle saft-veal!) Weel, John, what I was gaun to tell ye. *Marchlan’ Jock*,—ye’ll maybe hae heard tell

o' him, for he was juist the deevil's own sorrow,—but I'll tell ye about him afterhin' ; Marchlan' Jock, juist an uncle o' my mother's, took her up ahint 'im on 'e horse ae mornin', an' rade awa wi' her tae Crosshoose, about a mile oot o' Kilmarnock, an' she was brocht up there wi' Mrs Spiers' ain dochter, an' she never saw her mother again till she was woman-big, when she gaed up tae Beith tae sit a nicht wi' her when she had the typhus fever, an' was thocht a deein'. Dod ! she was a terr'le body my granny ; when my mother ran awa she wasna a bit concerned, but said, ' H'm ! the limmer, she's weel awa an' she byde, her absence 'll be guid company, an' her backside a cordial ! '

“ Weel, see ye, what did the body dae, but in t'e nicht-time, when my mother was noddin' an' sleepin' at the chimle-lug, wearied workin' a' day, ye ken, my granny gruppit by the chimle-en' an' drew hersel' an' 'e chair intae the fireside till she got a haud o' the tangs, an' took them alang my mother's cuits till the bluid sprang to the laft ! She was angry at e' cuits ye ken, thocht they werena like her ain. I never saw her but ance, an' she made

me walk up and doon fornent her on the flure.

“ ‘Ay!’ she said, ‘tou’s cuited like the mother o’ thee!’

“ We were baith a wee thick about e’ cuits ye ken.

“ But I was gaun tae tell ye about ‘Marchlan Jock.’ When Davie an’ me were bydin’ wi’ Mrs Harvie in ‘the Ba’gray,’ we were continually workin’ tricks on him, ye ken, for he wrocht us most awfully, the mair we were but weans, no passin’ fifteen or saxteen at ‘e ootside. Ay! he wad ‘a stealed oor claes when we were in dookin’ thegither, for Davie an’ me were juist onseparable; mony a time it was remarkit, we were born in ae oor, bookit in ae oor, cried in ae oor, and married in ae oor, an’ as sure’s death I thocht we wad ‘a dee’d in ae oor, but na! ye see we didna. See ye, there never was a lick that callan’ got at the schule or frae Mrs Harvie,—for he was aye in mi’chief, juist like Stair there an’ you, ye dyvours!—but it hurt me far mair ‘n it hurt him. But, onyway, that wasna what I was gaun tae say. What was I speakin’ o’? Dod! I’m ‘e forgettullest bein’

in 'is worl'! Ay! man, ' *Marchlan Jock*, I've got it noo. Marchlan Jock an' Davie, him an' him differed continually, they wad a' put saut an' sute in ain anither's mooths when they were sleepin', till they hoastit an' beighed tremendeously, or Davie wad pit pooter into Jock's pipe, ye ken. Weel, there was ae day that Jock stealed oor claes, as usual, when we were in dookin', an' aff an' up the parks wi them tae the Ba'gray, an' cuist them in the middle o' the flure. An' ye ken we juist had tae slink hame at 'e dyke-backs the best way we could; but were bent on workin' him some desperate trick. Weel, man, what think ye we did? Mind ye it was an' awfu' like trick, an' ane we could been ta'en amen's o' : for we took an' cleaned 'e preen-cod o' every needle and preen 'at was in o't, an' stappit 'em a' in 'e cushion he sat on o'. Dod! we could been sair pinished for't! Weel, in cam Jock, wearied, ye ken, as usual at nicht, for he was aye rinnin' athort, an' if he wasna poachin', he was after hizzies; in he comes, wearied, an' claps doon on the chair wi' a great *sadd*! But I'll (ha! ha! ha!) I'll caition ye for tip-pence, he raise again quicker 'n he sat doon!

An' then, ye ken, he lap up in a raptur' and swure he wad fell us, but we were fled, ye ken, lyin' quakin' on ane anither's bosoms in a toom bysse in the byre, an' a' covered owre wi' strae. Od! but we were the trickiest gastes as could be, as daft as a yett on a win'y day, an' ye nicht as weel tried to herd a basket fu' o' clocks.

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER BURNS STORY—A DISSERTATION ON BEAUTY.

“MAN, John, I whyles hear Stair an’ you crackin’ about Burns, but I could tell ye a bit story o’ him. When my mother was bydin’ at Crosshouse, Burns was unco fond tae mak her a lass o’ his, but her auntie wad let her hae nocht tae dae w’m. Weel, my mother was sent to the Shuin-schule, in Kilmarnock. An’ langsyne it was the fashion (I never hear’t spoken o’ noo ava,—by! little odds!) it was the fashion for lads tae tak their lasses intae the public hoose on the Sabbath-day, at twull-oors, tae get a bake an’ a hue o’ porter, or like o’ tat ye ken, an’ that was ca’d ‘*yuillin*.’ Weel, Burns took my mother in ae day like the lave, an’ some gentleman,—I canna tell ye his name noo, though I’m sure I’ve heard it fifty times,—

met Burns next day an' said t'm, Man, Rab, whatna braw hizzie was yon t'ou was yuillin' yesterday? She's pentit, yon ane, for a guinea!"

" 'Done!' says Burns,—for ten tae ane he had preed her gab mony a time,—he would do't fast eneuch. 'Done!' he says, 'an' we'll juist sen' for her and see.'

"So they did fetch her oot o' the schule into the public hoose,—by! I wudna gaen the length o' my wee tae,—an' Burns cried for sape an' warm water, tell't her what the bet was about, an' juist asked her wash her face fornent them. She did it, but, man, the red wudna wash oot ava, an' so Burns won his guinea.

"But, Stair, ye'll hae tae go and sort your horse noo, an' we'll mak for oor beds,—its gaun tae twull oors at e'en?"

Stair. "Ay! ay! time eneuch yet. Man, John, beauty's a kittle thing."

"Sary mouth! what dae you ken about beauty?"

'Beauty's naething but skin deep.'

That's a rhyme I've heard my mother come owre:—

‘Beauty’s naething but skin deep,
Leads mony a young thing aff its feet,
An’ aye an’ oh ! when ye come tae know,
Beauty’s nothing but a show !’

Ay ! noo, Stair, clever ye an’ we’ll mak for
oor beds.”

CHAPTER V.

DOCTOR GIBSON O' BEITH.

“ Alas ! that man should ever be
Wedded to some misery,
Some pang, some tale of woe ! ”

“ THIS is a cauld ane, guidwife ! ”

“ Ay. Nothing new ? ”

“ No.”

“ No sae muckle's ae auld wife dingin' owre anither ? Man, I wish this be na gaun 'ae be a wat day, an' Tammie awa tae Arran, after thae nasty beasts. Min' ye, I was geyan thochtéd 'estreen, when I heard the win' risin' the way it did ; I never boo'd an e'e. But a' the ill thochts come in my heid, when Stair and him's awa frae hame.”

“ Oh ! there's nae fears o' them.”

“ Think ye ? Man, I don't know. I wish they were hame. Skay ! ‘ Clyde, ’ gae oot o' my gate. There Doctor Craig awa bye,—

he's a freck aul' body at his age. Man, I'll sit doon a wee an' tell ye a bit story o' Doctor Gibson o' Beith. He was tae been married to my mother's twin sister Mary, ye ken, an' they were cried an' a' thegither, an' behold! what was tae been their marriage day, was her funeral day! She had been at Glesco, buying the brows, an' cam hame wearied, an' said tae her mother she was sick, an' thocht she was gaun tae spue, and wad she bring her a baishin. Weel, see ye, she spued the fu' o't o' lappered bluid! Doctor Gibson was sent for of coorse, but he juist shook his heid whenever he saw her, an' never spak a word. Weel, she dee'd, an' he was aye kin' o' melancholious after that, an', ae day, he took his gun an' said he would go to the muirs a wee, an' he never cam back. Some o' the neebors saw his dog next day, waunerin' oot an' in frae the road tae the moss, but they never took thocht, ye ken, but it was a waunered dog, till at last the hue and cry got up, and then they followed it till it led them a lang gate awa into the moss, an' there they got him lyin',—wi' his joogler vein cut! someway about 'e neck,—I canna

tell ye. Man, he was juist a real nice, extraordinar', forbye chiel! Ay! man, a fine lown, canny, douce fallow!

“But, I'll go an' pit a bit peat on the fire, for t'is is *juist* a caul' ane!”

CHAPTER VI.

THE KENSPECKLE MARK OF A GUID WIFE—
THE MAN IN D'RY PARISH—MRS GAUT
O' THE MONCUR.

“Clatty, sary, useless gaste !
Ca' ye that fair-day rantin' ?
Ye'd raither hae some toon's bred sumph
To gang wi' you gallantin' !”

“MAN, John, I'll boo my hough a meenont
an' hear your sough on't this mornin' !
Nothing new ?”

“No.”

“Man, its dreedfu' wat ; ay ! it's fa'in'
e'eno' juist like saugh wauns. Ay ! man,
I won'er what made Stair byde oot sae late
for 'estreen ? The sary useless gaste wudna
tell *me* whaur he was, but *ye'll* ken no doot.
Ouay, man, 'oo' buyers ken 'oo' sellers. But
I'll lay ye a poun' he was juist at Maggie
Smith's, noo. But I'll hear frae Mrs Watt,

they're unco thick, ye ken! Man, John, leuk wha's that awa bye te windock, for I haenae on my seein' specks the day."

"That's Miss M—— an' ane of the N——'s, dressed to death as usual."

"Ouay, man! stiff wi' pride, an' dirt! Won'erfu' fine leddies, ye ken. Man, when ye tak a wife, see an' waul for a *guid* ane, ane 'at can wash a sark tae the back o' thee, an' no sit an' play the piany a' day like thae buggich! Weel, see ye, in my young days folk werena hauf sae parteeklar what they put on. There was a body leaved in D'ry parish ance put on marrowless stockins ae day tae the kirk, an' like the rest o' folk langsyne, he wore knee-breeks, ye ken, an' it was perfectly weel seen that the stockin's werena neebors.

"'Guidsaffs! John,' quo the guidwife, 'tou's surely no gaun tae the kirk with marrowless stockin's on?'

"'Ah!' quo he, 'if ony ane meets me rinnin' for his life, an' wi' the fear o' death on him, he'll ne'er leuk tae 'm'. But Miss M——, ye ken, wad juist lift her hauns at 'at and say, 'Oh! shockin''. I wadna gie a

guid muckle rough red tatto for *an acre* o' her sort !'

“Man, there was a body leaved in Moncur langsyne ca'd Gaut, auld Gaut o' the Moncur; I kent him fine. He ance took up a bet he wad shear an acre in a day, an' hun'ers gaed tae see 'im. Weel, he did it. Min' ye it wasna ill shearin' *that*, I wad say. Dod! aul' Gaut's wife was wan o' the greatest ticklers as could be. Ouay! the bigger the rant, the better the fun wi' her, ye ken. She gaed clean gyte, an' lap up an' cursed an' swore dreedfully, they said, if ony o' the dochters cam hame frae a fair or a tryst wi' their goons onriven. Ouay! she was a terr'le ranter Mrs Gaut. An' the dochters werena far behint her,—fine gawcie muckle hizzies,—ye wadna missed ane o' them in 'e bed an' cotchan a flea!”

CHAPTER VII.

AULD DICKIE O' T'E GIRTLE.

“MAN, John, there was ance a body leaved in D'ry parish,—an' this is a true story, for I've heard 'm tell't mysel', oh! fifty 'ear sin' feckly, juist,—auld Dickie o' t'e Girtle, t'at's a farm twa mile abune 'e Sweeshton, ye ken, an' he was a little behin' wi' the rent. Weel, he sees twa beagles comin' up the park ae day tae sesquaster his beasts an' a his gear, ye ken, an' there was naebody in the hoose but himsel'. *Weel*, ye'll no guess what the clatty body did to get quat o' them? He steekit and barred every door an' windock in the hoose, an' stude ahint the door till the beagles cam up. Then he took a sharp knife, an' after lettin' them hammer awa at e' door for a wee, he maks his voice juist like a bit wean's, an says, 'Pit a fingel in a wee hole; faedal's no' in.' So at last ane o' the bodies,

juist to please the bit wean, ye ken, as *he* thought, did put his finger in, an', Lod! wi' that aul' Dickie gruppit it firm an' whate it aff wi' his knife! 'Pit in aniddle,' quo he, but I'll caition ye for tippence, he put in nae mae after 'at! Ha! ha! ha! he was a wil' body!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WITCHES O' AUCHENMADE.

“ Quhat guid was that, ye ill womyne ?

Quhat guid was that to thee ?

Ye wald better haif been in yer bed at hame,

Wi' yer deire littel bairnis and me.”

Hogg's "Witch of Fife."

“ Hoo ! John, ye're there ! I was oot helpin' Stair tae ca' oot his twa stirks,—he's gaun tae tak t'em tae Auchenmade, ye ken. Man, it's awfu' kin' o warm an' glorgy-wise. Dod ! I'll go an' see what the marc'ry says till't the day. Weel, see ye, it's gaun back ! Dod ! I was *thinkin'* we were gaun tae hae rain, for the craws were rippitin' this mornin' dreedfully. I wish it benae thunner tae, an' then it'll maybe soor the milk,—that's what *I* leuk till. But we'll maybe hae better weather after this,—it's the langest day noo. Ay !

“ Barchan's day brisk,

The langest day an' the shortest nicht !”

Man, that marc'ry's a strange thing,—it tells juist as correck, see ye, as it kent it had happened. It's something kittle, I don't un'erstaun't. Langsyne, folk wad 'a ca'd it witchcraft. Man!—but fetch in twa peats, Maggie, an' I'll sit doon a wee, for I'm juist forfochten noo in daein' the least haet,—man, there was ance an aul' witch in Auchenmade, —aul' Nanny Polique, tat was An'rock Boyd's mother, ye ken; but, tew! what need I tell thee she was An'rock Boyd's mother for? they were baith deid lang or ye were born. But, onyway, folk said she ranted wi' the witches, for there were mae o' them aboot the kintra-side forbye her, an' 'oo' buyers ken 'oo' sellers, ye ken. They ranted, they said, a' the blin' oors o' the nicht, an' whenever the cock crew, swith! Nanny was back in the bed o' her, lyin' sweatin' an' pechin' beside the guidman! An' onybody she took an ill will at,—dod! she wrocht them dreedfully, they said,—cuist glamour on their kye, an' spile't their milk 'at it gied nae butter, though they kirned an' kirned at it for a week. Weel, she took a doon-head at Merryhigen, an' cuist glamour on *his* kye,—aughteen guid

milk kye,—see ye, she should been brunt, the auld limb o' the sorrow! But wan drap o' white milk they wad not yield the whole aughteen, an' the guidwife cam owre tae Mrs Smith, tat was Dauvit's first wife, ye ken, an' tell't her about it. Weel, Mrs Smith gaed owre wi' her, an' they took an' steekit up every door and windock in the hoose, an' every hole an' corner tae keep her oot, ye ken, for she wad 'a torn 'em, they said, if she could gotten in. Then they bled the kye, an' set the bluid on the fire tae bile in a muckle pat. Weel, see ye, I never kent Mrs Smith tell a lee in my life, an' she *declared* that aul' Nanny cam rinnin' tae the windock, an' cried through a nail-hole they had missed, sayin', for peety's sake, tae tak aff that pat quick, for her heart's bluid was bilin'! Ouay! ance in a day, man, I could a' tell't ye a hun'er stories about Nanny, for I sat for oors hearkenin' tae Mrs Smith tellin' them,—a bilchy bit lassock, ye ken, juist like that thing there,—sittin' glowerin' up in her face like a guck hearkenin' tae thunner. Dod! I won'er in e' thrangetty when Stair gaed awa whaur in a' te God's worl' I laid my specks.

Leuk for t'em, Maggie, an' John 'll maybe tak ye for his third wife yet,—wha kens, maybe his second. Ha! ha! ha! John, quo ye, 'tat'll juist be, as the lad said, as it fa's oot!'"

Maggie. "They're on your nose!"

"Ha! ha! ha! Woman, you're richt. Dod! I'm wan o' the forgettullest bein's 'at can be. I wad forget I was born, I think, if it wasnae for 'e soon o' the worl'!"

CHAPTER IX.

WASTERS—LANG WULL MAIR AND FIRE-JAKE
JACK O' THE GOWKHA'.

“Noo Leezock she was stoot an' strang,
An' Leezock's breath was lood an' lang.”

“MAN, John, is t'at you? T'is nicht's a wee slevery. Nothing new?”

“No.”

“Steek the trance door, Maggie, an' pit on a bit peat, for it's as black as twull ootbye already. Maggie's strained her cuit, man, playin' the daft ane wi' lang Wull Mair, at the dancin'-schule 'estreen. Man, did ye hear what Wull said, at the Eglinton ball? ‘Weel,’ quo Wull, when a' the fine leddies were gaun doon tae their supper, ‘if they be a' guid in with the lace, it's less odds!’ No' that taivert for Wull, *that* I wad say. But, man, I saw 'm gae bye this mornin', the

dyvour, wi' his mooth unco dry, an' spittin shillin's, an' he had on an aul' black creeshy coat,—a loose couldna keepit the feet o't on't. Woman, I wad waul for a guid ane, no' a drucken, daidlin', guid-for naething whalp like him. But, tew! what need I tell thee *thy* craw's no white for? It's a' in taste,—some folk like parritch, an' some folk like puddocks! Man, John an' Maggie wad dae as Leezock Jack did, I wad say as Wull said, 'Less odds.' But I maun sit doon a meenont, an' tell ye that story. Langsyne, it was in everybody's mouth in hay-time an' hairst. Fire-Jake Jack o' the Gowkha', ye ken, was juist sic anither as Wull, juist something seemilar the same. Ouay! he wad be lyin' on the roadsides mony a time gin breakfast-time, an' then he wad gaen tae the schulemaister an' asked him tae skyle the schule tae him, juist tae hae a bit gell wi' the weans, he said, an' then he wad 'a gathered them a' roon 'm an' tell't them as mony lees as wad theek a kirk. But ance in a day he was a weel-faured chiel for a' that, an' Leezock kent brawlies she was nae great heart-break hersel',—awfu kin' o

tallowny-faced an' coorse-traited. Ouay! man, I never thocht onybody wad flit her tether in a hurry. But some folk are san' blin', an' ye see she wysed him on, till at last ae day Mrs Watt cam up tae oor dyke-en' tae tell me the news. 'Leezock's cried!' quo she.

" 'Woman!' quo I, *what* on o'?' 'Fire-Jake Jack o' the Gowkha,' quo she. 'Guid-saffs!' q' I, 'no possible! the muckle saft slink o' veal!'

" 'Weel,' quo Mrs Watt, 'may the moose never come oot o' the meal gernel wi' the tear in its ee!'

" 'A vera guid wish,' quo I, an' wi' that we pairted. Man, ye could tied the toon wi' a strae when they heard o't. Weel, gaun fit's aye gettin' something, if it *should* be a thorn in 't, an' it wasna lang till I heard a queer story, though I never moothed it to a leevin', but, lang or I was tired keepin't tae mysel', it was a' the crack o' the kintra side: Leezock, they said, thrashed him whenever she got him soople wi' the drink, and that was aften enough I's warrant. Man, he had nae need tae hae the schule skyled tae 'm tae rippit wi' noo,—he had gotten a schule-mistress o' his

ain, an' she was nane sweert tae use the taws either. Ay, they said, even when she was heavy o' fit,—an' I ken she had an aughtsome or a ninesome family,—she wad been seen maist ony nicht, at 'e dykebacks, juist as it was crossin' eleven,—gatherin' a gowpenfu' o' wauns, an' waitin' for Jack, lauchin' an' singin' awa tae hersel' a' the time pretty. Aha! ha! ha! man, I'll caition ye for a saxpence he swallowed his spittle an' swat a wee when he heard the soun' o' her voice. He wad be comin' daunerin' through the stackyard, ye ken, mair fashed wi' the breedth o' the road than the length o't, thrummin' awa tae himsel' like the sawin' o' buirds, for he could sing nane,—

‘ We're no' sae fou, we're no' that fou,'

or some ither daft sang maybe, when Leezock's word wad mak him maist swarf whaur he stude.

“ ‘ Juist na! Oh! ye ill-deedy cruban, I'll learn you to

‘ Sit boosin' at the nappy.' ”

It's something *nippy*, my man, that ye're mair in need o' the nicht, so you may juist be lowsin'!

“An’ then, when she got him in ’e hoose, they declared that she reishelled his bumpy weel till it gelled again like a flee-blister.

“Noo, Maggie, pit that swatch in your pootch, an’ tak it hame wi’ you, if ye *will* hae Wull. Ay! man, that’s an aul’-worl’ story noo. Fire-Jake Jack an’ Leezock’s baith deid this mony a year, but she saw him awa first; ay! an’ he wasna lang in ’e claith till she selt the farm.”

CHAPTER X.

A CHACK O' DINNER.

“WHAT taigled ye, Stair? I was lippenin' on ye to be hame for your dinner gin twull-oors! Man, John, want's a wersh meal. Ay! I'm juist as flat i' the fore as a farrow cat. Come awa man, an' hae a spunefu' o' tattoes wi' us. Clever ye, Maggie, an' dish t'em. Pook the tablecloot owre a wee to your side, Stair,—it's gotten a' runkled. Juist na! noo it's as soon's a beuk leaf. Ay! noo say awa tae yoursels, like guid callan's, an' fa' tae.

“Man I ance asked Dr Plook, when he was haein' a chack o' dinner wi' us, tae say the grace. Quo he, ‘Mrs Whalbert, I'll tell ye hoo aften *I* say a grace. When I get a new cheese, or a lade o' meal, or like o' t'at, ye ken, I juist rax owre't an' blether awa a wee for 't a', and if it be a bow,' quo he, ‘I say a

shorter ane.' But tew! he was aye a wil' heronious talkin' dyvour. Man, ye aye kent when he was fou',—he would keep the croon o' the causey, an' walk as straught as a rash, juist tae let ye see he could do't! But he didna leeve on deaf nits onyway,—ye'll mind o' him no doot,—a gutty wee chiel that gaed about the toon wi' knee-breeks on an' a black stick, an' wi' an' ill-faured dowg aye at the heels o' him.'

Stair. "Ouay! we mind him fine. Woman, do ye no ken that graceless meat maks fat folk?"

"Dod! ye ill deedy dyvour, I'll clash the chafts o' thee wi' a puddin'! Dinna scart a hole in your plate that way, lassock!—lea' juist a min'in' in't, for t'e cat, ye ken?"

Maggie. "I'm no scartin'."

"Dod! wad 'ou threep? There's nae gettin' the een o' thee sinnery in the mornin', an' thy mooth's never steekit but when the spoon does't. Ouay! thou's gleg eneuch when t'ou can galrevitch. Clever ye, an' get back to the wark o' thee. The big room wants reddin up yet, an' the boiler-hoose is a' lyin' reel rall,—I couldna steer my fit in't

when I was oot the noo for trash juist lyin' in deadthraw !”

“ Noo, John, oor cheese is on its hunkers, but you'll hae a preein' o't for a' that. Lord! that lassock has biled the tea till its like hay-broo, but never mind,

‘ Here's to you in water,
I wish it was in wine,
You'll drink to your true love,
An' I'll drink to mine !’

“ But I'll hae tae go an' see what that bardy bizzim's daein noo.”

Stair. “ Ay ! noo, John, what say ye to a smoke ?”

“ Humph ! smoke ! a thing like t'at at 'e sma' en' o' a pipe !”

CHAPTER XI.

THE LEDDY O' CLUMBEITH : A GHOST STORY.

“MAN, there Jock M'Cartney an' Whustlin' Wull on the rampauge the day again! See ye, I think Wull's the prettiest whustler ever cockit a lip. He gaed up through the Brig-en' gin four o'clock this mornin' whustlin' awa tae himsel' like a plantin' o' mavis. I won'er gin he can sing as weel.

“Man, ye've heard me speak o' Fire-Jake Jack o' the Gowkha'. *He* wasnae an ill singer in his young days. Ye wad trowed at times it was a woman. Weel, I'll tell ye a bit story man, o' a fricht that Davie an' me ance gat frae him an' aul' Thamson o' the Fleeland, *he* was anither troch. But, onyway, we had been bidden tae a rockin' at 'e Wulcat Holes, t'at's 'e Gowkha', ye ken, whaur Jack an' Leezock took up hoose lang afterhin'. Let me see,—this is 'e year o' God 'seeventy,—

weel, it maun be near haun fifty 'ear sin syne, for I was juist a bit lassock at the time, within a cat-lowp o' seventeen. I mind o't fine, Davie was burnin' tae gang, but I was a wee fleyed for the lang dark road. Hoosomever, he wysed me on, an' I tell ye we set oot an' crackit an' lauched awa as we gaed up the road tae keep our hearts haill. I mind it was in the back en' o' hairst, for the stuff was maist a' in, an' we spak o' startin' tae the neeps in a day or twa. In fac', when I think o't noo, it was juist a Hallowe'en. Weel, when we left the toon, it was a glowerin' nicht, the stars were skeenclin' up i' the lift juist for a' t'e worl' like wee wheels o' glory up i' the knock o' Eternity! When we gaed by the Mossculloch, ye could 'a coontit every tree awa owre in the Corsehill-Muir plantin', but by the time we had gotten tae the Bannoch an' awa by t'e Goldcraig, the mune gaed doon, and a' in a sudden it was as black's t'e mort-claith! Lod! but I was sweert tae gang up the auld cairt road tae the Wulcat Holes! They did say that there was wild cats in the plantin's, an' badgers tae, forbye whuttonrocks, an' etthers, an' siclike, but it was nane o' them

I was feared for,—man, it was the ghaist o' the Leddy o' Clumbeith! Langsyne, ye ken, it was said, that crossin' tae the Blair tae keep a tryst, she fell into an aul' coal heuch in ane o' the fields, horse an' a', and was kilt, an' some said the lad kilt her, an' flang her bonnie carcath doon the heuch, lowpin' after't himsel'. But, onyway, she was never seen leevin' again, an' they said she hauntit the auld road. Man alive! I had min' o't, an' there was a rug, ruggin' at my heart like the jowin' o' the ten'r bell! 'Tew!' quo Davie, 'there's aye some clock i' the broth! Come awa, woman,—steek your een an' tak my haun',—they would hae a fine lauch at us the morn if we turned noo.' See ye, it was sair against my wull, but I did tak his haun', an' we ventured up. But, I'll caition ye for tippence, we hadna gaen but half a mile till we rued it baith. The mune, ye ken, had warsled for a meenont through the cluds, an' I was juist sayin' tae Davie we had muckle need o't tae help us owre the humplocks o' glaur, when we heard what we thocht at first was the mooletin' an' greetin' o' a bairn i' the field, an' then it was like a woman's voice singin':—

‘O, happy is the bride that the sun shines on !
 O, mis’ry tae me through ev’ry comin’ year !
 O, happy is the corp that the rain rains on !
 But a weary weird to him that meets me here !

Man, I think I dwaumed wi’ fricht in Davie’s arms ! An’ he wasnae muckle better himsel’. The rung i’ the nieve o’ him waggled like a win’lestrae, an’ he tell’t me afterhin’ he hadna the pith left in him wad pu’d the heid aff a rotten herrin’, or a tailor aff a table ! Weel, we cooried doon at ’e dykeside, ye ken, an’ leukit through a bit slap intae the field, an’, as sure’s death, there was a leddy walkin’ doon the rig in the munelicht, as stent an’ as straught as a rash, an’ wi’ a silk goon on could stude the lane o’t wi’ flounces an’ gowd ! At least, ye ken, it glinted like ’at tae oor een. There was a man wi’ her, but he was walkin’ at the tither side o’ her, an’ we couldna weel see the face o’m, or what he was like. She was singin’ again :—

‘Lay your love lightly, lightly, lightly,
 Lay your love lightly on a young man,
 An’ if he deceive ye, it’ll no grieve ye,—
 Never lay all your love upon one !’

‘Humph !’ quo the man, ‘if t’at was what the Ledy o’ Clumbeith did, I’m no surprised

she wasnae a lang leever! But arenae Jen an Davie lang o' comin'?' quo he.

“‘Lord!’ quo Davie, ‘it’s aul’ Thamson an’ Fire-Jake Jack,—I ken their word noo baith!’ an’ wi’ that, he lowpit the dyke like a three year aul’, an’ at them wi’ his nieves an’ his stick, giein’ ’em twa raw at the same time. It was weel set i’ their haun’. He was nettled, ye ken, an’ nae won’er. By! I wad dune’t mysel’. Guidsafts! it was gran’ tae see her leddyship fleein’ owre the rigs like a judgement wi’ her coats kilted, as if the deil had been at the heels o’ her! But I’ll caition ye, Davie was deil eneuch for her that nicht. He didna lea’ her the likeness o’ a dowg! ‘I’ll learn you,’ quo he, wi’ aye the tither skelp at the doup o’ her, ‘what it is to scaur decent folk!’

“‘Lod! hae mercy, man, Davie,’ cried Jack, pechin’, ‘it’s me!’ But Davie ne’er fashed his heid, an’ juist flailed awa, till he ran him in wi’ a breenge amang the lasses at ‘e Gowkha’. Man, when they kent hoo Davie had coorted the Leddy o’ Clumbeith, I thocht they would rive themsel’s wi’ lauchin’! They hotched again, an’ the story was tell’t in toon an’ kintra, mony a day.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE BURKERS—DOCTOR HOWIE.

“MAN, John, I’ll boo my hough a meenont an’ leuk at ’e ferlies gaun by t’e windock. See ye, thae horses frae the sawmill are sair trauchled; the auld black ane gaed bye the noo wi’ a great heavy draucht, it could hardly waunice wi’t.

“Will ye quat pappin’ stanes at thae hens, sir, an’ come an’ herd this pat?”

Stair (sotto voce). “Lord! she’s forgotten there’s jeelie in’t!”

“Lod! there’s a bit flunkey body frae the castle, stottin’ along the Brig-en’ like a birsled pea; man, he’s gaun tae catch ’e worl’ by speed o’ fit that ane! An’ there auld Johnnie Wylie wi’ his fiddle in his oxter, hirplin awa up the gate tae some ball in the Mason’s Lodge. See ye, he’s no an ill kin’ o’ body

aul' Johnnie, ye get him aye juist the ae way, an' the auld wife they say's juist something seemilar the same. But I see ye're thrang at 'e beuks again.

"Man, did ye hear a terr'le rippit on the street about twa o'clock this mornin'? Seest'ou, I lay an' quakit for hauf an oor, an' when I heard a coach drivin' awa, I made sure it was either rubbers or the Burkers."

"Hoot! woman, there's nae Burkers noo."

"Dod! I dinna ken, I wad need a bit line for 't. Yuill-sellers shouldna be story tellers, ye ken, an' you young Collegianers in Glesco ken mair about it, I'm thinkin', than ye would let wut. Werenae baith Soople Sanny and daft Nanny Whalbert o' the Skirpy Hill missed the last simmer? An' though they did fin' ae corp doon about 'e Misk or Dochen's Lowp, an' anither in the auld heuch at e' Bartonholm, it never was *proved* that it was either the tane or the tither o' them. Noo, pit that in your pipe an' smoke it, my man! An' didna they lift Doctor Howie?"

“Ouay! but that was langsyne, ye ken. We don’t need tae dae that noo.” “But did you ken Doctor Howie?” “Ken *wha?* I knew him intimately. I kent ’m as weel’s I had gane doon through him like a dose o’ castor oil. An’ a fine chiel he was, man, an’ a guid doctor forbye, when ye could get him sober; but he turned his wee finger owre aften up, ye ken; Ouay! an’ at last the tae o’ m gaed up tae. An’ then the tinkler wife o’ m, she had ta’en up wi’ some play-actor body ’at cam aboot ’e Green wi’ the shows, ye ken,—an’ tae carry on the spree they selt the doctor’s corp tae the professors in Glesco. Man, I mind o’t fine, it was juist when the hue an’ cry got up aboot Burke an’ Hare, an’ they were watchin’ the kirkyairds every nicht wi’ booets an’ auld flint guns. Weel, my leddy had made aff wi’ her play-actor before the auld doctor was weel cauld, an’ whether something had been seen, or it was only jaloosed, I canna tell ye, but, amang ither graves, they opened Doctor Howie’s, an’ lo! an’ behold! the coffin was filled wi’ stanes! Man, the Kilwinning folk would ’a torn her if they could gotten at her! But, lang after ’at,

oh! a guid when 'ears, she was seen an' kent singin' on the streets wi' the squeef she had ta'en up wi', an' the bits o' callan's staned 'em baith oot o' the toon."

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

WHEN I laid bye the pen shortsyne, and steekit the book of my life, it was in the belief that with the Finis thereof my labours would be at an end. But such a curious affair is habit, and, be it good or bad, so kittle in its nature, that it is not so easy to drop it as many would suppose. And so I have found it to be in my own case. I gaed aboot like a hen on a het girdle, or an auld trogger who has missed his mark at a Bell's Day Fair, restless, uneasy, and wutting not what the maitter with me could be. The winter had been vera dreigh,—frost ilka nicht ringin' like a bell, and deep snaw owre the kintra that smooed the hirsels on the muirs, and leagured the folk for mony a day in the toons. And noo the spring time that I had lookit forrit to with such pleasure was weety

and cauld, and I durst not venture to the door. Willie has been so desperate thrang a' the winter, that it is but seldom,—only at meal times, and aften no' then,—that we get a waff of him ava. If they hae a wee plook on ane o' their chafts, they maun hae the doctor, an' but that he is young and yaul, he could not have stood the trauchlin' ava.

But I am prood to say, that Willie is noo in a topping way, and with a practice which I think bids fair to be a dreeping roast to him a' his days. When I see the birr at times with which he goes at the wark, I am obligated to smile to mysel', as I call to mind the prophetic words of Robin Cummell, when he was born,

“Gore! John,” quo he, as he leukit owre his specks, “he's a haill ane this!” But, as I was gaun to say, I was in a manner forced to return to the pen as my only playock and consolation. I canna read very lang noo, for my een get sair leukin' at the print, but I find that scarting a bit note noos an' t'ans doesna fatigue me to the same extent.

In casting about for a subject, I was reminded by a crack I had ae day with

Willie,—who, I may say, has much of the same antiquarian tastes that I had when I was young mysel', and can weave reasons forbye, and theories that I never dreamed of, anent the many mysteries of flood and field,— I was reminded, I say, of some of the all but forgotten legends and traditions with which Robin Cummell used to enchant my youthful ears. Though many, and indeed the great feck of them, I believe to be but the froth and imaginings of Robin's own fertile and romantic mind, yet have I the notion and idee that some of them may have a kennin' of truth at the bottom, and, whether or no, I am of the mind to set them doon, believing that they may do as weel as ocht else to while awa the taiglesome time. The stories of "Witch Bessie" and "The Laird of Linn, and Jock o' the Scales," as already told in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of my First Book, are doubtless true, and it may be, for onything that I ken of, some of the uncos I am now trying to recall may be surlies too. But, onyway, as I have said, conform to my plan, they are here set doon.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRAISE OF SOLITUDE—THE LEDDY IN THE MOSS.

THERE is nae pleasure to me noo, if it benae losing mysel' in some fine auld book of stories and sangs, like the charm of solitude. To dauner awa into the moss, far frae the carfuffle and idiotry o' a thochtless worl', to wade knee-deep amang the lang purple heather, while the lintie, raining music frae her nest, seems the spirit of childhood calling to me in sorrow owre the waste of the years, that is to me a happiness indeed. Or maybe streekit on my grufe below some rowan tree by the side of a fine auld m'unt of firs, while a burn gangs wimp-
lin' bye, crooning to me of langsyne and my youthful ploys,—that is to me as it were a ryping of the ribs and a bleezing red again of the spunks and the aizles of my youthful dreams. But, whaur is the wilderness in

which sorrow is lost, and the suffering of humanity unkent? There's no a nyeuck or a corner of the earth but is fatter for the deid.

I was muckle impressed wi' the truth of this ae day, when I took a walk by mysel' awa by the Auchentiber and Meg'swa's. I had gaen up by the S'nacremill and the Clumbeith, on the road to Bloak, and awa in through by the Muirfit and the Burrelholes. It was a fine morning in the hinder end of July, and the waff of the wild roses and honeysuckle cam in stoons of sweetness along the air. Awa owre in Eglinton and Montgreenan, I could see the craws and the pyets fleeing about the giant boles of the stately firs, while, behint me, Ailsa Craig and the peaks of Arran lay blue and clear in the western sea. Along the drowsy bent cam the drone of the bumbee toving to the air wi' its lade o' hinney, and the wheepling o' a whaup as it soved owre the heather in the still blue lift.

I had gotten bye the Clumbeith, and was wearin' on through the moss to Meg'swa's, when I forgathered on a great suddenty wi'

Pate Glunch, who was casting peats by himself. Pate was aye a still, dour man, steepit in the very spirit of the silent muirlands, but this morning I saw him rinnin to me when I was a mile awa, waving his arms like flails and vera raised an' fey-like. He cam up to me wi' a face like a dishcloth, and crying oot in terror, so that I instantly begood to waul my pooches for a lance, thinking he had either been stanged by an etther, or that he had gotten a gliff o' something, and had gaen bye himself.

“Come awa, man, doctor!” quo he, “Come awa an' see the bonnie deid leddy I have howkit oot o' the moss!”

“Hooly! Pate,” quo I, thinkin' that I nicht divert his thochts a wee, “is the leddy deid, quo ye? Did she lea' ony feck?”

“Na! na! doctor,” quo he, “I jeestin nane! come an' leuk for yoursel.”

Wi' that, he led me furrin to the moss-hag whaur he had been casting the peats, an' there, sure enough, lay the corp of as bonnie a leddy as I had ever seen. She was a young thing, no passin' aughteen or twenty at the maist, and so perfectly had her beauty

been embaumed in the moss that the roses mantling to her cheek, and the sweet smile playing round her lips, seemed ready to break into some kent and dear familiar words.

But alas! and alake! the mools that fyled her yellow hair told us of the many many years since sorrow and she had grown so weel acquaint, that at last she lay doon wi't in the grave!

When I gaed hame an' tell't this story to Willie, he was greatly ta'en wi't, and saw in't, he said, a tragedy of Montgreenan. But wha the leddy was, or why, and when she cam to lie there, are mysteries I think that would be hard to redd up. Maybe, however, this poem of Willie's, which he wrate about this time, is as near the mark as ocht else that is kent of:—

THE TRYST.

My fause luv set a tryst wi' me
 To meet me by the well,
 When the lark cam doon t's grassy hame
 And dark nicht kindly fell.

Oh! wae's me for that gloamin' hour
 And his cursed snaring art,
 Oh! wae's me for the grief that grows
 Wi' the babe beside my heart!

The simmer dews then fell like love,
Noo Lugton's rowin' deep,
And in its arms I and my babe
Will lay us doon and sleep!

I hae anither tryst to keep
Wi' ane wha ne'er brak faith,
In thy twa kindly-cruel arms,
Come fauld me close, O Death!

Cauld, cauld is the yellow flood!
'Tis hard, O earth, to part!
But caulder are *his* fause fause arms
And harder *his* fause heart!

CHAPTER III.

MONTGREENAN—THE LOST HOUSE OF ARDEER.

MONTGREENAN was aye ane of my favourite haunts. I can mind of the first time I was ben the green gloaming of its fir-tree shades gathering blackbyds wi' John Paiks, and crunching soor crabs and geans by the moss-stained Lugton. The fir-taps of Montgreenan were the biggest I ever saw, the blackbyds there were the best I ever pree'd, and the nests were surely the bonniest and the mossiest in the worl'. Mony an auld road did we ferret oot and fallow through the thickest of the woods, in the dim hope, and I think even belief, that it would lead us to some enchanted castle wa'. But the only wa's we found were ruins lang forgotten in the leafy mould of the forest, and the girth of the trees that grew in the very middle of the roads, spak of dim ages lang langsyne. I

mind of twa crumbling pillars like the sides of a great yett that stood amang the nettles and dockens of the wood, and which Robin Cummell said were as auld as the wee Pechs themsels, who biggit the Abbey by handin' the stanes frae ane to anither as they stude in a lang line frae Monkreddin to the toon. Robin used to tell that from under ane of their pillars, when he was a callan, the Laird of Montgreenan had howkit a patfu' o' siller, and, to show the great age of the treasure, he might mention that it was like nane of the coins he had ever seen, but was in bars of metal juist like stockin' wires.

But, tew! Robin was aye a terr'ble splute!

His stories of the Lost House of Ardeer and the Abbot's Revenge were, I think, the twa that took the greatest haud on me when I was a callan', and I never forgot them. I mind o' Robin tellin' them to my grand-faither, as it were but yestreen. I had been awa on the stravaig wi' John Paiks and Stair Whalbert, doon aboot the Snodgrass and the Misk, and cam hame in the gloamin', expectin' a guid gulderin', whatever mair, frae Auntie Lily, for bydin' sae late. Robin was takin'

his smoke at the fireside wi' my grandfaither, and after I had been duly catecheezed as to whaur I had been, and wha I had been wi', the crack gaed on, and I slippit quately to a corner wi' my brose.

It had come on a vera blusterous nicht, and there was sic a doondracht in the lum that the swurl of the reek made Robin hoast and beigh tremendeously.

“Man alive, Robin!” quo my grandfaither, “it's gaun to be a wild nicht; rype the ribs, Lily, an' we'll hae a bit cheese an' a hue o' toddy,” an' wi' that he brocht but the bottle and, turning up the heid o' the wee square table, sneckit it, and sat doon.

I could see by Robin's e'e, as my grandfaither mixed his first glass, that he was maskin' wi' ane of his wildest romances.

“Ay! man, Johnnie,” quo he, “an' you've been to the Misk? But ye didna fin' oot the Lost Hoose o' Ardeer, did ye?”

“Come awa, man, Robin,” quo my grandfaither, “an' lowse your wullet,—we maun hae that ane. Man, it's juist a prime nicht for an auld story o' witches an' ghaists!”

The bubbling cheese in the wee tin being



ready, and Auntie Lily having saved a scrap to set the mouse-trap wi', they drew their cheyres to the table and fell to.

“Weel,” quo Robin, in a wee, fa'in' into the dreamy and eerie style that he delighted in, when he had an auld story to tell,—

“Weel, aboot forty perks ayont the cot-hoose o' the Misk, if you were to delve deep enough in the saun', ye micht come on the chimbleys o' the Hoose o' Ardeer. It's a lang lang while sin' it was covered in ae nicht by the drift, as it were in a wreath of snaw. I can mind, when I was a callan', of seeing the roof of a doocot like a wreck abune the waves, and twa or three twigs of the aipple-trees in the yaird trying to blossom in the spring. But they're a' happit owre this mony a year like the silly sheep in a muirland storm. And yet, man, Johnnie, ance in a day, the Hoose of Ardeer was 'a goodlie tour,' wi' a flag that flaunted frae its walls and a ditch beside it, baith braid and deep. There was aye a dreary waste of sand for miles around, and it was said that, like the auld turrets in the toon, the keep of Ardeer was biggit by the wee Pechs handin'

stane by stane from ane to anither frae a lang gate awa. Indeed, it was I think the last, or ane of the last, keeps in the west kintra that were held by the Pechs. The hindmost Laird of Ardeer was certainly a vera wee droich o' a creatur himsel'. He was sheevil-shot, humphy-backit, reel-fitted, and gleeyed, and he had a bit nyaffin' voice in the heid o' him that was aye clippin' cloots wi' somebody. His wife was ane auld indytit witch of the finest champ, spinning wabs oot o' the saun' wi' her rock and wheel, an' haudin' fearfu' cracks, they said, wi' her hoolets an' cats. There was a son who, it was aye said, had been changed, for he was like neither the faither nor the mither o'm, a fine buirdly fallow wi' a nieve like a mason's mell, and a voice like a spate. He lo'ed the bonnie maid o' the Misk, and she lo'ed him. *She* had cheeks like the sea-pinkies by the water-side, and her breath was sweet as the wild thyme on the saun'y hills. Aften, as he halsit her in the parks by the Boag, or amang the lang heather of the Cranberry Moss, would he m'urn for the bad bluid between her faither and his, while she

answered him, smiling sweetly through her tears, that maybe their luvè would be leevin' in the years when the hate was deid.

“Auld Misk was a stieve rancle carle, wi' a terr'ble contempt for Ardeer, and a perfect hatred, no' unleavened wi' fear, for the auld witch his wife. She had tried her nine witch-knots on the bonnie maid o' the Misk, but the innocence of the sweet May was her perfect shield, and so the auld taid could think of naething better than to set her guidman on to Misk himsel', eggging him on against the body's better sense and fears. They forgathered ae day doon about Bartonholm or the Snodgrass, and the bardy body frae Ardeer saying something of a by-ordinar' kind to him,—Misk cruntit his croon wi' a sperthe, and the Leddy of Ardeer was a widow. Glunchin' an' gloomin' in the castle at hame, auld baudrons sat waiting the return of her lord.

‘Now her he-cat Charlie yaumered,
Now her she-cat Gizzy mourned.’

“Now she dreided some herschip in the byous weather to her auld guidman as he cam warplin' an' fanklin' owre the muirs

by himsel', and now, as she pictured him drinking wi' the carlins at Irvine, and sweert to come awa, she wished that the swats micht rive his kyte. Then she leuch till she was like to rive hersel', as she saw hersel' skelpin' the dowp o'm till it gelled again when he cam hame. But, skellyin' oot again into the coming nicht, her anger got the better o' her, and she wished it would blaw sic ane tempest as would soop the saun oot of the sea, and jawp the sea owre the hills. Wanrestfu' and troubled, she couldna sit still, so waunerin' oot into the mirk nicht, and the weetin' smirr that cam up from the sea, she met her son wi' the corp o' his faither lyin' before him on the horse. It was then that she gaed bye hersel' a' thegither, and cried on a' the deevils in her calendar to rain destruction on the worl'. It would seem too that they heard her, and answered in earnest, for the fiery levin clave the sky, and the thunner roared and bellowed like a wild beast abune the thud of the waves on the shore, while there cam a blast of wind from the sea that lifted stanes and saun', and drave them like feathers and stoor before a besom. It tirded the lead

from the tour ; it brak the windocks and smashed the doors ; it blew the fire through the hoose, which would have bleezed, but that it was instantly drookit wi' the saun', and it so raved and rampauged that it wreckit the House of Ardeer. And when at length the dim day brak, the maid o' the Misk, peerin' oot frae the lown beild o' her lowly cot, saw wi' dismay that the House of Ardeer, and a' that it held, was swallowed up for ever in the sand !”

“Guidsaffs, Robin !” quo my grandfaither,
“man, that bates a' !”

CHAPTER IV.

THE ABBOT'S REVENGE.

“HUTS!” quo Robin, “man, I’ll tell ye a greater unco than that. Dinna you ken that the sands of Ardeer have lappit up the bluid of leddies and gentles, as weel as swallowing the Piper’s Haugh, and the auld witch in her keep? Gore! I could tell you a fearsome story o’ the days o’ langsyne, the days when the capercailzie had his howff in Eglinton, and the auld Abbey was in a’ its glory!”

“Fine, man, Robin!” quo my grandfaither, as he flung a bakiefu’ o’ crittles on the fire, “Fine, man!” and he clew his elbock in gleeful anticipation of the story:—

“Awa back at the time I speak of,” quo Robin, “the Lord of Eglinton that was then had cuisten oot wi’ the Abbot of Kilwinning. It was his belief, and he spak o’t openly, that their miracles were naething but a when

havers, and the bluid which ran doon in their well was but the harrigals and the offal frae the fine fat deer o' the Leddyha'. In short they were bottomless leears and leeches, that herried him oot o' hoose and hame. His corruption was raised, and as he lookit at the fosity monks stechin wi' howtowdies and rumbledethumps, and at the Abbot himsel',—awfu' kin' o' bumfly, and like a chaff bed tied in the middle,—he naked his sword, an' swore he would thole't nae langer.

“‘The auld rabiawtor!’ quo he, as he rypit his siller spung for a plack,—‘my gear is traikit, there's a wadset on my lands, and my wine-casks are dung a' to staves. But shame fa' the gear and the blethrie o't,—I've been a fule owre lang, my faes may fecht me for the spuizie, but fause freens will hae their fairin' tae. Nor deer, nor sheep, nor ony beast that bites the gerse will ever gang frae Eglinton to reid their well again!’

“There were plenty to carry the news to auld Nigellus, the abbot. It was tootit owre a' the kintra-side in a gliff, and he gaed redwud when he heard o't, and vowed some dreidfu' vengeance on the house of Eglinton.

“Stottin’ up the gate like a haw from a callan’s gulshock scoot, he steekit himsel’ into his cell, and brooded lang and deep owre his plan of revenge. At length the plook of his spite cam to a head. The kintra was in a vera wild and unsettled condition. Sturdy gangrels, Egyptians, and ither lowse persons were rampaung and sorning, and every day, in Irvine, there was a hanging, a skurging, or a nailing of lugs at the Tron.

“Now the Countess of Eglinton gaed aften to Ardrossan to visit Murren Barclay, the baron’s dochter, and Nigellus, who kent the same, hired some ill-deedy dyvours frae Irvine to waylay her on the bent of Ardeer. They haurled her to a divoted bothy half buried in the sand, and howking hurriedly wi’ their hauns soon cam to an iron ring that was rivetted in a flag. They raised the stane and forced her to go doon. Ane o’ the spoliawtors stayed behind, and happing up the flag again, scoored awa owre the kintra.”

“Guidsake, Robin!” quo my grandfaither, “and what cam o’ the ledly? Peety me the day! but this is fearsome!”

“Bide a wee,” quo Robin, “till ye hear. The Earl thocht lang in the Castle till the Leddy would come hame. Restless and uneasy, he sat wufflin owre his papers and beuks, and listening to the eerie sough of the wind amang the plantin’s, and the dab dabbin’ o’ a tree-branch on the windock. It seemed like a message frae the wandering spirits o’ the nicht. The rain made a fistle fisslin’ amang the busses, as it were whisperin’ hairsely to him some nameless secret, and then cam doon wi’ an angry plump, roarin’ it louder to the ears that wouldna comprehend. The Earl thinking his leddy would surely never venture hame in sic a nicht, but would be bydin’ at Ardrossan till the storm blew bye, tried to settle doon to his books, but the table clamphered wi’ his papers, and the room a’ reel rall bore witness to his impatience and anxiety. At length, when the day brak, he could thole’t nae langer, and saddling his naig, he sallied oot to seek her. Lichtly he lowpit the stanks and the burns, and raither lauched at his fears in the braid light of day. Gaun wast of the Abbey on his road to Ardrossan, he halted a gliff at Saint Winning’s

Well to water his horse, but the beast seemed fey, for reestin' up on a suddenty, with a great snort, it plunged wildly away. Scoorin' on through between the Boag and the Misk, and bye the ruins of Ardeer, he soon arrived on the sea shore, and juist swerved in time to clear a dangerous quicksand. It was here that the first erles of his calamity met his horrified een, for there, stiff and cauld on the sand, and a' barked wi' his bluid, lay the leddy's page ! The treacherous tide had come up in the nicht and washed away the foot-prints that would have led him to the bothy. But though he saw't, and even searched it in his speechless and hopeless despair, there was naething there to tell him of his leddy's fate. What cam o' her was never really kent, though mony a wild story was whispered of her end. Riders by the sea-shore had seen white arms raxin' oot o' the quicksand, and heard wailing cries abune the din of the waves ; wanderers in Ardeer had met a leddy who grat, but vanished awa when they spak ; kimmers had heard wild skreighs frae the Abbey at midnight, but it was a' a speculation and a romance, and if their stories o' ghaists

an' siclike werena a' lees thegither, I can only say they were unco leesome like.

“ It was mony a lang year after the leddy was lost and the earl was deid that the mystery of her disappearance was solved. Their heirs leevd mair at peace wi' the Monks than had done their forbears, and the braid lands and possessions of the Abbey came at length into their hands.

“ When that rampageous auld spoliawtor, John Knox, eggit on the nowte and riff raff o' the kintra to 'ding doon the nests and the craws would flee awa', he thocht nae doot that the nests would be weel worth the herryin'. But, if sae, he gaed to the gaits' hoose to thig 'oo'. I have heard it said, indeed, that kists o' treasure lie buried yet in vowts far below the toon, but I am of the opinion, if you ask me, that the great feck of their gear was made over and convoyed to the Earls of Eglinton when it was seen beyond a doubt that the stramash was at hand. In their blind rage, when they found naething to reward their thievery, they wreckit and ramfoozled the quheir, they cowpit the high altar, and brunt the tapestried

arras. They stole the leads frae the roof and the golden caunlesticks frae the altar, but they forgot that the wa's themsels micht hae secrets o' their ain. And so it fell oot, that, years after the roofless monastery was gi'en owre to the tod and the skraighin' hoolet, it held in its grasp the skeleton of the murdered leddy.

“The last of the Monks, a dozened auld man, who lang survived the wreck of the Abbey, gied the first inkling and information on his death-bed of the fearfu' tragedy that had been played in his youth, and a ruckle of banes between the wa's of the ruin bore dreadfu' witness to the truth of the story.”

This, or something like this, was Robin's tale. But here I maun hooly a wee, and let Willie tell it again in the fantastic way he has now turned it out of the mould of his young imagination.

CHAPTER V.

HE calls it

EGLINTOUNE,

A TRAGEDY OF THE WEST COUNTRY.

No pen but rural lovers' on thy trees
Hath ever told thy praises, Eglintoune.
Sweet stream and bonnie brae, rest yet unsung.
Dear, dear thy mossy dales, thy woodland glades,
And wimpling burns to me, for by their brinks,
And in their shades, the sweetest pang that flies,
Like singing angel arrow through the soul,
There met me, barbed ; there, smiling, struck me first !
And shall it be, oh grand and gloomy woods,
That ye should vanish from the face of earth,
With none to dream the simplest song of praise
Or language to your lovers' ears, your sighs
And Druid croonings of your oaken boughs ?
What time my Philomela was unkind,
Thy croaking glades gave echoes to my thoughts,
Thy gloomy places shadowed forth my grief,
Thy open meads the moments when I hoped.
When sad October, cunning limner, came
And painted glories on thy greenwood leaves,
I read this ruin picture in their tints :—

I I.

SCENE—*Kilwinning Cathedral—The Abbot and Monks Feasting in the Judgment Hall after burning a Witch—Enter Page from Eglintoune.*

Abbot.

Come, little page, I welcome thee in wine !
 How doth thy master and his lady fair,
 Whom Holy Mother Mary ever wear
 Upon her careful bosom as a gem ?

Page and Monks.

Amen !

Page.

My lord is hunting o'er the sands
 Our good Saint Vinnen, heaven rest his soul !
 Cursed long ago with Garnock's churlish stream,
 Which, as he hung'ring came, withheld its fish.
 Across Ardyir's silent stony wastes,
 My lady ambleth, loving, by his side
 To hold sweet converse in the baron's keep
 With Marion, maiden of the midnight locks.
 The game is scarce and shy, and when my lord
 In wrath bethought him of the ancient cause,
 His anger leaped from him in unknown tongues,
 And calling me, who rode some paces off,
 "Go, boy," said he, "and tell the sleek-faced thieves
 In yonder princely pile of sin,
 That likewise as their 'saint' hath spoiled my sport,

His knavish sons shall wax no more
 So proud and fat upon my forest stags !
 By all the gods ! they live like very kings,
 While I, their menial, must doff my cap,
 As that old villain marches stately on,
 The incarnation of the seven sins !
 And say I know his 'miracles' a lie !
 His vaunted well is red, but 'tis with that
 His all-devouring mouth abhorred ! Mayhap
 A something nobler aids to stain its flow !”

Like the loud tempests struggling for a tongue,
 The furious Abbot sought for utterance,
 Which, at the last, when he had hardly found,
 Was dark and fiery as the storm of doom !
 As when the billows and the shrieking blasts
 Rise up and wreck their fury in the night
 On some lone ship and sink her with a crash,
 While the hoarse waves, imperious, pipe to death,—
 So down the aisles and melancholy crypt,
 And back from oriel, beam, and carven stone,
 His voice went hurtling to their frozen hearts,
 And thundered on the trembling page's ear,—
 “By good Saint Vinnen's ev'ry outraged bone,
 And all th' relics of our Holy Mother Church,
 By all the red-mouthed furies of the pit,
 When next the well runs blood, a giant woe
 Awaits thy spirit, O proud Eglintoune !”

III.

SCENE—*The Sands of Ardyirr—Evening of the same day—Lady Eglintoune returning from Ardrossan, attended by her Page.*

The moon came up behind a veil of clouds
 And swam, majestic, on the arch of heav'n,
 Like some sea-maiden from a mist of spray
 Trailing her long bright golden locks behind,—
 Then rose far o'er her dim and cloudy screen,
 As some pure heart that from all baser thoughts
 But love of good, which rises o'er all else,
 Resplendent swims beyond the smoke of sin,
 And, beauteous in its deeps of undimmed fire,
 Burns a white path to Heaven's sublimest steeps.

Lady.

O, Alexander, wert thou here !
 One splendid night like this one, long ago,
 Beneath the quivering of aspen trees,
 My soul went forth to meet you in a kiss !
 Far, far away, I see the watchful flame
 Of thy old lamp, so grimly quaint,—a skull !
 O grandest soul God ever chained in clay !
 Thy hours are thick with mystic wondrous thoughts
 And guesses at a half-seen holy truth,
 As you, dear woods, round our ancestral home
 Are dense with leaves and buds that crowd to heav'n
 To catch the moonlight stealing o'er the world !
 And yet there is within thy life a star
 That brightly burns as yon far lamp is clear,

Amid these darker woods,—the star of love !
 Only the eyes that loving look in thine,
 And see their image there, can know the sea
 That floods and flows within thy noble soul !

(She Sings.)

- “ ’Tis ane dreame o’ ye oldene dayes,
 Ye Aspin-Halle shakes wi’ myrthe,
 An’ ye gowden lamps are swingin’
 Owre ane feaste for noble byrthe.
- “ Anunder ye talle aspin trees,
 That quiured and syghed and rockt,
 Stude twa in ye flow’r tyme o’ youthe,
 W’ armes and heartes close lockt.
- “ He gied to ye mayden ane gemme
 And gat a fonde kisse in returne,
 And ye musicke o’ peace flowed through
 Their breists, lyke ane vympland burne !
- “ In schawe o’ ye bonnye greenwude,
 Ye knychte and ye ledy now lie,
 And birdis synge sweete owre ye turfe,
 Lyke ye spirites that never can die.
- “ O sweete is ye firste luvè o’ youthe,
 Sweete is ye deathe o’ ye brave,
 But sweeter when twa lovers sleepe,
 Is peace in ane peacefu’ grave !”

But, come, my little page, where art thou now ?
 Come forth ! Nay, hide no more, thy mistress calls !
 A crowd is on the fair moon's radiant face.
 Thus thoughts will sometimes sit upon my love's white
 brow,
 And ravel sadly with my rightful bliss.
 I ask what sadd'ning shadow loads his soul,
 But he only draws his fingers o'er his eyes
 And answers nought that I can understand.
 When wooed to speak, he wakes as from a dream,
 Mutters again in some strange unknown tongue,
 And then imprints a kiss upon my cheek.
 Why will the driving clouds aye come to mar
 The peaceful beauty of the placid moon ?
 I do not hear the sea ! I must have erred,
 And widely from the way ! What sound is that ?
 'Twas like the creak of our old iron gates !
 O heav'n ! I am alone in some strange place !
 My steed, be still ! Hark, some one comes this way.
 My Alexander ? No, 'tis not his form !

(She is dragged from her saddle by men in masks.)

I V.

*Eglintoune Castle—The same evening, earlier—The Earl
 Alexander, writing in his room, loq. :—*

Who loves not to behold the children of his brain,
 The better self he never knew till then,
 Stand clothed, Minerva-like, before his eyes ?

He feels that in him there may chance some germs
Deserving better than go down to death
And perish utterly with all the past ;
But I forget that there be human clods
That never felt the moist'ning dew of song !
I cannot understand the sordid souls
That grasp at harsh fact life and bind it down
By mathematic line and rule precise !
This is the calm hour when unseen spirits
Woo the worn heart into a dream of rest.
The twin lights of the day and night now blend
As to a holy hush of other worlds,
And as from thence, sweet sounds are floating in
From out the thicketful of singing throats.
These are the moments when remembrance comes
And beckons to us with his mast'ring hand.
Again, within the morning of my days,
When sweet love, like the resurrecting dawn,
Awoke the birds that in me sang as from
Some dim remembered ante-natal time,
I see my mother's smile and sad sweet face ;
Again I hear my father's laugh and song,
Ere yet his sorrows settled on his soul.
But I was aye a wayward dreaming child,
Haunted for ever by a fleeting face,
Whose ev'ry line was beauty, and whose lips,
So often as I slept, would kingdom mine.
How often, stealing from the banquet hall,
Would I, scarce knowing whom or what I sought,
Stray on through ferny brake and sunny glen
To reach the stream of lilies and harebells,

And dream again a kiss from those fair lips !
One day, I met my dream ! A little maid,
Of fairer face than all my speech might tell,
There found me murmuring in my sleep.
Seemed as a sunbeam o'er my senses came
And woke me from the night to happy day,—
Not with the start of one who fears a foe,
For big, blue, wondering, glorious eyes,
Th' abodes of bliss, sat tender on my own !
But quickly did their envious curtains hide
The sweet young soul that had looked out at me,
And something fair seemed blotted from the day.
As, in the south, the infant morn is lapped
In richest crimson fold of sunbeam's robe,
In smiling, wond'rous beauty was she swathed.
Already loved I madlier than life
Th' sweet familiar form I seemed to know,
And, straightway, to my pleading eyes, her thoughts,
In the marvellous rose and peachbloom tints,
That have no names upon the earth, went up,
And dyed a deeper beauty on her cheek !
The blush that is not guilt betrayed her heart !

Again I met her in my father's woods,
And longed to clasp her in my arms, and say,—
O, little maid, wilt make this heart thy home ?
Love rolled at length the silence from my tongue.
I pressed her trembling to my heart, until
Its leaping tune went quivering to her own :
Her answer was a kiss ! And, often now,
Within the twilight of that ferny wood,

We breathed our swelling hearts in songs of joy ;
 But I, intent to drink her mellow hymn,
 Would often pause to watch the music float
 From 'tween her roseate lips, like saintly soul
 That seeks once more to win its native skies !
 Was ever reverie of bliss like mine,
 Unless it were upon such lips themselves,
 To imprint the poem of a kiss ?
 As some happy island in the south'rn sea,
 O'er which, from groves of ever fragrant bloom,
 Th' exotic breath of palmy summer floats,
 And round whose purple strand the amorous flood
 Swells at the sunset in a sea of gold,—
 In all her wealth of beauty was she set,
 A gem upon my days ! In heart and form,
 The *soul* of beauty was within her stayed !
 She broke the blackness that had sealed me round,
 And read the glowing page of new born life.
 Thenceforward, through the dark leaves of my days
 The golden language of a priceless love
 Went splendouring, like a song of heav'n, down !

V.

Midnight—Earl, loq.

Why comes she not ? The moon has veiled her face,
 And the ever-restless winds now wail,
 And, 'mong the crannies of the old housetop,
 Seek a place to die. Hark ! is that the gate ?
 No, 'tis but an oak that groans out fragments
 Of its Druid lore to torturing winds.

To-night I cannot find the voice of peace
That erewhile spake in all my books.
I fain would see her loving face again ;
She must have ta'en her rest with Marion,
Till rosy dawn disperse the dripping clouds.
And yet I cannot rest ! What means it all ?
Outside, the dreary rain is pattering
Upon the panes and dripping from the eaves,
Sadly, mournfully, like a troubled spirit
That weeps for ever o'er its long lost home.
And th' mimic wind is down upon the woods
Pealing now storms of glory to the pines,
And weirdly wailing to the oaks its hymn,
Now crooning to the brook its ancient grief,
And scattering anon, with lavish hand,
The rainy chaff along the barren ways ;
O'er the treetops comes a whitening flush,
And, on the far horizon, streaks of gold
Hint, with the chirping birds, of coming day.
Heaven has wept its gloomy heart to peace,
And now is blue as my own darling's eyes,
Which were the dawn of all my joy ;
But I must sally forth and seek my steed
To bring the truant back. Hark ! a bugle-call !
And hoofs ! I hear them coming faster !

(Exit.)

VI.

*Saint Winning's Well—The Earl on his way to the
Sands of Ardyrr, loq. :—*

Ha ! my good horse, I have been selfish in my haste,
But now drink as thou wilt from this most "holy" well.
(*Horse starts back.*)

Earl.

Mother of God ! what is't I see ? Red blood ?
Ah ! now I recollect the villain's words !
Blood ! blood ! a dread of doom doth haunt my soul !
Away ! my poor quivering steed, away !

VII.

Tradition.

The grand old sea pealed his morning hymn
To a sandy surf-swathed shore.
A horseman spurred by th' weltering waves,
But heeded not ocean's roar.

Wilder the woe in that horseman's heart,
Quicker his blood's career,
Than the grief of the ever-groaning sea,
Than his charger's sudden rear !

'Tis the Earl of Eglintoune, distraught,
Seeking his winsome bride ;
Young Lady Marion rode with her
From Sanct-toune at eventide.

But they never reached Ardrossan's halls,
 And Baron De Berkley sent,
 At dawning of day, to Eglintoune,
 Two leagues o'er the broomy bent.

“Come saddle your steeds, we'll find out the jades,”
 Quoth the Earl in merry mood,—
 “I swear they're safe in Saint Vinnen's cell,
 A-mending the good saint's hood!”

Laughing, he leapt the stanks and the burns,
 Laughing, he entered “the Port,”
 But, long ere noon, affrighted, he sped
 By the waves, with horse at the snort!

The page that followed his lord alone
 Saw him leap in the shifting sands,
 And, outstretched, and rising to meet him,
 Two milky white arms and hands!

V I I I.

SCENE—*The Abbot's Death-Bed.*

TIME—*Twenty Years Later.*

ENTER—*Archibald, Earl of Eglintoune.*

Abbot.

My boy, 'tis well thou'rt come,—I cannot die
 Though mem'ry with a thousand poisoned shafts,
 In arms against me many a year,
 Doth menace now my very soul.
 The link may snap and let me down to doom,—
 For hope of absolution have I none,—

If I do narrative to thee my sin ;
 No, no, I do not rave, as you shall hear,
 My crime was great, and great must be the pain !

Earl.

Nay, good father, say not so, it grieves me,
 For well I know thou art a holy man,
 Whom great Heaven and all the saints must love !

Abbot (groaning).

My son, my son, it is not so ! But first,
 Among thy duskiest leaves of mem'ry,
 Hast ever seen a face divinely fair,
 And read a word called " Mother " ?

Earl.

Then it is
 Not *all* a dream ! I do remember eyes
 That oft would meet mine own in liquid love,
 And lovely lips and hands that I would kiss !
 Mayhap my mother's beauty haunts me thus ?
 Was she not fair ?

Abbot.

She had such beauty, boy,
 As might have robbed a wild beast of its rage,
 But I was pitiless as death.

Earl.

Father !

Abbot.

List ! I will tell thee till thy blood run cold,
And till thy steel run red with just revenge !
Boy ! thy father hated all my race !

Earl (starting up and drawing his sword).

Wretch !
And was it thy hand robbed me of her love ?

Abbot.

Fool ! fool ! be still ! my days are at an end !
Judge me and slay me when I've told my tale :—
Dawn was near, and, ghostly as the years to come,
The moonbeams stole through yonder pillared aisle ;
No sound was in the forest all around,
Save of an owl from yon fair Lady Firs,
That hooted thrice. Far off, I heard the waves
Fall, softly kissing, on the yellow sands,
And the great heart of nature throbbed at peace.
Brimful as the heavens then of moonlight,
And as the never-resting sea of song,
Was I of music. It did fill my soul
And tremble to my conscious finger ends,
But 'twas no echo of the peace around,
For wild as when the winds unfold their wings
And sweep with fury on their helpless prey,
A storm and thirst of vengeance tore my soul,
And gave it, lassoed, to the flames of hate !
I had foretold the well would run with blood,
And crimson dreams revisited my sleep.

These dreams would soon be hideous deeds !
Impatient as the culprit for his doom,
I paced, alone, the moonlit minster aisle.
At length, like muffled mem'ries from the grave,
Faint, far off sounds assailed my straining sense,
And I undid in haste the secret door.
Anon, the yawning earth gave up three forms,—
Two, maskèd men, and one, a lady fair
With wildly-wond'ring eyes and trembling limbs.
Her richly-broidered silken robe was torn,
And tears were on her marble cheek.
No word we spake. They laid her screaming wild
On yonder high and hallowed altar stone,
And I prepared me for the vengeance planned.
But now the finer reason for a space
Did wrestle in me for her sake, for she was fair,
Ay ! fairer than an opium eater's dream !
But I had sworn by great and dreadful names.
Come nearer, boy,—my sinking life doth fail !
I clutched it with a mad joy in my hand,—
The murd'rer's blade, the forged in hell !
A thrust ! a sob ! Mercy ! I die ! she—

Earl.

Rot, monster, from my sickening sight !
That hour a seraph child was born in heav'n,
And now, perdition, have at last thine own !

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST OF THE MONKS.

I CAN mind of anither day when Robin Cummell was takin' a chack o' dinner wi' us, that the crack fell on the auld time again, and my grandfaither having shown some curiosity aboot a previous remark of his anent the last of the Monks, Robin gied us some description of him :—

“ I have heard my faither tell,” quo Robin, “ that he could juist mind when he was a callan' of having seen him, but my grandfaither, who dee'd aboot wan, kent him brawlies, and in fact I jaloose they had mony a splore thegither.

“ They must have been a droll looking pair as they kleeekit up the causey, for my grandfaither was raither a wee man, and somewhat pookit in his person, while Melville

the Monk was a mountain o' flesh, wi' a back like the gavel of a hoose.

“ They were baith vera fond, as Melville ca'd it, of takin' an observation through a glass dimly, and aften, when they got fou', would he tell the most wonderfu' stories o' the langsyne glories of the Abbey, the great learning of the sants, their miracles, and their mysteries. Indeed, he whyles hinted darkly at secrets he might tell gin he had a mind, but if ony ane daured to ask him what secrets, he scowled like a tempest, nippit him up with a short answer, and steekit his lips. And it was only when he was deeing, as I have tell't you before, that he revealed the fate of the Countess.

“ But the chief learning that survived in him, and for which he was widely kent and weel liket, was the recollection of some prime reçates which he brocht from the Refectory, how to mak a bawbee bap into a fine cookey wi' carvey sweeties, how to mix a posset for a greening wife, how to cure the falling sickness wi' pills o' pouthered puddocks, how to use hykerie pykerie and rue, and mony mae cunning cures and devices that made

him a great favourite wi' a' the women folk o' the kintra side.

“ He was a man of a great jocosity in his cracks, and had some wonderful stories, as my grandfaither said, in the wullet of his memory. His conversation, indeed, in the *ultimus eekibus* of his cups, though aye stopping short of skulduddery itsel', was whyles, still and on, of a gey heich-kiltit kind. And then what a glittering maw! Naething cam wrang to *his* disgeester frae taties an' dab to a cogue fu' o' brose or the spaul o' a bubbly-jock. A water-stowpfu' o' yuill juist slockened his drooth.

“ He would neither mess nor mell wi' ony o' the new reformers, but daunered the kintra-side on the Sabbath days by himsel', wi' his lang cruik and his bare shaven pow. His mull being ayeweel plenished and his sp'euchan never toom, he was a welcome visitor at a' the farm toons owre Cunningham and Coil, and even into Carrick itsel', and mony a droll story he had to tell of his adventures when on thae expeditions.

“ Auld Cockenny was ane of his favourites, and he aften quoted him to my grandfaither

wi' a great goo. Takin' a brash o' godliness ance,—I think it would be aboot the time o' the Stewarton Sickness,—auld Cockenny took to the prayin' by himsel in the stackyaird and the parks. Weel, ae day Melville cam on him unawares at the back of a dyke, sayin', 'O Lord, I ken Thou can'st do everything; if it was Thy wull, I ken Thoo couldst ca' this toure dyke owre on me evénoo for my sins!' when wi' that, the dyke was instantly cowpit about his lugs! 'He lowpit up in great astonishment, and juist for hauf a meenont,' quo Melville, there was a syncope and solemn pause, and then Cockenny got his tongue,—'H'mph!' quo he, 'it's a queer thing a body canna say a thing in fun, but it's sure to be ta'en in deidly earnest!

“He took the Beuk of course nicht and morning, gathering a' the girzies and the men into the spence, 'but whyles,' Melville said, 'he raiter waunered in his discoorse,' as when ae morning he cast the tail of his e'e oot at the windock, and saw some pigs in the close rampaugin' amang the cabbages, and he added hurriedly to the words of Haly Writ,—'God! I believe thae's t'e damnedest swine

oot o' hell!' Or again, when he was sayin' the grace, and saw the cat through his fingers washin' her face wi' her paw, he stopped immediately, and flung his Stewarton bonnet at bawdrons wi' the indignant quastion, 'Daum ye! would ye break the weather in my vera face?'

"But the guidwife was mair than his match. Readin' to her ae nicht aboot Solomon and his hundred concubines, she fell soople in her cheyre.

"'Guidsaffs! thou impiddent latheron,' quo John, 'what's t'ou guffawin' an' lauchin' at God's word for?'

"'Weel, John,' quo she, 'I was juist thinkin' to mysel' t'ou wad mak a sary Solomon!'

"Melville would dee I think in or aboot the forties, and a strange thing took place at his death. My faither could juist recollect of the sough o't when he was young. Though mair than ninety years of age, Melville retained baith his great bouk of body, and his bitter hatred of the reformers. 'The great Mr James' could mak naething of him ava, and at the wa' gaun, the Monk gied him some droll advice:—'Keep your mind easy,' quo

he, 'and your boeels open if you would lang defy the doctors; and be guid to your belly, sir, be guid to your belly, it's your best freen! Noo,' quo he, 'I'll be struishlin' awa up bye, but, mind dinna be comin' owre ony idiotry an' blethers at *my* grave, if ye dinna want me to fa' sinnery amang your hauns!'

"But Mr James, ye ken, couldna think of losin' sic a grand occasion for the improvement of his hearers, and so he gied them 't like a tether for twa oors in the kirkyaird, crawin' awa like a bit midden cock owre the doonfall and end of this last of the papistical remnants.

"Now, whether it was that the wood o't was owre gizzened and frush, or that the wricht had got fou and botched it, I dinna ken, but certain it is that, in the midst of his discoorse, the coffin brustit wi' a great explosion, and nearly scomfished the folk as they fled for their lives doon the Kirkstyle!"

CHAPTER VII.

AND LAST.

BUT I think the back of the coorse weather's fairly broken at last, and though the drumlie Garnock is still rowin' frae bank to brae, yet the sun is blinking warm and bonnie owre the holms and the plantin's, and so I maun cry "A barley! a barley!" and go and enjoy it while I may. Alas! that the tether of our life is so short, and its sunny blinks so few and far between! But it's a braw worl' for a' that, and it's a desperate pity we hae to lea't at the last. My auld freens are a' wearin' awa noo year by year.

"Quhilk to consider is ane paine," and soon I maun follow mysel' whaur they lie thick and threefauld below the gowans in the auld kirkyaird. But when I too have fairly croynt awa, and utterly faded from the sight

of man, I would yet hope to leeve in my book for a wee while langer wi' my guid auld freens. And if ony ane should ever conçate that thae records are worth the printing ava, let him stick like rozet to the very words of the text, nor daur to mak or mell with the literal meaning thereof. Let him never forget that I would raither hae them brunt than libbet by the fleems of an ill-natur'd critic.

What value he may set on them I know not, but I will tell him a bit story before I gang awa :—

Auld Willim Hunter, the wheelwright in the Byres, always charged something for every little trifle he did. His common answer when asked his price for such small services, was, “ Well, a halfpenny is too little, and a penny is rather much, but we'll call it a penny.”

The laverock is singing owre the Leddyha' Park, and the yellow-yite is crying in the Corsehill Muir, the gelly-flowers are bloomin' by the water-side, and the beech-trees bursting into tender green and gold. A breeze comes laden wi' baum and the memories of the buried years, so I haenae time to byde,

but maun awa and plowter in the sun awee
mair.

“ Dum loquimur fugerit invida
Aetas.”

STEEK THE BOOK.



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