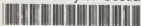


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MARTHA SPREULL



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MARTHA SPREULL

BEING CHAPTERS IN

THE LIFE OF A SINGLE WUMMAN

EDITED BY

ZACHARY FLEMING, WRITER

H. Johnston

WITH PREFACE BY THE AUTHORESS

ILLUSTRATED BY TWYM

New Edition.



GLASGOW
DAVID BRYCE & SON

1887

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PREFACE TO NEW EDITION.

BY THE AUTHORESS.

We've had things through-hands at hame about wha wis to write this preface for the New Edition. The publishers say that the extraordinary sale o' the first issue deserves some recognition, and Maister Fleming, my husband and editor, wha is deeply versed in the laws o' etiquette, says this duty devolves on me. Weel, what am I to say? I maunna be ower uplifted, for pride is a dangerous thing. I have seen folk gae clean aff at the head wi' success, become poetical, and talk rank nonsense. Even the greatest authors have their limitations, and, as I ken my ain boonds, I maun speak soberly, as becomes a sensible wumman that has a reputation to sustain.

Efter the verdict o' the critics, I begin to think there is something in the fact which wis noted at the time by Mysie Deans, the mantymaker, Beeny Fortune, the spae-wife, and ithers, namely, that my wisdom teeth cam' when I wis in my twelfth year. That remarkable circumstance made an unco impression on

my mither's mind when it took place. I recollect her words fine.

“Martha,” says she, “aye try and do what's richt; dinna forget to read yer Bible, and when ye gang near the college efter gloamin', if onybody tries to put a plaister on yer mouth, cry a' yer pith; for it's borne in on me, and I canna help sayin't, that, whaever leeves to see it, ye'll be a credit to us yet.” Weel, ye wud think from the opinions o' the Press that this prophecy had come true. It's wonnerfu' what your critic can see in a book efter he has set himsel' deliberately doon to mak' discoveries. Some o' them ha'e laucht oot richt heartily; some ha'e sat doon and grat their fill; while ithers, again, are filled wi' emotion by the moral and philosophic wisdom they have discovered in a story that wis meant to be a simple and ootspoken narrative o' passages in the life o' a single wumman. A few sharp hands, hooever, endowed wi' great penetration, have found out the serious character o' the book, and have kindly recommended it to the consideration o' students, ministers, and earnest-minded folk inclined to found bursaries. On the whole, I am glad I havena made a fule o' mysel'. Whether I have been understood or misunderstood, the critics have been generous and my worthy friends, the publishers, are pleased, inasmuch as they have sold out the first issue while there is yet a demand for more. Now, I havena a

PREFACE TO NEW EDITION.

great deal mair to say. The reader will be sorry to hear o' Peter Spale's death. Peter wis a worthy man, but a dour arguer on releegious subjects. He passed awa, at a ripe age, and kens noo wha wis richt and wha wis wrang. Dr. Threshie has been laid aside for some weeks wi' a sair brash o' liver complaint, and Willie Warstle, the bursar, in spite o' youthful vagaries and heterodox notions, promises, sae far as we can see, to be an upright business man.

M. S.

DRUMSYNIE,


POLLOKSHIELDS,

May, 1887.



PREFATORY NOTE

BY THE EDITOR.



Y worthy and most estimable friend, the Rev. Dr. Threshie, thinks I should say a word by way of preface in laying this little volume before an intelligent and discerning public. This duty, I feel, would have been much better discharged had he himself undertaken it, forasmuch as he has skill in writing for the press, having earned no small celebrity by the composition of an excellent theological work. He is also the author of numerous religious tracts and Gospel treatises, printed at the expense of that most worthy man, the late lamented Richard Wyper, who sent them to the Highlands and Islands, with the view of gathering the

outcast and benighted populations of these desolate regions into the sheepfolds of the Church. He says, however, that this duty lies to my hand. If it be so, I feel it becomes me to approach the task with befitting modesty, for, albeit I have been college-bred, as they say in the Latin tongue, *furor scribendi* never was a ruling passion with me, having perceived, on thinking the matter over in early life, that law and literature seldom turned out to be profitable companions unless under the force of transcendent genius. But, this much it befits me to say in justification of the position I have assumed. I have been law adviser to the Spreulls, off and on, for the better part of forty years, and I can honestly testify that the writer of these articles is a woman of great rectitude and of a most unblemished character. Her father was an excellent and worthy man, as may be seen from her own narrative, and as I myself can bear testimony. He was a religious man in the sterner sense of that word, and fell, as his daughter tells us, in the great conflict that culminated in the Disruption of the Kirk of Scotland. By trade he was a cordiner, and bore honourable office in the craft; but though he had a fair business, and was an excellent tradesman, his daughter was left but indifferently provided for at his decease. It has often been a matter of observation with me, however, in my professional life, that the best qualities of an individual are not unfrequently provoked

into prominence by the stress of circumstances. It was so in the case of the subject of these preliminary observations. How she struggled, and how she surmounted the difficulties of her lot, is best depicted by her own pen, and, consequently, need not detain the reader here. For myself, I blush to think of the exceeding high value she seems to put on my own poor services, professional and otherwise. These personal references, which are in some places very outspoken, I would fain delete from this record, but this she will in nowise hear of. The reader must not, therefore, accuse me of egotism because they remain. There is another thing, also, I would fain have altered, to wit—the spelling of certain words; but she says there is nothing so contradictory as the laws that govern the spelling of words. Letters are the foundation of language, and why should not letters have their proper significance when words have to be spelt or spoken? This, observe, is not to be gainsaid. So I let matters stand as they are, though, I admit, it is contrary to college rules.

That she has wide human sympathies will appear from many of her opinions and observations in the volume; and her selection of a bursar after falling heir to her cousin Jen's estate is a proof of this in the most practical form. The choice of William Warstle was an act that surprised both Dr. Threshie and myself beyond measure. A more uncouth, unmanageable,

and camstrarie youth you could hardly find in a week's journey, yet this was the kind of untutored spirit she selected to take the care and control of. His moral training had been totally neglected. The Ten Commandments were a sealed book to him; but even after the Catechism was opened and explained with much affectionate zeal, his moral vision had contracted such a squint that he failed to observe matters straight, and always looked round the corners of truth, if peradventure, he might see things different from other folk—the result being that he generally ended in heterodox and perverted conclusions. The bursar, I fear, will be troublesome to us all, but I have observed when a woman sets her affections on an object, however unworthy it may be, it is useless trying to convince her she is wrong. Well, after all that has come and gone in the course of the narrative which follows, perhaps the reader will conclude that this is not the least estimable trait in her character. In going over the proof-sheets of the book, Dr. Threshie tells me that at least I have no reason to complain of this feature in her character, and as the Doctor is a well-conditioned, godly, and far-seeing man, I accept of matters as they stand with resignation and thankfulness.

In conclusion, I would observe that the following chapters contain some admirable moral truths, and are animated by a spirit of self-abnegation worthy of being

followed by all who have more means at their disposal than are needed for supplying them with the common necessaries of life.

As editor of this work I have one word more to say. The artist has not only traced the physical lineaments of his subjects with great skill, but he has been most civil and obliging to the authoress and myself in all our negotiations with him. The publishers, as decent a firm of their class as you will find in a twenty-four hours' journey, have printed the book well, and, in my humble opinion, have given excellent value for the money. To the critic I have nothing to say. That the authoress is a woman should keep him within the bounds of polite and generous criticism. Should he act otherwise—should he, as is too common now-a-days, venture beyond the limits of fair play, presuming on the defenceless character of an unknown lady—then I have simply to remind him that the law has remedies to which, in my friendly as well as my professional capacity, I cannot fail to have recourse.

MARTHA SPREULL.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.



I AM a wumman. It's as weel to let ye ken that at the ootset, for a body's notions can aye be best appraised when ye ken the circumstances in which they are formed. I got no' such a bad schuiling when I wis a lassie; but it wis, I believe, in 1843 that my interest in the higher edication began. In that ever-memorable year my faither died i' the battle of the Disruption, and left me heir to a flett o'

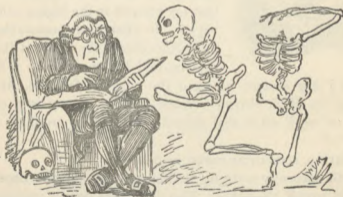
rooms i' the eastern centre o' the city, no far frae the auld College in High Street. When looking at my case calmly about a week efter that sairest o' my earthly troubles, I said to mysel'—

“Martha, something maun be dune.”

I had naturally a strong feeling against ludgers, hooever I poked mysel' thegither. Nae doot some decent student lads wud be the better o' a kin'ly hand about them, no' to speak o' weel-aired rooms; so what did I dae but send an advertisement to the *Glasgow Courier*, and clap a ticket in ane o' the front windows—“Apartments to let to Students.”

Frae that day to this, between bills paid and bills no' paid, my interest in edication has remained unabated. In the time that the auld College remained in High Street, efter throwing open my hoose, I put through my hands in all, six ministers, ten doctors, and a dizzen failures!—the latter mainly o' the minister class.

It is a guid while noo since I kent the College first; maist o' my earlier recollections o't are o' the gruesome kind. Body-lifting bein' then in vogue, baith in toon and country; and wi' these awesome practices, whether justly or no, the College wis associated. I can mind fine when I wis a lassie, what a tiravee wis raised ower the discovery of pairts o' a human body and skull in a close near the ootskirts o' the College buildings. So sairly did it affect my young imagination that I saw the same sicht in oor ain close in the High Street nightly for at least a month efter. Folk said that



when the doctor bodies couldna get dead subjects they didna scruple to tak' leevin' anes. I mind hoo my mother wis afflicted wi' that fear.

“Martha,” she wud say, “aye rin whan ye're passin' the

College, and gin onybody tries to pit a plaister on yer mou' cry a' yer pith." At the time, I wis honestly i' the belief, frae stories I heard, that efter gloamin' a' the closes i' the High Street were teemin' wi' airmless, legless, and sometimes headless ghosts, wha had come to wait on the Professors for their lost limbs.

When I think o't noo the doctor creaturs o' that time maun hae gotten their body-learnin' under great disadvantages, and I'm no surprised that on hearin' o' a death frae some new cause they should have run a little risk to get at the bottom o' the trouble. Hooever, efter the passing o' the Anatomy Bill, which made proveeshun for a' unclaimed bodies being handed ower to the College for anatomical dissection, public confidence in the profession wis restored, and the only thing ye had to fear, in gaun up and doon the High Street efter gloamin', wis the losin' o' yer purse or pocket-hanky.

Since I hae been asked to put pen to paper, some gey droll things hae come into my head; but they maun stan' ower till again, as this chapter is nearly lang enough already. Hooever, when talking o' my student laddies, there is ae mysterious feature aboot College life that I could never satisfy mysel' upon. It is weel enough kent that students gae clean daft in the spring-time o' every third year, as reg'lar as the time comes roon.



Onybody that has watched them, as I hae dune, will no' think I am doing them an injustice by this statement. At this particular time o' the year, to fin' twa or three o' them on yer

best table at æ time, each trying to beat the air sma' and gain some imaginary victory by dint o' lood speakin', is gi'ein' a very mild description o' this curious malady. Mercy be praised! I aye kent when it wis comin' on by the colour o' their heads. Whenever I saw them searching their kists for their red, white, and blue bonnets, I took guid care to put aside the mantelpiece ornaments. It is true the thing is blamed on the appointment and installation o' the Lord Rector; but I canna think that the worry and excitement o' this simple duty could so completely upset a College-fu' o' itherwise fairly sensible men. To satisfy mysel' I gaed to hear Lord Palmerston, in the capacity o' Lord Rector, at St. John's Kirk i' the Gallowgate, and though I saw the distemper coming to a head there, in the puir creaturs howling, throwing peas, breaking gas-pipes, tumbling the wulcats and such-like, I must own the cause o' this periodical derangement remained as great a mystery to me as ever.

CHAPTER II.

UNEXPECTED LUCK.



AM real muckle fashed wi' my head, especially when I get a waff o' cauld; and since I wrote last I have had a wonnerfu' sair brash, which accounts, in pairt, for my backwardness in beginning this chapter. I have already tell'd ye hoo my interest in the higher forms o' edication began by the opening o' my flett o' rooms, efter the Disruption time, to such collegeners as wanted a cheap diet and a respectable hame. Weel ye may be alloot to suppose when the Professor bodies rowed their goons aboot them, and shifted westward to their fine new College on Gilmorehill, that it would be a sair stoun to me, inasmuch as I couldna tak' up *my* apartments in George Street and march efter them; but, aboot the self-same time Providence, and a second cousin on my faither's side, wha had some property in the Trongate, ordered it otherwise.

The thing wis an unco surprise to me. My faither and the Trongate Spreulls never 'greet on releegious maitters; their last and sairest quarrel wis on the doctrine o' the "Ceevil Magistrate" and the "Pooer o' the Keys." Frae that hour the door o' friendliness atween the twa families remained lockit until death opened it. Jen Spreull, the last o' them, deet without a will, and just as I wis enjoying a quate greet ower

the removal o' my last ludger's kist—he wis awn me six months' board—Maister Fleming, the writer, broke the news to me. He wis a terrible pious man*—Maister Fleming—and spoke in a real feelin' wye aboot the great loss I had sustained. It wis sudden, but I must bear up wi' Christian fortitude and resignation—I said I wud try; and speired efter her affairs.

“There is not a great deal,” he said, “but as you are next of kin, and live in a simple way, between the siller and the heritable property ye may feel easy in your mind as to this world's concerns for the remainder of your lifetime.”

Naething could have happened better—no' that I wished for the puir woman's death, far from it, for I didna expect onything, but the hand o' Providence seem'd clear, coming to me as it did just when I wis in my last extremity, greeting ower the removal o' Maister Pringle's kist. It clean beat romances, and I thought to mysel', noo, if ever I hae a chance I'll put this in a book, whether folk believe it or no'.

But the day wisna dune yet. When I got back to the wee bedroom where Maister Pringle wis ropin' his bit boxie, I thought he looked pale and yaupish-like; and it bein' about tea time, I made up my mind that as he had been leevin' at my expense for the last six months I could maybe as weel afford to gie him anither meal for naething as the landlady he wis gaun to in the West-End. So I gaed awa oot and bocht twa fine fresh finnon haddies, and telt the lassie to put up the toaster

* The authoress is exceedingly kind, but I feel I would be blameworthy if I the creature of a day, a man born in sin and shapen in iniquity, were to allow myself to be set up as a model of piety. *Errare est humanum*. Nevertheless, she has this justification, to wit, that I am, and have been, an elder of the kirk for the past twenty-five years, and have, in a profession surrounded with temptations during a long career, done my best to do everybody justice, and to preserve in my own person a conscience void of offence.—ED.

before the kitchen fire, and set the tea things for twa in the parlour, and by and by we had a gey cosy tea. I should have telt ye that Maister Pringle wisna ane o' my laddie ludgers. It wis late in life when he gied up his schule in Bell's Wynd and determined on being a minister. I fear he hadna muckle amang his hands when he entered the College first; but what wi' teachin' in nicht-schules and giving private lessons during the day, he had managed, wi' six months' board frae me without fee or reward, to pass himsel' through the second session o' the Divinity Hall.

Weel, Maister Fleming had brocht me wonnerfu' news, and, as I fancied my guest maybe had some trouble on him, I gaed awa' to the press, filled up a gless o' whisky, and put it in his last cup, just to gie him a wee thoct o' life.

"Thank ye," says he; "that's what they used to do aboot Balfron when I was a boy. There never was a tea-drinking there without a guid gless o' whisky i' the last cup."



If ye'll believe me, the whole thing wis dune oot o' doonricht peety for the man, he lookit sae miserable-like; but I never jaloused what it wud lead to. When he had taen aff his dram, which he did wi' mair relish than I cared for, he hoasted twice, as if he had something in his throat.

"Miss Spreull," he says, "since the moment o' partin' has come, I find it harder to face than I expected."

"Wheesht, wheesht," I interrupted, "ye 're only six months ahin, and ye can gie m't again."

"O, it's no' that," says he, as if that wis naething; "it's no' that. It's the thocht o' you bein' left all by yourself without a protecting hand. I didn't mean to declare my sentiments until I wis placed"—sune enough, thinks I; has the man been listening at the door?—"and till I had a comfortable manse to offer you as a home. I need not say what a help ye would be to me in my ministerial work."

"In truth ye needna," says I. But I could stand it nae langer. The man had still twa years to serve i' the Divinity Hall, and maybe hauf-a-dizzen mair or ever he wan near a kirk. What could he want but his meat, and maybe claes, a' that time for naething; and wha wud say he did wrang if he picked the bonniest young thing wi' siller he could get to fill the place in the manse he noo offered, but never ettled for me? I wis ower auld no' to ken the wyes o' men, so I started to my feet, and I says—

"Noo, Maister Pringle, dinna talk ony mair nonsense; it's but a trifling obligation ye are under to me, only I dinna wish to mak' it ony bigger. Ye need hae nae fear for me, for I can tak' braw an' guid care o' mysel'; and since ye have got warm't wi' the dram, just step awa' west like a man, and I'll send the lassie doon and tell the carrier to come for yer kist."

Noo, I never cared for love-stories mysel', and ye'll maybe think this is gey an' ootspoken o' me; but the incident may serve as a warnin'. Hooever, I wadna hae breathed the thing ava had it no' been brocht to my mind by what I saw the ither day. I wis gaun doon Renfield Street wi' Maister Fleming, when I saw twa gey riff-raff looking beings wi' some papers

i' their hauns like gas accounts. I lookit

closely at them, for they were doon i' the heels, and their coats seemed as if they had got a scuff here an' there wi' a black-lead brush.



papers. They need twa to vouch for
Ane o' them wis Maister Pringle!

“These are pair waifs,” said Maister Fleming, seeing I was takin' a gude look at them, “engaged by some sheriff-officer to deliver arrestment their delivery.”

CHAPTER III.

ON HUMANITY.



is true I am only a wumman, and maybe that is the reason I never could understand hoo the word Humanity ever got to mean the study o' a dead language. Onybody that has seen as I hae dune, my puir ludger laddies marching about till past midnight wi' their een starin' i' their heads, an' wi' big blabs o' sweat on their broos, tryin' to maister as muckle o' the Laitin tongue as wud pass them decently through their examination, will hardly wonder that I am a thocht dootfu' about the appropriateness o' the name.

I min' some years sin' the Free Kirk Presbytery o' Glasca, on the motion o' the learned Moderator, agreed to ask the General Assembly to dae awa wi' the Laitin discourse required by students while in attendance at the Divinity Hall, and again when appearing before the Presbytery for license. What the Assembly did wi' the motion I canna tell, but I think that wis *humanity* i' the lairger sense o' the word. My faither, honest man—wha wis ordnar' weel edicated himsel', and wha wis deacon o' the Cordiners on three several occasions, no to speak o' havin' ance been nominated as Deacon Convener o' the fourteen Incorporations—held gey strong opeenions regardin' the edication o' ministers. Maybe his feelin's were edged a wee by

the recollection that a brother's son—first cousin o' my ain—becam' a complete bodily wreck in what they are pleased to ca' the Humanity classes. He wis the only laddie wean we had i' the twa families, and a gey throughither ane he wis; but frae his cradle upwards their hearts were set on makin' a minister o' him. Hooever, the poor creatur' never wan the length o' the College. The Laitin an' Greek classes i' the Grammar Schule were ower muckle for him. His grouth clean stoppit efter the first year, an' though he continued to dwine away' for a guid while, when the end did come, instead o' his mind bein' occupied wi' the sweet consolations o' the Presbyterian religion, he wis cut off i' the springtide o' his days wi' the words o' a heathen Laitin poet on his lips. It wis a great blow!

“Dead languages!” I think I hear my faither sayin' as he wud stand at oor door, on the Bell o' the Brae, argyin' wi' Peter Spale, the cooper. “Dead languages for a minister! What, I wud ask ye, Peter, hae we to do wi dead languages? It's the leevin' word we want, man, an' nane o' yer heathen gibberish. Lea' that to the Romans, wi' their *paters*, an' their *nosters*, an' their *te deums*. Ministers o' oor perwashun should be grundit i' the Doctrines, Original Sin, Effectual Callin', an' sic-like. It's the essentials we need rung into oor ears frae the pu'pit, that they may gang to the inner heart an' conscience, searchin' as they gae ben. I grant ye, Peter, that the doctors may require the dead languages, That is richt eneuch, for it wud kill the maist o' us, I'm thinkin' if we kent what we got frae them i' the shape o' pheesic for the siller we pay. It is maybe as weel they should write their superscriptions in an unknown tongue, but we want plain an' honest dealin' frae the ministers.”

“Dagont!” Peter wud say, as he planted his shouther dourly



against the jam o' the door and tucked his leather brattie under his waistband, for there wasna a thrawin'er bein' on the face o' the earth than Peter. "Dagont! Maister Spreull, I wunner to hear ye. Hoo can a man teach ye truth if he's in ignorance o't himsel'? Hoo can he expect ye to believe unless he is certain sure that what he is tellin' ye is true, an' hoo can he tell whether the Word is true or no onless he can prove it by gaun back to the oreiginal tongue? Na, na, Maister Spreull; I dinna fa' in wi' ye there. Whenever ye fin' oot that they canna put as muckle learnin' intil a callant's head as will mak' a decent minister o' him, I wud just advise ye to 'prentice him to a cooper; for as ye hae aften said yersel', strength and ignorance is a' that's needed for a cooper."

Noo, although as a lassie I had often listened to these argyments, I never thought seriously o' them until I fell heir to the flett o' rooms in George Street an' had to fend for mysel'. Of course, it is true mony o' my ludger laddies got through what they ca'd their Airts, Medical, and Theology classes easily eneuch, an' had spare time to break my precious cheenie an' ither household valuables. Still an-on there wis a guid when o' them wha, like my ain first cousin, stuck sair at their Greek an' Laitin, leaving' it to this day a mystery to me hoo such studies ever had been associated wi' the name o' Humanity.*

* This chapter, I fear, is founded on a misconception of a scholarly word. *Humanity* studies are the secular subjects of a liberal lay education as opposed to *literæ divinæ*, or the divinity course through which our ministers have to pass before obtaining their license to preach the gospel. *Humanity*, however, is now mainly restricted to studies in the Latin tongue.—ED.

CHAPTER IV.

A NEW BURSARY.



THE Lord be praised, I dinna need to tak' in ludgers noo. Since the removal by death of Jen Spreull, my late first cousin—the last o' the Trongate Spreulls—as I have already told ye, my temporalities have been provided for. Still-an-on, I canna forget the student lads that ate at my table and broke my furniture. At this moment I have in my hand four as touching sermons as ever were penned, by ane o' my divinity boarders, wha left them as payment in kind for six months' diet. Anither ane, wha had a turn for music, left me a fiddle-case; and a companion o' his, a doctor body, wha used to blacken his face wi' a brunt cork, and sing like a "Christy Minstrel," left ahint him a concerteeny wi' maist o' the keys broken, as a' I am ever likely to get for a hale session's up-keep and attendance. Yet I must alloo I passed through my rooms in George Street some as nice lads as ye could clap eyes on; but as the feck o' them were puir and had a bitter struggle, it has been borne in on me that I should mak' some observes in this chapter on the subject o' edication, and get twa or three things aff my mind that sooner or later I ettle to say.

In looking ower an auld batterless history lately, that I got wi' Jen Spreull's books, I saw that in the year 1494 an Act

was passed i' the Scottish Parliament whereby "all barons and freeholders who do not put their sons to the schule, frae they be sax or nine years of age, sal be fined £20"—a gey sensible thing.

Again, in 1579, the Scottish Parliament set its face against vagrants, and passed the following enactments for putting down strong and idle beggars atween the ages o' 14 and 70 years, viz.:—"That their eares may be nailed to the Trone or to anither tree, and their eares cutted off, and that they be banished the countrie; and gif thereafter they be found againe that they be hanged."

But a *student* wis rewarded by a special leeshins to beg, and wis privileged to ask alms. The words are:—"All vagabond schollers of the universities of Sant Andrew's, Glasgow, and Abirdine, not licensed by the Rector and Dean o' Facultie of the universitie to ask alms," etc., showing clearly that this privilege did exist.

Noò, though our students i' the present day are driven to mak' gey queer shifts, such as leaving sermons, fiddle-cases, concerteenies, and such-like in liquidation o' their lawfu' debts, I wudna like to see it coming to this frae door to door wark wi' them. It wis different wi' beggars in auld times; a guid han' could mak' ten shillings a-day and his meat; but noo, hooseholders have plenty to do keepin' up greedy paupers and poor-law offichials let-a-be gi en' charity to gangerals and ither necessitous folk. A far better plan wud be a sliding-scale o' fees so that a' classes o' the community, frae the prince to the labourer's son, might enjoy the benefits o' a college edication. In the earlier history o' the college thae things were managed better, I think. Then the classes were within the reach o' the puirest, and the fees were arranged to suit the social rank o' the student. Sons o' the nobility and barons o' Scotland were to pay annually at

least £3. Those o' the second rank, though well enough aff, but inferior in rank to the barons, were to pay £2; those of the third rank had to pay £1; while the poor were admitted free.

It's no' for the like o' me to offer an opeenion as to whether a plan like that wudna work noo, but I sometimes wonder whether the class-rooms i' the new College are no' big enough, and for that maitter empty enough, to alloo the admission o' a few student callants free at the beginning o' each session. Suppose there were ten vacancies every year, and that these were open to the cleverest laddies in oor Board Schules; I think that wud gie such additional glory to the building, without making the Professors puirer, as might tend to bring the College authorities and the community into closer sympathy, and wud, I am sure, be nae loss to the College i' the lang run.* Noo, I am no' a business wumman mysel', and coontin' was a thing I never could thole; but I ken if ye put past a certain slump sum it will produce so much a year o' sterling siller as interest, and, that sum, ye might set aside and ca' it a bursary, if ye felt so inclined.

I am aware what a bursary is—having seen it in operation, for I have passed a good whien bursars through my hands—clever billies some o' them were, though whiles as daft as yetts in a win'y day—but the relief and comfort this twenty, thirty, or fifty pounds a year afforded them, often made me sit doon wi' tears in my een and bless the memories o' the men that had gi'en my hard strugglin' laddies sic timeous help. There are plenty o' folk wha could braw-an-weel afford to lay aside siller for this purpose without missing it; and maybe they

* A most admirable suggestion which my excellent friend Dr. Threshie thinks I should here and now commend to that learned body, the Senate, for their serious consideration, the which I take the liberty of doing with all humble and respectful sincerity.—ED.

wudna be loath to do sae if they had seen, like me, the happiness which even a sma' eek to the students' slender means affords, but I mak' nae pretence o' kennin' ither folk's duty. I only hope to be able to see my ain, and this leads me to remark that it is my serious intention to establish a Spreull bursary—Providence did a real mindfu' thing in takin' awa' my cousin Jen before she had time to mak' a will to put the Trongate property past me, the which I jalouse she had the heart to do if she had been granted time. It is therefore my bounden duty, as a Christian wumman, to do what good lies to my hand, so far as my means will alloo, and as naebody kens better than I do the scrimpit diet some college-bred callants are reduced to, I think my intention will commend itself to your approval.

Let me say here that I dinna believe in posthumous leebiality; as the Rev. Dr. Dousimweel used to say—"there are nae pockets i' the shroud." I aye thought that wis a gey grim and cauld-rife remark: but ane I wud nevertheless humbly commend to folk wi' siller by them—for mysel, whatever pleasure there is in doing good I wud like to enjoy it during my lifetime. I had three several consultations wi' Maister Fleming, who made a note o' my instructions, as he ca's them—though I don't like the word, for it's no' for the like o' me to instruct a professional, no' to say a college-bred man—and I think the bursary will be something like this:—Bed, board and washing in my ain house, wi' a wummanly care ower the moral well-being o' the bursar during the term o' holding the same.

I must alloo I wis puzzled by a word Maister Fleming used—a foundation, I think he said it wis. At first I couldna' see the sense o't ava, but the mair I think on't the mair I see the beauty o' the word, for health is needfu' for study, and a good diet for a growing callant lays the foundation o' a healthy

constitution.* I am no' just clear as to the time I should gi'e to each bursar, but I think it is likely to be four years, or for such time during that period as he behaves himsel' to my satisfaction. I have definitely settled this, hooever, that it will be open to a' p^uir students o' the first year—but naturally a preference will be given to the name o' Spreull.

* An erroneous, albeit an ingenious application of the word, meaning in law, as I feel bound to explain it, fund from which anything is supported.—ED.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE NEW YEAR



A YBE ye've never notice't it, but I aye begin to think serious about New-Year time. It's no' strange, for my birthday fa's on Hogmanay, and serious-minded folk, especially when they win to my time o' life,

hae a heap o' things to look at baith back and forrit, and questions to spier at themsel's on their birth-days as to what they hae dune and what they are ettlein' to do. In this frame o' mind I took a step up to the Rottenrow the ither day to see my auld frien' Peter Spale the cooper. Puir Peter is geyan frail noo, being sair decrepit wi' the rheumatics; I found him sitting on a creepie amang his stock o' luggies and washing-bynes mendin' a broken water-stoup that he held atween his knees. He wis unco gled to see me, and flang the stoup oot o' his han' wi' sic force as must have gart the girrs quake lest the hale fabric should fa' to pieces i' their insides.

"Come ben," he said, trying to stracht himsel' and holding out his stiff and lumpet fingers to shake hands. "Ye see, Martha, though I'm no sae soople as I ance wis, I can crack fine."

Since his wife Mysie dee't, Peter leeves a' by himsel. He's no' able for much work, but he's geyan independent, for when Dr. M'Whannell, his minister, hinted that he should get some



help frae the pairish he flew into a bonny rage, and, as I heard afterwards, said everything that an angry Christian man could weel say before a minister, short o' sweerin'. The kirk, however, pays his rent without speirin' his leave. And atween makin' and mendin', he tells me he can keep himsel' in sic fare as he needs without onybody's help. Weel, as ye may suppose, we had a gude crack aboot auld times. I sent oot for a dram—for the day wis bitter cauld, besides, nairday wis at han'; and I mindit hoo my faither and Peter used to argy on deep releigious maitters ower a wee drap o' toddy; but though they had sair battles, and never 'gree't, I aye thocht they were better freends than ever efter hin'. It wis real fine to see the blythe blink in his ee efter he got warm't wi' the toddy.

"Dagont!" says he, takin' a hearty snuff oot o' his silver box, "I'm sair vexed I canna step west on Hogmanay and be yer first-fit, as I aye wis wi' yer faither when we leaved on the Bell-o'-the-Brae."

"Deed, I wud be doonricht gled to see ye," quoth I. "For there never wis a luckier first-fit; and, to tell the truth, my faither widna aloo ony ither."

I wis but a lassie when we bydet on the Bell-o'-the-Brae, but I mind oor Nairday customs fine. My faither aye had a releigious exerceese on Hogmanay. It wis his habit to pray the auld year oot and the new year in. We daurna budge aff oor knees till the last stroke o' twelve had chappit on the College steeple. Then, while the hoochs and hooreys for Nairday frae lads and lassies were heard echoing through the streets in the neighbourhude o' the Cross and the Laigh Kirk, my mither wud clap the kettle on the fire, and my faither wud plant himsel' ahint the door to listen for Peter Spale. Then Peter wud come ben wi' his bottle, and Mysie, his wife, wi' her basket o' black currant bun and shortbread. Eh, it wis a fine

time in these far-back Nairdays! The twa gudemen drank their toddy, and generally had hot words ower some poleetical or releegious point; my mither and Mysie had cracks o' their ain; while I laid in to the currant buns and the shortbread atween han's. I canna say my faither wis very superstitious, but he had great faith in Peter as his first-fit. As I hae said, he aye planted himsel' ahint the door to listen, and if ony o' the neebours should win to the door before Peter the lamp gaed oot in a giffy and we were a' sound asleep.

The body locket kin'ly at me frae the ither side o' the fire.

"Weel, Mistress Spreull," says he, "I'll alloo I wis a lucky first-fit ance. I think ye werena mony oors auld when Mysie and me gaed ben that Nairday, and among the last words yer faither said to me wis that ye had been a great blessin' to him; and I'm sure ye hae been an unco credit to us a'."

"Hoot, toot," quoth I, "ye maunna speak aboot that," but the tears cam' to my een sae fast, as I thocht o' what had happened sin' syne, that I had to turn awa' my heed for fear they should bring back unhappy memories to himsel'.

Ane o' the objects o' my visit wis to contrive without offence to gi'e him a set o' new flannels: for the body's bluid wis geyan thin, and I kent he couldna afford by his sma' cooperin' jobs to ware muckle siller on himsel'; but, to my great satisfaction, he took the thing real freen'ly when he heard they had been woven by my ain han'; and efter brewin' him anither gless o' toddy, the which he wud mak' me taste mysel', I wished him a "Happy New-Year," and left him unco jocose and happy.

Weel, seein' that I wis oot at ony rate, I thocht I wud just slip doon the High Street and see the auld neebourhude again. But, eh me! sic a changed place. The auld Bell-o'-the-Brae is clean cut awa. Hale streets hae been dung doon, and fine

new anes wi' bonnie big lands o' hooses planted i' their place. It wis just like ane o' thae transformation picturs ye see i' the pantymine. Everything lookit sae clean and airy-like, that it wisna like the same place ava. I mind when I lived in George Street, whenever I becam' discontented wi' mysel' or my hoose, I just took a walk doon the High Street and back by Bell's Wynd. It wis a grand cure, for I aye saw sae muckle dirt and misery there that I generally cam' hame thankfu' and happy; noo, the place wud maist mak' folk discontented wi' the West-en'. My heart warmed to the auld College as I gaed by; but to hear the skirl o' the railway whistle, and the puff-puffin' o' the trains on the very spot where there used to be galleries o' red gowns and bright faces, made me think Providence had spared me to see by-ord'nar' times.

CHAPTER VI.

"WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK."



HAVING let my rooms in George Street to a decent tyler body wi' a guid gaun business, I flitted to a hoose o' four rooms an' kitchen i' the West-en'. I took this step pairtly under the advice o' Maister Fleming, wha said I could afford to leeve in a genteel locality, an' pairtly because

I wud be better able to overtake the work o' the bursary minted in a former chapter, from being within easy reach o' the College. But let me tell ye first and foremost, when it got to the public ear that I meant to found a bursary, the thing raised an uncommon soogh, insomuch that it caused some tongues to wag at the rate o' nae allooance. I found this oot in a gey simple and natural wye. A few days efter the bursary business wis settled atween Maister Fleming an' mysel', I inveeted my auld freen' an' neebor Mrs. Warnock—wife o' the pastry baker o' that name in George Street—to come west and tak' a cup o' tea wi' me, an' gie me the news.

Bein' the first time Mrs. Warnock had been in my new hoose, and as she wis sairly troubled wi' cauld feet, I gied her a

dram afore drawin' in to the tea. She wis unco cracky for a while, but efter we had puttin' a guid wheen o' things through hands, I saw the woman had something on her mind. I didna' hurry her, but speert on an' on in a general sort o' wye, till at last I asked for Mrs. Whangy, wife o' the leather tanner in Shuttle Street. At this the body wis sair owercome. I do believe if I hadna' just gien her anither thimlefu' o' speerits at the time she might hae gane awa' in a dwam. Hooever I gied her time to draw her breath.

"Deed, Mrs. Warnock," I said quite cheery-like, "ye may say on, for that wumman an' me never were great freen's."

"Ye may weel say't," quoth she, "an' had ye no pressed me I never wud hae opened my lips on the subject, I'm sure; but efter what the limmer said about ye, I think ye canna coont on Mrs. Whangy as a freen'."

"She wis aye a brazen-faced randy," said I, somewhat excited beforehand, "ye needna' fear to tell onything that she may have said, Mrs. Warnock, for it'll no' put me ae bit about."

"Weel, ye see, this maitter o' the bursary, or whatever ye ca' it, had won to her ears, an' she comes doon to the shop to order a dizzen cookies. She aye insists on a penny to the shillin'. Her mither, ye ken, keepit a wee victualling shoppie i' the Calton, an' she minded the custom. When she had payed her sixpence and asked the thirteen cookies to be sent hame, she glowered through her gowd glesses unco kennin'-like, an' said, 'Ye'll no' hae heard o' this new move o' Martha Spreull's?' 'No,' said I, quite innocent, 'I havena heard frae Miss Spreull since she flittit to the West-en.' 'Oh,' quoth she, 'Martha's a great wumman noo, she has opened a bursary, nae less. She did her best to get a doctor, or at least a sticket minister in George Street, while she leaved by them; noo she's

tryin' to mak' her market in anither wye wi' her cousin Jen's siller.'

"But, Miss Spreull, I really did not ettle to tell ye what this ill-set wumman said."

"Dinna fear," quoth I, "for I'm real interestit."

"'Oh,' says she, 'having failed to get a man when her hoose wis fu' o' them, noo that she has siller, she has opened a bursary'—an' if ye'd seen hoo she lookit when she said this—'a bursary—bed, board, an' washin'—in her ain hoose, mind ye; an' she thinks that, havin' the puir boarder a' to hersel', she'll couter him up till he offers himsel' as her guidman. Div ye no see her dodge?'

'Weel,' quoth I, 'Miss Spreull has aye been real decent wi' me, and I hinna an ill word to say against her.' 'Ay, but ye maunna tell her,' says she, 'for the truth is sometimes sair to bide.'

'Oh,' says I, kind o' tairtish, 'ye needna fear, for, to tell the truth, I never wis given to clyping a' my days; but there's somebody i' the shop, an' when the laddie comes in I'll send yer cookies hame.'

"That wis just the wye I spoke till 'er."

Weel, ye may suppose, I wis mortal affrontit when I heard sic a scandaleesin' story. I never had a great opeenion o' Mrs. Whangy. In truth, we never were great freens; but she wis aye fair to my face, an' I couldna jaloose the deceitfu' duchess wud have evened sic a thing to me.

But the interesting pairt o' the story is yet to come. The king aye fa's i' the cadger's gate somehoo. I do believe my auld neebor, Mrs. Warnock, had barely time to clear the corner o' the street, when, wha should come into my hoose but this same twa-faced tairge, Mrs. Whangy! It wis past mortal reason and sense to believe that this wumman should ever dare



to darken my door; but there she wis in my best parlour, accordin' to the evidence o' my servant-wumman, wha brocht me her caird efter showin' her ben.

"Weel," quoth I, "this beats miracles, she's fa'en into my han's i' the nick o' time."

My bluid wis up, but I didna lose my temper. Hooever, it wisna the wye o' the Spreulls to say saut when they wanted mustard. So I gaed stracht ben. There wis my leddy, wi' her braw flounces spread out carefully ower my carpet, her han's folded before her, wi' her nose i' the air, glowerin' through her gowd specks as if she wis sittin' for her fottygraph. Thinks I, "I'll tak the stairch oot o' *you*, my wumman, or I'in dune wi' ye."

"Mrs. Whangy," said I, quite calmly, withoot sittin' doon, "this is an unexpected veesit. Maybe ye'll tak aff yer specks, ye'll feel the guid o' them when ye gang oot." I couldna help the remark, for the specks made her look sae grand an' impident-like; but I pushed on.

"Weel, it's maybe no' worth yer while," quoth I, "for a' the time ye'll care to bide. Ye've come, nae doot, to speer about the bursary."

"Miss Spreull," she said, settin' her teeth firm.

"Na, na," says I, "I've got twa'r three things to say, an' I'll no' be interruptit i' my ain hoose. I'm no' used to flytin'; hooever, I can speak oot my mind braw an' weel when it's needed. But it maunna be bark about i' this hoose altho' ye are a tanner's wife. Ye've gotten yer ain vairsion o' that bursary story, as I've heard tell, and ye're welcome to't for me; but I have mine. Maybe your wye is the ane ye wud have ta'en if ye'd been in my place; but I've reason to be thankfu' that Providence made me wi' a mind abune the mean and unworthy motive ye have evened to me. I daresay there is

no use o' the like o' me offerin' you advice, for it'll be lost on ye ; only I wud just say or I've dune, that the next honest wumman's character ye put through yer han's ye should tak' care to judge her by a higher standard than yersel'."

"Noo, hiv ye onything to say ?"

"Say ?" she roared, jumping to her feet, flounces an' a', wi' a brienge, layin' aboot her, stampin' an' stutterin' in a wye that wis alarmin' to see. Everything wis to say, I could see that ; but she hadna twenty throats, and everything and mair wanted sayin' at the same moment o' time.

I wis mortal feared she wud fa' doon in an apoplexy fit, or burst a bluid-vessel. So I didna gie her time, but rang the bell.

"Jenny," quoth I, geyan calmly, "wud ye show this wumman to the door ? She has gotten hersel' heated awee, an' I think she will be the better o' the caller air."

Noo I set this doon here wi' great pain, for, I admit, sic scenes canna tend to edification. Nevertheless, in this wicked worl' the best o' motives are whiles misunderstood ; an' the lesson I try to learn for mysel' is this—that folk shouldna be driven aside frae the path o' duty for the sake o' ill tongues.

CHAPTER VII.

SELECTING A BURSAR.



WAS mortal angry, as ye may jalouse, when Maister Fleming, the writer, telt me that the College authorities wud hae naething a dae wi' the bursary I had set my heart on givin' to the best first year's student who should com-

pete for it. The bursary, as ye'll nae doot recollect, wis to be tenable for four years, or at least for such period within that time as the bursar should conduct himsel' to my satisfaction; and wis to consist o' bed, board and washing in my ain hoose, wi' a wummanly care ower his moral upbringing' during the term o' holding the same. It wis a most carefully wordit foundation, as Maister Fleming beautifully ca'd it; and couldna be worth less to ony growin' callant than forty pounds o' guid sterling money i' the year.

It wis gey provokin'; but the greatest and best o' folk hae met wi' discouragement i' the wye o' weel-doin.' I had settled Mrs. Whangy, and I wisna gaun to hae the laugh turned against me by the opposition o' a when College Professors. So I clapped on my things and went stracht doon to an auld frien' o' my faither's, the Rev. Dr. Threshie, wha keepit a private academy in Montrose Street, and had great skill i' the classical and ither languages. The Doctor, puir body, had met

wi' a mishanter when he wis young, and wis hump-bucket. Some say he fell oot o' a careless lassie's airms ontill a flag flair, and had dislocated his shoother-bleds; and ithers alloo't the mis-shapeness wis born wi' him.* Hooever that may be, there wisna muckle wrang wi's heed, for he wrote a real learned treatis' on the Book o' Revelations, which, I have heard my faither say, raised an unco steer at the time, and caused an American College to send him ower the title o' doctor o' divinity. As a minister I think he wis gey ill-used. Some years before the Disruption he wis presented to the pairish o' Kilfinnan i' the county o' Fife; but there wis a terrible to-do about the settlement. Some said his doctrun wis unsound, ithers that his prayers werena evangelical, and that when preaching he keepit ae e'e on a paper before him i' the Bible while the ither wis directed towards the middle ornament i' the front o' the laft. My faither, wha had great insight in ecclesiastical matters, said that a' the hurry arose oot o' this, that the puir body had a hump on his back. The thing wis referred to the Synod, then it gaed back to the Presbytery, and whether the evidence wis richt or wrang, the Assembly took the side o' the congregation, and they were set free to select anither minister. Maybe I wis hasty, but ever sin' syne I have had a dour prejudice against onybody that comes frae the kingdom o' Fife.

I must say the doctor behaved in an oncommon manner when I telt him what I proposed to do. He wis afflicted wi' that guid auld-fashioned politeness that restrain men frae laughin' richt oot in a wumman's face, but he got till his feet, and as he turned his back to me, I could see his shouthers, wi'

* I have the best authority for saying that neither of these reasons is the proper one. As a child he was just as upright in the backbone as any one need wish to be, but the crook came on after an unusually sore turn of the measles, from the dregs of which distemper so many bodily ailments spring.—*Ed.*



the growth atween them, risin' and fa'in' in an unco jerky and agitated wye.

"Na," I said, kind o' hurt, "I didna mean to mak' a laughin'-stock o' mysel'; but if there's real fun i' the proposal I wud like ye just to turn roon and let me see that ye enjoy it."

This brought the creatur to his senses braw and quick; nevertheless, when he did turn roon his een were dancin' and the tears were running doon his runkled cheeks at such a rate I could see that whatever notion had crossed his head he had a braw hearty laugh at it. In a meenit he wis a' apologies, and ran clean ower wi' ceevility.

"That'll dae, doctor," quoth I, "I dinna grudge ye a laugh, but I am desperate serious about this bursary, and as the College winna carry the thing through I mean to tak' the business in my ain han's, and as ye're a scholarly man I want ye to conduct the examination in yer ain cless-room."

So, efter he saw I wis in real earnest, he sat down quite serious, and we yocket to the crack in a thorough business-like wye. I gaed hame unco weel pleased efter the thing wis settled, and when, next day, I saw the advertesment in the newspaper, I thocht to mysel' that things had turned oot a' for the best, as it wud catch the e'e o' needy callants faster in a penny newspaper than i' the College Calendar—a book that I kent frae experience very few students could afford to buy.

Weel, what d'ye think, there were nae less than sixteen applications, though there wisna ane bearing the name o' Spreull. It wis just real heartnin' to see. On the day o' examination, Maister Fleming gaed doon wi' me to the schule where the puir creaturs were thrang writing frae the papers that Dr. Threshie had set them. The doctor himsel' sat in a high-backet chair that owerlookit the desks, to see that they didna copy frae books. I wis real interestet; and I thocht to

mysel' if moneyed folk had just been there to see the dead earnestness o' the puir laddies, they maybe wudna be sae loath to gie them a helpin' han' wi' their edication.

Let that be as it may, they were as fine a set o' raw, earnest, growin' callants as ony kind-heartet man or wumman either could wish to feed. Whan they had dune, Maister Fleming made a beautifu', feelin' speech, and telt them that though fifteen o' them must be disappointed, they werena to be cuisten doon; they had only to persevere wi' the same earnestness they had shown that day and the barriers that stand i' the wye o' human progress wud gae doon afore them.

It wis an encouraging speech, I must alloo; and as they filed past at scalin'-time, makin' an unco noise on the wooden flair wi' their heavy feet, a mist cam' ower my een, insomuch that I lost sicht o' them and had to turn awa' and look oot o' the window for a meenit to get the better o' my feelin's.

Weel, it wis gey droll, but the settlement o' wha the bursar wis to be fell to mysel' at the hinner en'. The twa best callants were sae equal in cleverness that Dr. Threshie, wha is a most conscientious man, wis sair put aboot to ken what to dae—so a thocht cam' into my head—

“Will ye let me settle it?” quoth I.

“Wi' plesure,” says he, “for in troth ye may tak' either and no' gae far wrang.”

“Weel,” quoth I, “ye hae soundit them back and forrit in halesome secular lear, and wi' yer wull I wud like to yock them for twa meenits on The Question Book. I maun ken hoo they stan' with regaird to speeritual knowledge.”

Weel, if ye'll believe it, this exerceese made a great impression on my ain mind, for while ane of them—as bonnie-faced, blue-e'ed a laddie as ever ye saw—didna miss a word frae the very start till we wan on to “God's wrath an' curse,” the

ither—a tousie, big-baned halffin'—couldna gie me the correct answer to "Man's Chief En'."

Some folk may think the wye wis geyan plain efter this, but to me it wis a time o' great perplexity; hooever, I did my duty.

"Doctor," quoth I, while the callants waited i' the side-room, "ye'll maybe think me a thrawn wumman, but I've made up my mind."

"Weel," says he, "ye'll be gey an' thrawn if ye dinna tak' the ane that answert best; hooever, ye're welcome to yer ain choice."

"Thank ye for yer courtesy," says I, "noo, just gie that five-pound note to the bonnie laddie wi' the blue een; there's no' muckle likely to gae wrang wi' him. He is sure to mak' his wye, and it's clear to me he is weel cared for at hame. The ither ane is a clever billie; but he needs lookin' till, so if ye have nae objection we'll gie the bursary to him."

And thus the thing wis settled; hooever, I had my wark cut oot for me; but ye'll hear mair aboot that again.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNCLAIMED FIDDLE-CASE



AFTER a' is said and dune, it appears to me this worl' is no sae big as it seems. There's a story telt in a southern county about a gangrel creatur' wha marched aff at midnight wi' a blanket that had been lent him by a hospitable farmer, in whose barn he had gotten a night's lodgin', but a mist cam' on, and the body, wi' his blanket aboot him, fand himself at night, efter a lang day's march, in the same farm-yard, face to face wi' the man whose kindness he had requited sae ill. I dinna ken whether the reflection is original or no', hooever, it seems to me that the ill-daer generally gangs roon in a circle, like the man i' the mist, without ettlin' it, until he fa's 'intil the very teeth o' the ill he has dune; and I wudna say but some notion o' this kin' may have been at the bottom o' the auld custom o' settlin' accounts wi' criminals on the same spot where their crimes were committed.

Noo, this is a gey gruesome beginnin' to the story I'm gaun to tell ye—for I'm no' thinkin' ye've forgotten that when I bidet in George Street, before the death o' my first cousin, Jen Spreull, ane o' my ludgers, a divinity student, gaed off at the end o' a six months' session and left me a toom fiddle-case in



settlement o' his bill. The fiddle-case wis a thing I hadna muckle use for mysel'—no havin' a musical ear; though efter Willie Warstle, my bursar laddie, cam' hame, I found it unco handy for keepin' his white shirts and collars in. Weel, what do you think, ae day as I wis traikin' through the shops in Sauchiehall Street, wi' the leg o' a sock that needit fittin' in my bag, in search o' yairn to match, wha should I meet but the owner o' this same fiddle-case wi' a guid sonsy, red-faced leddy on his airm. I wis perfect dumfoonert wi' surprise, for I never thocht to see him again on this side o' time. He had on a guid black coat, besides a white neckcloth, and lookit sae sedate that you wud have thocht butter wudna melt in his mooth, as the sayin' is. Weel, as he cracket quite sober and solemn-like, I fand oot that he wis minister o' the Parish o' Drumsynie, and that his wife wis the dochter o' a rich cattle-drover i' the toon o' the same name, whose family wis weel kent by my faither. She wis gey rouch and out-spoken for a minister's wife, and interfered wi' the crack in a wye that I thocht wis mair maisterfu' than modest. In truth, I didna like the wumman; but that is neither here nor there.

Efter a wee I turned on my heel wi' them, and we gaed west thegither. Weel, the talk proceeded on, but there wisna a word about the bill. Thinks I, "My gentleman, I've gien ye a guid chance to speak first;" but kennin' hoo treacherous the memory is about money obligations, I broke the ice, and speered when he wis gaun to send for the fiddle-case.

Wi' that he gaed me a nudge on the side wi' his elbow, and a look as much as to say "Dinna name the thing before *her*."

"Ah," says he, unco sanctimonious like, "Mistress Spreull, college life is a light-hearted time—a time of queer antics and thoughtless extravagance."

"Nae doot," quoth I, "nae doot"—for I had min' o' the nicht

I gaed ben and threatened to send for the pollis. They were actin' a nigger extravaganzie wi' their faces blackened. Ane played the fiddle, anither the concerteeny, while the lads wi' the clappers and the tamboreen faced up to ane anither and made sic a racket on the flair-head wi' their heavy feet, that I thoct they wud bring doon the hoose.

"Ah, yes," he gaed on, "but the responsibilities of a parish soon make us lay aside and forget the follies of our youth."

"Very guid," thinks I, "very guid, still they maunna let ye forget your lawfu' debts." Hooever, I saw it wudna dae to push him ower sair before his wife. So, as they were near my ain door, I inveeted them in to have some refreshment.

It wis sometime before we could get a word by oorsels—but we took the first chance.

"Mistress Spreull," quoth he in a frichtet, hurriet kind o voice, "for God's-sake don't say a word about my indebtedness to you before my wife."

"Weel," says I, "ye've been lang o' mintin' the maitter yersel."

"True," quoth he, "but since getting settled I haven't had much among my hands. My wife's money is at her own disposal, and I cannot finger a penny without her knowledge. She's of a jealous turn, and to ask her for such a sum as I owe you would rouse suspicion; in fact it would ruin me."

The man wis sair puttin' about; but he said if I wud help her wi' her shopping—for she wis a stranger to the city—and relieve him, he wud call on some friends and see what could be dune. There wis naething unreasonable in that; so when the mistress cam' ben, it was sune arranged, an' she an' I got on oor things an' set aff to the toon.

I took her to see twa'r three respectable shops where I wis weel kent mysel', and I wis black affronted at the wye she

gaed on. Wab efter wab o' flannel, wincey, and silk were turned ower on the coonter, but she had aye some faut to find. It wisna guid enough, or it wis ower dear—then, efter she had gi'en trouble enough to break ony ordinar' shopman's temper—no; she wudna mind wi' onything the day.

"Mrs. Drummond," says I, efter we had got ootside the third shop, "What div ye want?"

"Want?" quoth she. "I want bargains. I could buy thae things cheaper and better in oor ain store."

"O," says I, "these are a' respectable shops, an' what ye get in them can be depended on, but they're no' used to priggin'. Hooever, ye sometimes get bargains i' the Polytechnick—maybe ye'll step along there."

"O," says she, "that is a place I wud like fine to see, for I hae read about it i' the newspapers."

So we gaed along to the Polytechnick; na, but she wis uncommon pleased wi' the show, especially wi' the Magic Cave, which, in truth, wis a great sight to see. Weel, as she gaed frae gallery to gallery, an' frae coonter to coonter, speerin' the yaird o' this, an' the price o' that, I wis nearly trailed aff my feet. At lang an' length she got her e'e on the end o' a wab o' navy-blue silk, an' I wis thankfu' to get sittin' doon on a seat while she bargained for't.

It wis clearly a thing she had a weakness for, but when she had gotten it at her ain price I had the best laugh at her expense I've had for mony a day, though I wis real thankfu' the incident hadna happened in ony shop whaur I wis kent.

The wumman had put doon a five-pound note on the coonter while the shopman wis makin' up the parcel, an', just as we were sittin' crackin', a cash laddie cam' by an' snappit up the siller, an' bein' light on his fit, he wis makin' aff gey brisk wi't to the cash-desk, when she lap to her feet, an' knockin' ower

the chair, an' hauf-a-dizzen wabs o' salvage flannel that were stocket on the flair behind her, she gripped the wee callant by the cuff o' the neck, an' nearly shaket him oot o' his bit jacket.

"What's wrang wi' ye, mistress?" quoth the laddie, looking up in the wumman's face, unco terrified-like.

"Wrang!" she cried, lood enough to draw a crood aboot her. "Wrang! ye young keelie; I have often heard o' the like o' ye in this sinfu' ceety, but my certie I'll mak' ye suffer for't. Gie me that five-pound note this meenit, or I'll cuff yer ears to ye."

I needna say hoo the thing wis explained, but as ye may weel believe, I got her oot as sune as I could, and lost nae time in gettin' her up to the College Station, where, according to appointment, her husband wis waiting for her.

I can tell ye I wis gled to get the wumman aff my hauns. She wis in an unco fluster, an' I couldna get a word wi' the minister by himsel', for she keepit her e'e weel on him. But as we gaed up the platform, he slipped an envelope into my haun.

When I got hame I found, to my surprise, it contained a cheque in payment o' my accoont. There wis also a letter, written in pencil, saying he had borrowed this sum frae an auld college frien' wha had settled in guid practice as a doctor.

Nae doot it wis robbin' Peter to pay Paul. But, thinks I, that's nae business o' Paul's.

"Ye can keep the fiddle-case," says he in a postscript, "for both my wife and my session are opposed to instrumental music."

"Weel," thinks I, "Noo that justice has been appeased, it's no' worth my while to fa' oot wi' the man aboot the custody o' a fiddle-case."

CHAPTER IX.

WILLIE WARSTLE, THE BURSAR.



E may talk about Oreeginal Sin an' Moral Evil till ye argy the thing awa', but it's nae use, for a' yer reasons an' yer fine sophistries winna shake my belief i' the guid auld doctrine. My neebor, Mrs. Naismith, used to say that ony wumman wha had brocht up seeven o' a faimily, as she had dune, had nae need o' ony further proof o' human depravity; an' weel-a-wat she didna require to wait on sic a great haunfu', for if she had just offered a bursary, consistin' o' bed, board, an' washin', to puir laddie students for four years, like me, an' gotten a bursar like Willie Warstle, she wud hae been able to settle the matter to her ain satisfaction in a hantle less time.

Ye will understand better what I mean when I tell ye what happened to mysel', an' put me in a bonny rage forby gi'ein' me a fricht that I didna get the better o' for twa'r three days.

Ae nicht efter the gloamin' I wis comin' hame, gey an' soople, doon ane o' thae by-streets no far frae Charing Cross. I had been layin' in something tasty for the breakfast i' the mornin'. Willie Warstle wis thrang at Cæsar's Commentaries on the Gallic and Civil Wars when I left, an' I wis wunnerin' what effect sic stirrin' an' heroic events wud hae on his openin' mind, when—a' o' a sudden—I wis grippit by the cauf o' the leg, an' held to the spot as if I had been tethered to a stake. I got a mortal fricht, no' to speak o' the narrow escape I had had o' fa'in' flet on my face on the plane-stanes.



On examination I fand that my leg wis encircled firm and fast by a guid stoot string.

Weel, seein' it wis a runnin' loop, I sune freed mysel' frae peril. It had nae doot been lyin' open on the fitpaith on purpose, an' when I stepped into it, must have been pu'd wi' a sudden jerk, for the thing had tichtened on the thick pairt o' my cauf, aboot a spang below the knee.

Thinks I, "This is awfu!" I had heard o' assassination societies amang the Irish, the hochin' o' cattle, an' sic like things; but to be trappit at yer ain door in this Christian country, in the face o' heavy pollis-money, wis past mortal belief an' endurance. I could hae fentit fine; hooever when I saw there wis naebody near I got angry, an' that saved me.

Weel, thinks I, this maun be bottomed. Body-liftin' an' burkin' were common enough when I wis a lassie, but a' that has been put an end to by the Anatomy Act; this, too, thinks I whatever it means, maun be put doon.

I followed the string, an' saw that the tither end o't gaed into a trance that wis reached by a short flight o' steps frae the street. It wisna a through-gaun close, an' I could see it didna gang very far ben. So I planted mysel' in front o't, an' commanded the culprit to gie himsel' up to unconditional surrender.

I listened, an' thocht I could hear a quick breath i' the darkness, but there wisna a word in reply.

"Oh, ye may come oot," quoth I, "for I'll wait here till the pollis comes, though I should bide till daylight i' the mornin'."

The breathin' grew faster, but there wis nae word o' surrender. "What," thinks I to mysel', "if the villain should get desperate an' fa' on me wi' his nieves?"

There wisna a footstep in the street, an' I felt it wis rinnin an unco risk, but the thocht inspired me with a happy idea that I lost nae time in carryin' through.

I seized the bell-handles on each side o' the door and pulled them wi' a vigour that alarmed even mysel' when I heard the racket they made. In less time than I tak' to write this doon, the doors were opened, an' there, i' the corner, wi' the gaslicht suddenly turned upon him, wis my ain bursar—the lad Willie Warstle that I had left at hame reading Cæsar's Commentaries, shakin' frae head to fit like the leaf o' a tree.

"Come here, ye young scape-grace," says I, when I recovered my senses. "What ill-set trick is this the de'il has putten into yer head?"

He cam oot wi' a face as white as a clot, and tried to fa' on my neck.

"Na, na," quoth I, layin' aboot his lugs till my neives were sair, "I'll gar ye smairt weel for this my gentleman."

"Honest folk," quoth I, turning to the onlookers, "I ask yer pardon for causing ye sic disturbance; but the laddie played a trick on me, and as I thocht he wis a stranger—maybe a keelie—I wanted yer help to hand him ower to justice. The offender belongs to me;—sae I'll chasteese him mysel'." An' to show there wis truth in what I wis sayin', I fell on him again.

Weel, before we got hame he apologeesed richt humbly, an said he wud never dae the like again.

"But what did ye mean by daein' sic a doonricht wicked thing?" quoth I.

"Oh," says he, "I thocht ye were a young lass."

"Waur an' waur," quoth I.

The remark set me a thinkin'. The idea o' a mere calant like Willie Warstle sittin' in a cauld close, in a quiet street, for hours, wi' a string laid oot on the fitpaith, for the express purpose o' catchin' a young lass by the leg, showed a depth o' depravity that wis unco sad to think o' in ane sae

young. The cratur wis badly brocht up. Ye maun mind that, for what could ye expect frae a laddie wha wis sae ill-versed i' the Catecheesm as no' to be able to answer "Man's Chief En'," when I tackled him in Dr. Threshie's schule on the examination day?

This valuable compendium o' faith and mainners had been a sealed book to him. Thinks I, there are twa sides to man's nature, and, as ane o' them is receivin' due attention frae the Professors o' the College, it lies at my door, as a Christian wumman, to see to the ither.

"Willie," said I, unco severe-like efter these reflections, "it wis a desperate wicked thing ye did, but it wis a far waur thing ye ettled to dae. What in this worl' could ye mean by layin' a string to catch a young lass by the cauf o' the leg? Noo," quoth I, "ye're badly in need o' mendin', and ye maun



mak' up yer mind to begin to yer Question-book the morn; for what ye maist want in yer present graceless condition, is to be weel grundet i' the Moral Law."

CHAPTER X.

DAVID WHAMMOND'S LEGACY.



WEEL, efter the turn things had ta'en in last chapter, I made up my mind that nae time should be lost in gettin' Willie Warstle a Question Book. Efter catchin' me by the cauf o' the leg wi' a string, in mistake for a young lass, I wis left in mortal fear o' what he might be up to next, if his moral edication wis langer negleckit; but I made a mistake at the ootset. The book I bought him contained the "Confession of Faith," as weel as the "Larger and Shorter Catechism." Hooever, I can tell ye I wis doonricht weel pleased wi' the progress the callant made, and the answers he gave me showed a wonnerfu' grip o' memory, as weel as intelligence; in fact I could see he wis interestit i' the book.

Ae day he startled me wi' a question he speir'd.

"Do you believe," says he, "John Smallwares, the pipe-maker, can forgive sins?"

I wis perfect dumfooner't, for I couldna see what the laddie had in his head. John Smallwares was, nae doot, an elder i' the kirk, but, to tell ye the truth, he wisna greatly thocht o' as a Christian man, havin' failed in business an' paid five shillings i' the pound by wye o' composition.

"Hoot, toot," quoth I, "what puts sic fancies into yer heid?"

“Oh, but do you believe it?” says he.

“No,” says I; “that’s a doonricht Popish doctrine. What gars ye speir sic a daft-like question? Ye’ll no’ fin’ that i’ the Question Book.”

“No,” says he; “but it’s in the Confession of Faith. Listen. Ye’ll get it in the 30th chapter: ‘To these officers’—meaning John Smallwares and other elders—‘the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power, respectively, to retain and remit sins.’”

The laddie stoppit, and lookit earnestly in my face for a reply, while I took the book frae his han’, put on my glesses an’ examined at the passage for mysel’. It wis a gey puzzlin’ statement, I alloo, but surely it could be explained awa’, or the meenisters wudna bide by it.

“Willie,” quoth I, “ye maunna fash yer thoom wi the Confession o’ Faith the noo; it’s ower deep for young callants like you. When ye’ve maistered the Shorter Catechism, and win into the Divinity Hall, ye’ll understand it better. Meantime keep by the Shorter Catechism and lea’ the Confession o’ Faith alane.”

Weel, just as I wis thinkin’ about the maitter next day, my servant-wumman cam’ in and put a letter in my hand wi’ a broad black margin. It announced the death, the day before, o’ David Whammond, my auld Sabbath schule teacher. David wis a heddlemaker to trade, a plain, earnest man, who gathered about him a lairge class o’ young women in the schuleroom, in Shuttle Street, no’ far frae Mr. Whangy’s tanyard. David Whammond and James Reid, the gingham weaver, aye gaed to the class thegither. David did the speaking maistly, while his frien’ led the singin’. It wis nae uncommon thing, hooever, for James Reid to stop David in his remarks, and put in either a correction or something that he thought suitable to say on



the occasion—these remarks were never ill ta'en. I mind to this day a gey droll interruption that took place ae nicht in the middle o' David Whammond's address. The subject wis, I think, the Origin o' Evil. The speaker leant ower his desk in real earnest, and James Reid sat i' the precentor's seat wi' his head cuist on ae side as if waitin' for something to pick a quarrel wi'.

"Did ye niver think o't, my dear young lassocks," says David, laying aside his glesses, "did ye niver think it wis a curious thing that the serpent should have come to the woman—a puir, helpless, unoffensive woman? But he kent fine what he wis daein'—he wis cunnin' enough for that. My dear young lassocks, if the serpent had come to Adam, dae ye ken what Adam wud hae dune? He wud hae chappit aff his heid wi' a spade."

"Noo, David Whammond, I wonner to hear ye," says James Reid; "man I wonner to hear ye! I never like to accept ony-thing ye canna prove. Hoo dae ye ken they had spades in Adam's time?"

"Do you think, James Reid," quoth David, lookin' doon wi' great dignity, "do ye think the Lord wis gaun to let Adam delve the yaird o' Eden wi' his fingers?"

It's funny hoo this should come into my heid at sic a solemn time, but the interruption wis real droll.

So puir David Whammond has won awa'. His wis a faithfu' life, an' he had been spared to work out his guid twal 'oors i' the vineyard. It wud hae been an unchristian thing to vex. I gaed awa' doon to his dochter's to see his remains, and I must alloo it wis as bonny a corp as ever I saw. Weel, as I wis comin' awa' his dochter took me into the wee room where he keepit his books, and she tak's doon ane that had been weel read and weel thoom't.

"Here," quoth she, "here is a book he greatly prized himself. This is a book he understood better than mony a minister. Ane o' his last requests wis that you should get it, for, he said, there never wis onybody in his class could answer the questions like you."

I took the book and opened it, wi' tears in my een, as ye may jaloose. It wis carefully interleaved, and bore written notes in a clear, roun' han.' When the mist cleared frae my een I saw it wis the "Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechism,' bound in ane.

"Weel," thinks I, "wis there ever a more providential bequest? It wis maist as wonnerfu' as when my cousin, Jen Spreull, dee't an' left me the Trongate property." Willie Warstle had puzzled me sair wi' his questions, and my heart had nearly sunk within me; but the path o' duty wis noo clear. My auld maister, David Whammond, had wrestled wi' a' the kittle points for a lifetime, and I wis sure that in his notes everything wud be made plain. I left the hoose o' my deceased benefactor greatly strengthened, feeling that I had been providentially armed for the difficult task that lay before me.

CHAPTER XI.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.



FELT geyan flattered, I can tell ye, when Maister Fleming, egged up by Dr. Threshie, the minister-schulemaister in Montrose Street, minted the notion that I should put these ramblin' sketches in a book.

"Gae wa'," says I, wi' modest affableness, "wud ye really even sic a bold thing to me?"

But a' the same, I wis by-ordinar' weel pleased to ken that a professional lawyer like Maister Fleming, and a doctor o' deveenity like Dr. Threshie, wha had written a learned treatis on the Book o' Revelations, should think sae weel o' me as to believe I could write a book that onybody wud read.

Weel, thinks I, if I am to write a book, I maun be real natural, and just stick to fac's, for I ken fine I haena that divine afflawtus o' genius that enables poets and ithers to mak' gran' books oot o' naething ava. I fand oot that it wis the openion o' these twa learned men that I should tell the

world hoo I wis born, what the impressions on my young mind were efter I began to notice, and, generally, the things that had happened to mysel' and my family between that early period and the time o' my opening my flett o' rooms in George Street to student ludgers, as set forth in the first chapter.

Weel, as I said before, I maun stick to fac's. If I had been gifted wi' a great imagination, I micht hae made a fine thing o' my birth, for, as I learned frae Peter Spale, the cooper, I wis born on Hogmanay. Ye may be sure Peter and my faither had a guid blash o' toddy that nicht; and, I am positeeve, it wud only be oot o' defference to the new comer if they hadna a stiff releegious argyment, and high words, or they were dune. But o' this I canna be expekit to speak wi' dogmatic certainty. Hooever, as I've heard tell, the first year o' my existence wis signaleesed by some remarkable events—for the collery broke oot in the Bell o' the Brae, and, as the infection spread rapidly through the densely-populated districts, to wit, the Havannah, Bell's Wynd, and Spoutmouth, it wrocht deadly havoc amongst puir folk; next, a wild bull, that had broken lowse frae the buchts, cam' rampagin' up the Drygate, and, in its mad career, knocked the barrels aff a sour milk cairt, tossed lame Jamie, the chapman, heads ower heels into the cyver, and wis at last brocht to reason in front o' a looking-glass behint the coonter in William Walley's cheenie shop, on seeing the pictur o' a bull, lookin' fully as wild as itsel'; and last, but no' least, as the sayin' is, for comin' nearer hame, some gangeral gipsies, that had been encamping doon i' the Molendinar Glen, broke into oor ain hen-hoose, and took awa' ten as guid laying hens as ever stood on a bauk, no' to speak o' the cock, and a couple o' bantams, that my faither had got as a present for me frae Fredrick Fan, the deacon o' the weavers. Still-an'-on, we had reason to be thankfu', for neither the bull nor the collery cam'

near us; as for the hens and the bantams, I kent naething about them from my ain personal knowledge, and I believe my faither and mither sune won ower the loss.

I got through wi' the measles real easy; but the chincough set doon unco sair on my system—in truth, I got sic a shake, and croichled awa' sae lang, that my mither had to tak' me doon to the waterside at Govan for a change o' air, where we bidet for three weeks wi' my mither's marriet sister, Mrs. Brodie, and where we baith experienced great benefit to oor health frae the change o' scene and the caller air. My mither often boasted that I never had much fash wi' my teeth. Neither my first nor my second set ever cost me ony trouble; the only pain that I experienced ava on that score wis when my wisdom teeth cam' at the age o' twelve; for the gums were saur wauket, and my mither had to tak' me twice to the Dispensary at the Royal Infirmary and get the gums scarified



before the teeth could win through. I shouldna say't mysel', but I min' it wis lookit upon as a maist uncommon thing for a lassie at twelve to have cutit her wisdom teeth. Mysie Deans.

the mantymaker i' the Rottenrow, said it wis a perfect wonder, that my mither wud need to tak' great care o' my head, and no' let it grow ower fast, for I wis real fond o' readin' pictur books and the like; being a bit thin slip o' a lassie, I believe it wis thocht my head nicht grow to be ower muckle for my bodily system.

I don't know whether ony o' them ever jaloosed I should write a book, as I have been advised to do by twa edicated professional men, but I min' ance Beeny Fortune, the spaewife, ca'd when my faither wis at a meetin' o' the cordiners, just efter the last time we had been at the Dispensary. My mither made the spaewife some unco strong tea, and sent me oot a message. I could see the bottom and sides o' Beeny's cup were black wi' the tea grunds, and my mither's face wis flushed and happy-like, when I got back.

"Martha," she says, laying her hands on my shouther efter-hin' when we were by oorsels, "ye maunna tell yer faither that Beeny Fortune wis here. Aye try to do what's richt; dinna forget to read yer Bible, my lassie, and mind ye dinna gang near the College efter gloamin'—for it's borne in on me, and I canna help sayin' t, that whaever leeves to see it, ye'll be a credit to us yet."

I kent Beeny Fortune had been tellin' her something, but I held my tongue.

About this time an important incident happened in the family, which I maunna forget to tell. A cousin o' my mither's, a major in the East India army, had come hame wi' a pension, and settled wi' a young wife—an English ledy that he had got on the wye hame—in a nice bit self-contained hoose in the neighbourhude o' Partickhill, no' far frae the river Kelvin. Weel, as they had nae weans o' their ain, naething wud please him but he wud hae me to bring up. My faither

and mither had a lang confab ower the proposal. They were a genteel family, there wis fine caller air on the banks o' the Kelvin, and what not; the upshot o't wis that ae spring mornin' I wis entrusted to the care o' the Partick carrier, and about mid-day I wis safely landed at Cashmere Cottage, the name o' the major's place. This wis my first experience o' the worl' awa' frae hame, and it wis a bad beginnin'. The major, I think, wis the daftest bein' oot o' India, and, to tell the truth, his wife wisna muckle better than himsel'. It wis said the sun had been ower strong for his head, and I can weel believe it, for he wis the hot-headedest man I ever saw. They were aye quarrelling and aye makin't up again. She wis a heap younger than himsel', and he blamed her for haein' nae sympathy wi' him.

Weel, ae day there wis a terrible pliskie atween them. The major, thinkin' to bring her to and try her affection for him,



ran into his study, fired aff a pistol, and fell heavily on the flair, as if mortally wounded. I'm no leein' when I tell ye that he must have lain there for at least twenty meenits; and ye

may weel imagine his disgust when at the end o' that time he got to his feet (of coorse there wis naething wrang wi' him) and fand his wife coolly sittin' i' the next room, readin' the "Tales o' the Borders." Efter that I cam' hame. *

* I don't wonder at this resolve—if I may be allowed to make the remark without offence—the people were clearly very foolish. The atmosphere of such a home was not healthy for a precocious and observing girl.—ED.

CHAPTER XII.

THAT BURSAR AGAIN!



IT wis a Monday morning, and as nice a day as onybody could wish to see, though the air ootby wis a thoct cauld. I could hear Mrs. M'Culloch's lark, that she aye put ootside the window on fine days, liltin' awa' to itsel', bringin' to my mind the time I spent wi' my mither's sister at the waterside in Govan, when I wis gettin' better o' the chincough. I mindet hoo I used to sit on a plaid on the gress, before my auntie's door, makin' up babs o' buttercups and listenin' to the whir o' the shuttles, and the daud, daudin' o' the lays i' the loomshops. Then my mither wud steal oot wi' a jeelie-piece, preen the wee shawl tichter about my throat, and chaarge me ower and ower again to rin inbye, a' my pith, whenever I felt the kink comin' on.

Thinks I, "Weel, it's no' every day I'm i' the mood for writin', but here is my early days comin' back to my min' quite poetical; and, as I hae promised Mr. Fleming to say something about my youthfu' impressions and my upbringing, noo's the time." Sae I got oot my papers, and had spelt my name to see hoo the pen wud write. The ideas were comin' into my mind in the most beautifu' order, when lo! the door opened, and Willie Warstle stepped ben.

"What noo?" quoth I, wishin' to teach him mainners.

"Hoo lang will it be till ye learn to chap at the door o' a lady's sanktom before ye gang ben? Hae ye no' read o' great thinkers haein' their trains o' thoct broken by the wanton interruption o' senseless folk?" I felt I had great power o' expression that day.

"O," says he, kind o' vexed like, "I didna ken ye were engaged. There wis something on my mind I wanted to ask ye about, but I can wait till again."

I admit I wis curious as to what the laddie had to say, for he had a face that, wi' doonricht seriousness, looked for a' the world like Jamie Thrum's fiddle.

"Weel," quoth I, "I'm geyan busy the day, but if ye hae anything on yer mind that's fashin' ye, maybe the suner ye tell me 't the better."

Noo, ye will hardly believe me when I mention what serious thochts had been passin' through that callant's head. He had made by-ordinar' progress wi' the Catechism; it seemed nae langer a task to him. For some weeks back, when ither laddies were playin' at fitba' and siclike gymnastic games, he wud sit in his wee room read, readin' awa' at the Question Book; in fact he seemed to have ta'en a likin' till 't, and though his questions whiles showed he hadna grippet the kittle doctrines by the richt en', still-an'-on he had a wonnerfu' uptak' for a callant o' his years. It would seem that Dr. Langehaffs, the Cameronian minister, had been preachin' the nicht afore on the "Decrees," and, amang ither things, had spoken o' the salvation o' elect infants; but stated in a wye that I think wis maybe dogmatic enough, that bairns who werena amang the elect number were lost. In support o' this doctrine he quoted the "Confession o' Faith," the which Willie had been puzzlin' ower sin' syne, an' wis in a bonny state when he cam' to speak about it.

"But," quoth I, "ye needna fash yer heid wi' the 'Decrees' till ye win into Theology. Thae professor bodies hae a wonderfu' power o' explainin' things awa'."

"Ay," says he, "but it's either true or it's no true, and I don't want it explained awa; the only sister ever I had died when she wis five"—the callant here filled up—"and if such a deevilish doctrine be true I *wud*——"

"Wheesht, wheesht!" quoth I, for he wis excited, and I feared he micht say something rash under the impulse o' strong feelin'.

"Noo," thinks I, "this is a case for David Whammond;" so I goes ower to the bookshelf and tak's doon the precious volume he had legated to me, and turned up the place to learn his views; but the passage, it seems, had puzzled even this saintly man. It wis clear frae the notes he had written his opeenion at different times, and they showed a gradual gatherin' o' licht, no' to say caution, as he advanced in years. These were his several observes on the passage that sae sairly exercised the laddie's mind—"A solemn and profound doctrine."
 . . . "A mysterious and kittle question that shouldna be dogmatised aboot." Then later: "There is naething that I can see to hinder the Almichty electin' to save a' infants that dee young."

Here at last wis a grain o' comfort for the puir callant wha wis sae sair distressed aboot his infant sister. So efter tellin' him he wisna to vex like them that had nae hope, and that Dr. Langchaffs wis fully as likely to be wrang as David Whammond, he gaed back to his lessons greatly consoled. But what dae ye think happened next? I suppose the mair the youthfu' mind is bent forcibly in ae gate the mair likely it is to spring back the ither wye when the strain is ta'en awa'.

That nicht I wis sittin' a' by my lane, ponderin' ower the



happy and serious change that had come ower the laddie's min'; the progress o' his moral edication wis an unco comfort to me seein' hoo raw the material wis when he fell into my hands. Weel, just as I wis in the middle o' these ruminations, the oot-side door bell played ding wi' sic fury that I nearly fell to the grun' wi' fricht; but I can tell ye my case wasna muckle mended when a grim polis offisher cam' in and telt me that this same callant, Willie Warstle, the bursar, wha had sae lately shed tears ower the stern doctrine o' the "Decrees," wis at that identical moment safe and sound in a prison cell. I wis perfect dumfunert, and for the instant fairly tint my reason, no' to speak o' my seven senses.

This wis a bonny pliskie! It is true, he put on his coloured cap before he gaed oot, to attend an election meetin' o' students i' the gloamin', and I kent frae a lang experience that students aye gang oot o' their judgment whenever they put thae coloured things on their heads.

"But, mercy on us," says I, "there maun be some haloosinnashon—some, some mistake—are ye sure the laddie's name is Warstle?"

The constable wis real ceevil, nae doot feelin' for the sad pickle I wis in, he telt me that there had been a torchlicht procession o' students, led on by a brass band, consistin' o' three trambones, a base fiddle, and a big drum. There had been riotous conduct endangerin' the lieges, no' to speak o' the destruction o' several sign-brods, hauf-a-dizzen lamps, forbye the pu'in doon o' a gilt lamb that flourished abune the door o' a weel-kent haberdasher in ane o' the public thoroughfares. It wis most awfu'.

I paid the bail. I couldna think o' the laddie lyin' a' nicht in a damp cell, amang keelies and ither riff-raff law-breakers. Efter a' there micht be some mistake.

Next mornin' I gaed to the coort wi' Maister Fleming the writer. It wis a sad, sad sicht to see sae mony braw, weel-put-on, bright-faced laddies ranged in front o' the bar o' justice. The judge had a warm side to the prisoners, for he gied a sair hecklin' to some o' the witnesses; but when I heard three constables, a licht porter, and a nicht watchman, giein' their sworn testimony that the prisoner, William Warstle, had been seen to fling a rape ower the haberdasher's sign—the gilt lamb—and that he and anither, wha stood near him in the dock,



had pu'd the different ends o' the rape till the thing cam' doon on the pavement wi' a clash, I couldna but feel that the sentence—twa guineas or fourteen days—wis, on the whole, reasonable and just.*

Weel, weel, thinks I, as I paid doon the siller, this beats a' the student laddies ever I fed. This bursary business is gaun to cost me a bonny penny or a's dune. It gied me something to think aboot, and for the young and rising generation

* This sentence I thought an exceedingly mild one, considering the gravity of the offence, but the Fiscal was a friend of my own and knowing, as he did, that the punishment, *videlicet*, the paying of the fine, would fall on my client, he did not press for a heavy penalty.—Ed.

the event is no' without a moral. Truly, oor best impressions are like the mornin' cloud and the early dew that passeth away! Yesterday he wis moved to tears ower the sermon o' a Cameronian minister, to-day he is convicted for the destruction o' an honest haberdasher's gilt sign. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall!"



CHAPTER XIII.

SCHOOL EXPERIENCES.



S I said before, I had cuttit baith my wisdom teeth or I wis weel into my twelfth year. My mither, bless her memory, wis unco upliftit about the occurrence, the mair especial as her feelin's were worked on by Beeny Fortune, the spaewife, Mysie Deans, the mantymaker, and ither offee-shus neebours; but it's no' for me to dwell on that as a matter o' special merit, for I didna bring the thing on mysel', neither could I hinder the course o' natur', or lift up my voice, had I been willin', against what wis decreet before I wis born. Indeed, to tell the gospel truth, as I am bound to do, baith as a matter o' honour to mysel' and as a duty to those that come efter me, I canna say I wis a grain wycer efter a' the scari-feein' and trouble o' gettin' the teeth, than ither lassies o' my ain age that had still the ordale to gang through. I wis a real don at the "peeveral," "there cam' dukes," "Babity bowster," and ither youthfu' games. I could even tak' a turn at "I spy," and "Keep the corbie frae the craw," wi' the callants, but I showed nae predeleckshon ava' for buik learnin'. Indeed, durin' a' my schule carrickilum the only thing that I ever excelled in wis the spellin' o' big words. Hooever, it has been

often noticed before that clever folk were slow at the uptak' in early life. The great licht o' gen'us ken'les but slowly, as the poet has said; whereas early cleverness is like a lichtit peeoy that fizzes awa' at a bonny rate for a while, but sune burns itsel' oot.

The schule I attendit wis an auld loomshop in Shuttle Street, wi' an earthen fluir. The maister wis lame, an' the best shot wi' the tawse ever I saw. He seldom meddlet us lassies, but twa'r three times a day we wud hear something whizzin' through the air, ower oor heads, and this wis the tawse wingin' their flight to some delinquent's lugs. The maister's aim wis sure as death, as I can get grown-up witnesses still to testify. The culprit wis thereupon summonsed to return the tawse. Ye may be sure he had a bad five meenits efter that. I wud back the maister, when angry, for bein' the frichtsomest being ye could find within fifty miles o' Shuttle Street. His big roon face wis aye red, but it became redder as the passion got the better o' him, his een the while workin' oot o' his head like oppera glesses, till ye wud think they were comin' to meet ye, and that he himsel' wis gaun to tum'le aff his stule in an apoplexy fit.

Ae day an incident occurred of an unusual character that made a deep impression on us. Tammas Taigle, the tatie merchant's son, wha leaved wi' his faither at the corner o' Burrell's Lane, wis the biggest boy i' the schule, and a great favourite wi' his class-fellows. He had an awfu' gen'us for drawin pictur's on slates. On this particular day wee Francie Strain wis unco keen to ken what an elephant wis like. Tammas, wha had been at the wild beast show, then located at the foot o' the Sautmarket, took Francie's slate and began to trace the ootlines o' a sonsie elephant, much to the delight of ane or twa o' his neebours, when the air was suddenly rent



asunder, and the next instant the heavy-fingert tawse labbit wi' a stingin' clash on Tammas' jaw-blade. The callant loupit richt up in the air; and nae wonner. He got a mortal fricht, forby bein' hurt in his feelin's. We were a' vext for him. Like maist generous natures, Tammas wis unco quick i' the temper.

"Come here wi' thae tawse," the maister roared. Tammas seized them tightly in his han', and, takin' a race into the middle o' the fluir, gart them play flee at the maister's head, strikin' him on the face, and carrying aff his wig.

"Noo," said Tammas, "hoo div ye like that yersel', ye auld draigon?"

Then he gaed coolly back for his books and his bonnet, and bade us a' good-bye and left the schule. The thing filled us wi' mortal terror. Such a darin' deed had never been heard tell o'. It seemed to me that chaos had come. Efter sic anarky and defiance o' constitutit authority, the end o' a' things must be near. The storm, hooever, blew by. To oor great surprise and delight there wis neither imprisonment nor shedding o' bluid; but Tammas Taigle never drew an elephant, nor liftit a pen, in Shuttle Street schule again.

I manna forget to mention that about this time my edication wis for a time suspendet in consequence o' a hack in my heel. At first it wis thocht to be a simple and natural enough thing; but as it wis dour o' healin', Peter Spale gaed doon to ane Mrs. Wark in the Gallowgate, wha wis famous for the sale o' hive water, and ither kosmetics for the skin, and brocht back wi' him a wee box o' her patint healin' saw. The effect o' this eyntment wis to be mirawclas, and sae it turned oot to be, for in less than a week's time my fit and leg were fearfu' to see, havin' hoved up abune a' natural bounds, insomuch that I couldna put my fit below me, and had to sit a' day wi't prappit

up before me on a chair. My faither wished to send for a doctor, but my mither wud hear o' no sic thing. She felt sure they wud be gled o' a leg like that for the college, and what wis to hinder them frae chackin't aff and makin' a speckilation o't before the students?

At that time there wis a releegious body in the east-end o' the toon, ca'in' themsel's Latter-Day Saints. They had been haudin' great meetin's and makin' a heap o' converts. Mrs. Gomorrow, the greengrocer i' the Drygate, had got baptest into the body, and naething wud dae but that my mither should alloo ane o' the elders to come and pray wi' me and pass his hand ower the place. They had removed "incomes," no to speak o' the "rose," "white swellin's," and divers other diseases. Weel, the elder cam' ae nicht when my faither wis at a meetin' o' the Incorporation o' Cordiners—for my mither wis feart they should meet. He wis a black-aviced, laigh-set man, wi' sma' grey beads o' een, and an unco deep voice. He prayed as Christian a prayer as onybody could wish, passin' his hand the while ower the place affected, but I wis terribly disappointed when, efter prayin' a' his pith, there wisna ae bit o' odds on the leg. I had thocht a' day about Naaman, the leper, and the wondrous change that cam' ower him efter dippen seven times i' the River Jordan, and fully expectit my cure wud be something like that. He said, hooever, it wis want o' faith, and urged my mither to come wi' Mrs. Gomorrow to their meetin's and be baptest. He cam' back efter that to argy wi' my faither, but as he had heard in the meantime what had already taken place, he met the elder in the trance as he wis comin' ben, and seizin' the black body by the cuff o' the neck ran him to the door, and dippet his head in a byne o' sapples that my mither had been scorin' blankets in. It wis real droll to see the cratur' makin' aff doon the Bell-o'-the-Brae

shakin' the water frae his haffets, wi' my faither cryin' efter him that the next time he cam' there wi' his Latter-Day heresies, he wud gie him a different kind o' baptism.*

Weel, efter that I wis put under the hand o' Daniel Dockan,



the herbalist in the Trongate. He said that Mrs. Wark's saw wis rank pushion, and micht hae cost me my life, let abe my leg. Frae that day I began to get better, but it wis slow progress at the best, and I may say that frae this simple cause I lost the better pairt o' a half-year's schulin'.

* This incident was characteristic of the man. His zeal for pure and undefiled religion was indeed great. He was sore vexed with the devisive courses which were prevalent in the so-called Christian church of the day, and as the byne was handy it was natural enough to suppose that this intermeddling defiler would be none the worse of a dook.—ED.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BLACK YEAR.



THE year that followed the eventful incidents in last chapter wis fu' o' singular misfortunes. So much so, that my faither aye efterwards referred to it as the "black year." The price o' leather went up ayont a' bounds. My faither, wha used to keep a journeyman and an apprentice, could barely get work enough for himsel'. Such a year o' solin', heelin', and patchin'-up auld feet-gear wis past a' experience. Wattie Welt, the 'prentice, thinkin' the feet had been ca'd frae the business, broke through the articles o' his indenture, and ran aff to sea, efter he had ser't three years o' his time. This wis a sad blow, as my faither had spared nae pains to mak' him a guid workman, and young as he wis, he could last, inseam, and ca' in tackets as if he had been years at the trade. When skins were dear ye couldna expect butchermeat to be cheap; and this, combined wi' a late harvest, a failure in the petawtas, and an epidemic amongst oor chickens, that carried awa' brood efter brood as sune as they could pick their lane, made us think that some awfu' judgment wis aboot to fa' on the land. Peter Spale, wha wis aye lookin' oot for signs and wonders in the heavens above, and the earth beneath, blamed these misfortunes on the comet that had that year sailed through oor horizon,

trailin' a muckle tail efter it, that filled us a' wi' fear. I min' hoo it wis said, if the thing lost its eckwillebrim, or broke lowse frae the invisible power that controlled its movements, it micht fa' doon on us wi' a clash, and burn up the worl' like a shavin'. This wis the popular fear; but Peter Spale said such a thing wis not necessary to oor total destruction. He argued that the same purpose wud be ser't if we just got a wap wi' its tail. The comet, hooever, at length passed, and we were left face to face wi' dear leather and the ither troubles I have already described.

My faither aye looket deeper into things than Peter Spale, wha wis but a superfisnal obseryer. He held that the true cause o' oor temporal trials didna lie in the movement o' the heavenly bodies, which were governed by immutable laws. We had to look lower for the root o' the evil. The cause o' a' the mischief, he believed, lay in the kirk itsel'. Moderatism, Patronage, forced Settlements—the placin' o' the messengers o' peace ower congregations at the point o' the bayonet—wis at the bottom o't.

But a' these disputations and troubles were rudely dung oot o' oor heads by the crowning misfortune o' a'—my mither's death. I hadna sense at the time to ken what a loss it wis, but I min' a' the incidents braw an' weel to this day. Babie Brewster, my mither's sister-in-law, wha leaved in the Cowcaddens, cam', as sune as she heard o' the sad event, to pay the last services to the dead; and, as she said, "to see that everything wis dune decent and wycelike." Honest Mrs. Spale, oot o' regaird for my mither, her close friend and nearest neighbour, offered to dae what wis needed, but my auntie wud hear o' nae such thing. So she cam' in and took the management o' everything in her ain hands, makin' the offensive remark to Mrs. Spale, that "bluid wis thicker nor water."



Weel, the tears that wumman shed wis most awfu' to see. I tried to greet wi' her for a while, thinkin' I had the best richt, being the nearest bluid relation o' the deceased; but the tears failed me at last, and I had to gie't up. I min' the first thing she did wis to cover up the lookin'-gless, stop the nock, and pu' doon the blinds.

"An awfu' like thing," she said, "to think o' a corp i' the hoose an' the blinds no doon; but, puir lass, ye ken nae better, an' yer faither has never been used to trouble. Noo, we maun get wax caun'les, Martha; but stop, whare does yer mither keep her dresses and things? I maun see about the hoose, because there'll be odds and en's wantet, and it's no' to be expected yer faither kens whare everything lies. Men are awfu' senseless at a time like this, Martha. They can neither greet nor work, and they're aye in yer road. Nae doot they think plenty; but if thinkin' dings ye stupid and keeps ye frae workin', what's the use o't? There's a heap to look to, lass, when death comes. Folk maun dae what lies to their han' first an' greet efter hin'. That, noo. But, Martha, lass, we maun hae the caun'les. It'll no dae to forget them. Rin you doon to the tallow chaun'ler's i' the High Street, an' get twa o' his best wax caun'les—min', they maun be wax."

When I left she wis rummagin' through the kist o' drawers an' greetin' a' the time, as if her heart wud break.

Weel, what do you think, efter the funeral wis past and we had time to settle doon and look about us, we discovered that this same wumman, my auntie-in-law, Mrs. Babie Brewster, had helped hersel' to the maist o' my late mither's dresses and under-clothing, no' to speak o' a brent new pair o' boots that had only been twice on; that, in fact, while she wis thrang sheddin' tears for the dead, she wis as busy makin' up her pack at the expense o' the leevin'. The thing wud never have been dis-

covered but for the suspicion o' Mrs. Spale, wha bein' sae intimate wi' my mither, could describe and identify the articles that had been taken away.

I never saw my faither in sic a rage as he wis in when he fand oot that this wumman wi' her ostentashious grief had been robbin' us right and left, under the guise o' friendship, and that, at a time when we were surrounded wi' sae much mental and material afflichin. It wis a bonny turn up, and but for the near relationship which her guidman stood in to her that wis awa', I solemnly believe my faither wud have handed her ower to the tender mercies o' justice.

Truly this wis a year o' great hardship and trial, but at the end o't I wis a guid wheen years aulder than at the beginnin'. What wi' bad trade, a puir harvest, and the epidemic among oor ain chickens, I had learned that life, so to speak, wis fu' o' mysterious uncertainties. I had learned, besides, anither thing, and that wis the deceitfulness o' tears!

CHAPTER XV.

AT A HYDROPATHIC.



'M no' leein' when I tell ye that the thread o' this discourse wis as near nicked as ever onything wis in this mortal and sinfu' worl'. Four hale weeks hae passed by since I finished my last chapter, and truly I had sic fears that it wud be my last that I instructet my law adviser,

Maister Fleming, in case onything should happen, to write ye a posthummas article saying that I wis cuttet aff in the prime o' my usefulness wi' my autobiography little mair than hauf finished, and that though the worl' had suffered a great loss thereby, inasmuch as I had still some highly moral and instructive reflections to set doon, I wisna to be held blameable, for, in truth, it wis the very last thing wud have gi'en in to mysel'.

"Noo, Maister Fleming, there maun be an epytaff," says I, efter I had left him a heap o' orders.

"Weel," says he, laying aside his glesses wi' great solemnity, "I'll take your instructions." *

* I own I was sorely grieved at finding my fair client so ill, but professional etiquette prevented me committing anything to writing without orders. I respectfully admit I could have said much in praise of her virtues, but as she herself is a woman of extraordinary talent I thought she might have something important to communicate at such a crisis. As to the immediate effect of my conduct on the patient's health, I have no apology to offer.—Ed.

“My what?” quoth I, jumping to my elbow and flingin’ my arms ower the counterpane; “must a virtuous, weel-leevin’, no’ to say God-fearin’ wumman, wha has foundet a bursary and written the better part o’ an autobiography, condescend to gie instructions about her epytaff? Na, na, gin it comes to that I’ll leave my name to posterity, and if naebody thinks it worth while to put a *mementae* on my tombstone, I’ll no’ lea’ it i’ their power to say I inditet and paid for letterin’ my ain virtues.”

Maister Fleming wis vexed, and tried to explain the thing awa’. Had I deet then, I believe I wud have gotten as fine an inscription as ever ony lawyer wrote on a headstane; but I wis in ower great a temper to dee. At that instant I must have got the turn, for when the doctor cam’ next he stared as if somebody had worked miracles on me, and when I telt him the cause, he wis like to fa’ doon in a fit wi’ laughin, and said it wud be a while before I needed an epytaff yet, as a’ I wanted noo wis nourishing diet and a change o’ air.

Weel, it wis some days before I could venture on a change. Mrs. Warnock, the baker’s wife in George Street, wis unco attentive, and advised that I should gang to Rothesay and tak’ the mineral watters; but when I telt Willie Warstle, wha is noo in the logic class i’ the College, he laughed at the senselessness o’ the wumman advising onybody to try and get up their strength on mineral watters. He thought, hooever, that I might gang to a hydropatic establishment, and as the callant has lately shown himsel’ wise and thoughtfu’ ayont his years, I took his advice.

Noo, before I gaed to the establishment, I wis warned that I shouldna tell the doctor I had been ill, as a’ I needed to set me up wis nourishing food and caller air. It wis a great muckle hoose, furnished frae bottom to top like a Sultan’s

palace, but the withdrawin' room beat a' ever I saw. The wa' were lined wi' great lookin'-glasses in gilt frames, an' showed me sae mony views o' my ain figure that I had to steal into the recess o' a window to hide frae mysel'. There wud, maybe, be some twenty or thirty in the room—men and women. The men maistly sleepin' on grand easy chairs, the women either knitting or pretending to read, though I could see frae the lookin'-glasses that the readers were lookin' ower their books at me. By and by a grand buxom duchess rises frae the fire and planks hersel' doon beside me at the window. She wis unco free, and speered a heap o' questions, naming me by my name.

"Ye hae the better o' me," quoth I, "for I dinna ken that we ever met afore."

"Oh!" quoth she, "I saw your name in the book; are ye related to the Trongate Spreulls?"

"The late Jen Spreull wis a second cousin on my faither's side."

"Oh! my," says she, "I kent her weel." In a short time I fand oot that the great duchess wis a wumman; that, in fact, she wis the wife o' a ham-curer in Brunswick Street, named Bacon. She wis about the healthiest-like wumman ever I saw; but she talked even on for aboot a quarter o' an hour to show me what a complication o' ailments she had. Then I got the personal history o' every ither wumman in the room besides a full, true, and particular account o' what wis wrang wi' them, so that when I gaed in to dinner I kent the company as weel as if I had bidit in the hoose for a week.

Being the last arrival, I wis set doon by the side o' the doctor at the head o' the table. He wis a thin, gaunt, lang-chaffed man, wha said little, and minded his ain plate. Mrs. Bacon, wha sat on the ither side o' me, had plenty to say in the withdrawing-room, but she wis quate enough noo. As an



eater, she micht have been Rab Haw's cousin. I never saw her equal. Her complaint wis—a great load on the stomach efter meals—heart-burn and palpitation—and nae wonder. But, in fact, they were nearly a' as bad—I mean the women—for they ate during the forty minutes alloo't for dinner as if they had been on piece-work. When the doctor had reached the puddin' stage he began to look about him and saw me.

Efter the dinner wis ower he touched me on the airm, invited me into his consultin'-room, and presented me wi' a copy o' the "Water Cure." I wis touched wi' the man's kindness, and tried to thank him for the book.

"Read it," he said; "I fear there is something the matter wi' your digestive organs."

"Dear me," quoth I, "dae ye think sae?"

"Ay," he said; "your food should give you more flesh."

I thought o' Mrs. Bacon, wi' her mountainous figure, and wondered whether mair flesh, heart-burn, and palpitation wud be a benefit; but his kindness hadna exhausted itself.

"Here," he said, gaun ower to a press and bringing oot a piece o' water-proof in his hand; "this is a stomach-compress. Apply that as described in the book, and I think it will do you good." I had never received sae much attention before from an entire stranger, so I thanked him for his great courtesy and carried the presents up to my room.

Next morning efter breakfast a gey stout, red-faced-lookin' wumman cam' up to me in the lobby, and, addressing me by name, said the doctor had told her I should hae a hot pack.

"A hot pack," quoth I; "what's that?"

"Oh!" quoth she, "it's a bath."

"Weel," quoth I, "the doctor has been real kin', and if he thinks a hot bath is guid for me I hae nae objections."

So at the time appointed I met the red-faced wumman in

the lobby, and she led the way into a long room wi' sma' apartments on either hand, screened aff by curtains.

She put me into ane o' them, telt me to undress, and left a hot sheet wi' me. When I wis undressed she led me into a hot room. Thinks I this is gaun ower the score; I never can stan' this. Talk o' the Indays—it wis like walking into a burning, fiery furnace.

“Excuse me,” says I; “I hinna muckle flesh, but what I hae will be burned aff my back if I stay here.”

She smiled as if I had made a humorous remark, and led me further ben. Then she laid me doon on a shelf—for by this time I wis quite helpless—and put a wet sheet ower me, then on the top o' that she put a rug, and efter tucking me in like a baby she left me lying on my back. I must have fented several times before she ever looked near me again.

I saw figures moving aboot in the dim light, and I dreamed I wis a lassie again on the Bell o' the Brae, and saw my faither and mither, and Peter and Mrs. Spale, and the lame schulemaister, in Shuttle Street, wi' Tammas Taigle in the middle o' the flair shieing the tawse at his heid, and carrying aff his wig.

In the middle o' my dream I felt the rug and the sheet wis being removed, and I saw the red-faced wumman nearly naked beckoning me to follow her. On going into the next room I wis placed in a sma' circular box, but what wis to come next I couldna tell; by and by a thousand jets o' watter stung me wi' a comfortable heat—I turned round and round, for the points were jagging me like needles; then it got cooler, then caulder, until at last I fairly came to my senses, lost my breath, and ran oot o' the thing a'thegither, telling the wumman that I wudna submit to that for the Queen on the throne. Weel, I can tell you I wis glad to get awa' wi' my life. Efter that I stayed six days at the establishment, there wis, hooever, nae mair

hot packs for me. I felt greatly improved when I left, but I had a bonny bill to pay. I could neither mak' head nor tail o' t at the time, though on looking at the account efter-hin', I found amongst the details that I wis charged for a book on "The Water Cure," a stomach-compress, and a medical consultation. "The Water Cure" I havena read, and the compress has never been on, so if ye ken ony charitable or benevolent institution that wud value sic things, I am willing to part wi' them as a donation in kind.

About the doctor's grace before meat I have just a word to say or I'm dune.

"For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us thankful," wis what I heard the first day I went there. Thinks I, doctor, ye're in a hurry the day, having omitted to ask a blessing on the meal, but it was the same request to be made thankfu', even on, as lang as I was there, till I wis sick o't.

Noo, gratitude, if worth onything ava', oucht to be spontaneous, and if the Lord has to *mak'* a man thankfu' for a guid healthy meal o' meat, then, wi' a' reverence be it spoken, I think it's hardly worth His while.

CHAPTER XVI.

A HOLIDAY IN ARRAN.



O keep my promise, I write this frae the rocky shores o' Arran. For your information, I may say that Arran is an island surrounded by raging billows,

and is, I am told, even at low tide, entirely cut aff frae the adjacent country. Look where ye like, ye can see the ocean, The hills are the highest and barest I have ever seen, and they are whiles sae black and angry-like I am feart to look up at them. But the hooses are sadly oot-o'-keepin' wi' the hills for size. They mind me o' the wee thacket biggin' at the Water Raw in Govan where I stayed, lang syne, wi' my auntie for a change o' air when I wis gettin' better o' the chincough. In fact, there is some o' them no near sae big, for Mrs. Warnock telt me this vera day that when she wis puttin' on her claes i' the morning, she had to lift the sky-licht and put her head oot o' the window to straicht her hanches. Nevertheless, they tell me it's a favourite place; but if ye want to learn mair aboot it, consult the guide-books—in fact, ye'll get mair information in them than by traickin' ower the island, and ye save yersel' a heap o' trouble. Willie Warstle and I went yester-

day to see a muckle stane that they mak' a heap o' here, and on oor tellin' the guide that we feared it wis magnifeet, he assured us that it wis a much bigger stane than we supposed, as there wis a guid bit o't under the grun'. The guide-books are unco impressive readin' by themsels, but ye dinna hauf realise the cleverness o' the men wha write these books till ye gang and look at the things they describe for yersel'. The play o' fancy, and the force o' imagination they bring to bear on their wark, is most beautifu' to see, and wud mak' their fortune if they took to writin' romances.

We have had some wonnerfu' experiences since we cam' here, the which I must set doon in their order. The hooses are not only sma' but scarce. The only place we could get oor heads into when we landed wis a bit room and kitchen in a lang, straggly raw o' hooses at the fit o' a great range o' hills. It wis whitewashed ootside and papered inside, and seemed suitable enough for the bursar laddie and mysel'; so, efter makin' the bargain, we went back to the rock where we had left oor kist, and brocht it hame. Willie has an unco craze for fishin', so, efter dinner, naething wud dae but we must hae a boat and gang oot to fish. For weeks before, the callant had been preparing lines and hooks, and wis workin' awa' wi' pieces o' auld silver spoons, the which he worket into most curious shapes, and made sic an impression on my mind wi' his talk aboot savin' butcher-meat that I let him hire a boat; and as it wis a' the ae expense, I thocht I wud invite Mrs. Warnock to accompany us for the sake o' the sail and the sea-air. As neither Mrs. Warnock nor I kent onything aboot rowin' a boat, we engaged a big raw callant at sae much an hour to manage the oars.

Considerin' that the island is nearly oot o' sicht o' lan', the sea wis unco calm; so Willie, wha wis sittin' at the hin'-en' o'



the boat, puts his hooks into the water, and efter lettin' oot a lang piece o' the line, he settled doon and lookit into the air sae eager-like that Mrs. Warnock nudged me wi' her elbow and smiled, as much as to say, "Just look at the earnest face o' that callant."

Weel, we sailed alang for a while lookin' at the sea and the muckle hills, and the white hooses on the beach, when the boat gaed a jerk, and Willie Warstle jumpit to his feet.

"Sit doon," says I, "or ye'll coup the boat." Mrs. Warnock laid hold o' my airm, but the laddie never heeded us—he wis ower intent on pu'in' in his line. He had a fish on as sure as life, for it jumpit divers times oot o' the watter, and shook its head, as if it didna want into the boat.

Willie stuck by his prize, hooever, and in a few seconds brocht in as bonny a haddie as ye could see in ony shop window in Glasgow. I couldna help thinkin' on the contrivance of the callant, as he sat there wi' his sober face at the hin'-en' o' the vessel, bringing in fish efter fish till we had as mony as wud serve Mrs. Warnock and mysel' for twa days; sae we were thinkin' to turn, when the line plays 'whish' through the laddie's fingers again, and the four-cornered reel danced i' the bottom o' the boat, but wis cleverly grippet just as it wis gaun ower the side.

"Hold on, and I'll back-water," cried the callant at the oars; "ye hae got a richt ane this time."

This wis a time o' great peril, but I had the presence o' min' to lay hold o' the bit laddie's legs, for he wis hauf-wye ower the hin'-en' o' the boat, and the thing wis like to tak' him awa' a'thegither. Mrs. Warnock began to greet, and begged he wud cut the string; but the callant, though nae match for the fish in strength, had his wits about him, and gied the line twa turns roon' a pin on the side o' the boat, and held on. I could see

we were driftin' fast backward, and being afraid we might get carried oot to sea or landed on some desert shore, I appealed to Willie to let the line go. In this Mrs. Warnock warmly supported me. It wis maybe a whale, or a shark, or a sea serpent, she said, and she wisna prepared to dee.

But oor entreaties were in vain. The boatman telt us to gie him time. It wis, he said, a fine fish; there wis nae danger if we wud just let him hae his swing.

Meantime Willie held on like a true Briton. By and by the boat stopped gaun backward, and the line slackened. Mrs. Warnock thanked guidness the bruit wis awa', and Willie wound up the line wi' an expression o' disappointment on his face. I wis sorry to look at him; but while this feelin' wis passin' through my mind, the face changed as if by an electric shock. The line tightened, and backwards we went again—but this time wi' less force.

Weel, efter five minutes' struggle the laddie wis able to wind up, and the fish cam' dourly wi' him. Hand ower hand the cratur wis brought to the side o' the boat, and it wis frichtsme to see him lyin' in the watter lookin' up at us wi' his wide black een. He made twa or three struggles to win awa', and struck the side o' the boat wi' sic force that we had some fear the vessel micht spring a leak, and that we micht even yet find a watery grave within sicht o' land. The danger, however, wis averted, for the laddie at the oars had a lang stick wi' a cleek at the tae end o't, which he stuck into the chaffs o' the fish and dragged him into the boat. It wis an awfu' struggle.

The fish turned oot to be o' the cod order, and, as we efterwards found, weighed twelve pounds.

Weel, efter that we gaed hame, and as it was nearly dark, we had tea thegither. I saw Willie to bed, and went ower the shore to get the air and escort Mrs. Warnock to her ain door.

But imagine my horror when, on comin' back, I discovered the callant amissing.

This fishing business, thinks I, has ta'en his head. I went oot into the road and gave the alarm.

"Ring the toon bell," quoth I; "call oot the Milleshay, and wauken the sleepin' inhabitants; wha kens but my puir callant has risen in his sleep and walket ower a precipice into the sea."

There were some licht-headed young men standing near wha laughed and said it wis a guid joke—the callant had been eaten up alive. I met an auld gentleman, wha wis real decent, and I tauld him the story.

"Ah," says he, smiling, "I fear ye hae gotten into bad quarters—the place has the repute of not being over clean."

"Clean or no' clean," quoth I, "ye wud think his claes wud be left, but as it is there's no' a vestage o' him to be seen."

By this time the neighbours had turned oot, and just as an explorin' party wis settin' oot wi' sticks and lanthorns, the innkeeper, wha bides about a quarter o' a mile ower the shore, cam' along to say that efter finding oot the nature o' the place the callant had beat a hasty retreat to the inn, and wis noo fast asleep.

I needna tell ye that I wisna lang o' shakin' the dust o' that hoose aff my feet and in removing my kist. Willie Warstle is sittin' beside me as I write, and looks as if he wis sufferin' frae a sair brash o' the measles; but to tell ye the truth it's a mercy there wis ony o' 'im left ava. Ever since that memorable nicht we hae occupied apartments at the inn.

It seems I had gotten the only hoose in the place that wudna let. There were five papers on the wa'—a' on the tap o' ane anither.

CHAPTER XVII.

HENRY HERNBANE'S COURTSHIP



LET me see, whare wis I at? Maister Fleming reminds me that I have been makin' digressions. Weel, that's true—and nae doot yer critic will say this is a gey reel-ral autobiography; but life itsel' is unco reel-ral whiles, and it wud ill-become an honest wumman, charged as I am wi' the moral oversight and godly upbringing o' a bursar, to mak' things straicht when they should be crocket, or smooth when they should be rough, simply for the sake o' effect; na, na, we'll leave that to novelist-bodies wha's professed business it is to lee. The wheels o' real life dinna rin on rails like the steam coach or the tramway-car. They hae their ups and doons, and if they whiles stick in a dub, or rin into a sheuch, we maun e'en bide till they get oot before we can expect to mak' progress forret.

Noo, I admit the truth o' what Maister Fleming says, that there's still a *hiawtis* in my story between the time we leaved i' the Bell-o'-the-Brae and oor removal to George Street; but nae wumman likes to be hurried, and in this respect I'm just like the lave o' my sex—nevertheless, I'm comin' to the point in my ain wye.

I have already telt ye hoo Babie Brewster, my mither's sister-in-law, nearly robbed the hoose during a time o' sair

afflickshen and bereavement. Weel, the years following this ungodly event were, so to speak, marked by extraordinary material prosperity. Wellington boots were then a' the rage, and my faither's work having taken the fancy o' ane Major Macready, he sent us sic routh o' aristocratic customers we had to gie up oor bit hoose on the Bell-o'-the-Brae, and remove to lairger premises in George Street, that we nicht the better accommodate the gentle folk that drove up to oor door in their carriages to leave their measure.

Sae great wis ocr run o' fortune, that we had five journeymen and twa apprentices wi' bound indentures workin' at ae time frae six i' the morning till six at nicht—no to speak o' lang brashes o' overtime at the end o' the week. It wis a real heartsome time, wi' the gran' gentry callin' every day, and the siller increasin' in the bank till within twa or three hunner pounds, as my faither telt me, o' reachin' four figures.

At that time my faither wis only a tenant in the George Street hoose, but I maun tell ye hoo he became the laird. The owner o' the flett o' rooms, the tae half o' which wis occupied by us, and the tither by himsel', wis ane Henry Hernbane, a tyler.

The property wis said to have come into his hands through an uncle on his mither's side, but that mak's nae odds, only I want ye to understan' that it never wud have been his ava if he had had to work for 't himsel', for he wis ane o' the laziest beings I ever saw, and as inquisitive as lazy! Every carriage that cam' to the closs found him either lookin' owre the window, or stanin' wi' the door open to the length o' its chain, that he might see wha the new comer happened to be.

Having tried every means, by speirin' here, and speirin' there, to ken what my faither wis worth, he at last cam' straicht to the point and asked for a loan on the security o' the

property. Seein' there wis but bank interest on the money we had saved, my faither thocht ower the proposal, and efter due precautions about searches, deeds, and ither instruments, as they were ca'd, he lent the body the siller; but noo the man's purpose cam' oot. Kennin' we *had* siller he next laid his plans to win oot o' his obligation to my faither by offering his hand to me. Just as barefaced a piece o' impidence as ever I heard tell o', but I'm thinkin' he met wi' his match.

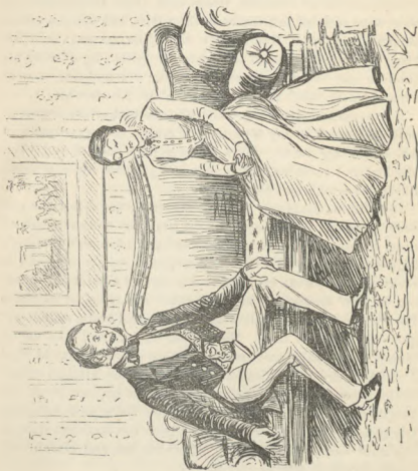
For a while efter he got the siller he took every chance o' putting himsel' in my wye, and in makin' himsel' ceevil—in fact senselessly ceevil. Weel, I wis as licht-hearted and fu' o' mischief as I could be, and as soon as I jaloused his intentions, I thocht I would lead the body on.

In troth, he could see plainly frae my looks that I wis just deein' for him. This fares on for a time, but he couldna afford to let me dee before his een, and lose baith me and my faither's hard-earned siller. So the creatur' plucks up courage, and ae nicht, when he kent my faither wis awa at a cordiners' meeting, he cam' in and asked if he could see me a' by my lane. He wis dressed in a swallow-tailed coat, and had a yellow kid glove on his left han'. He scraped and bowed like ane o' Queen Elizabeth's courtiers, and wis sic a comical fricht, that I could hardly contain mysel', till I got to the kitchen, where Betty Basin, the servant-wumman, and me had oor lauch oot thegither. Having arranged matters wi' Betty as to when she wis to appear on the scene, awa' I goes ben and sits doon at the ither end o' the sofa frae where he sat, and claspin' my hands, lookit as mim as ye like.

"Martha," says he, in a voice that a common story-writer wud say wis thick wi' emotion, "Martha, will ye exkaise me ca'in' ye by that hamely name?"

"I hae nae ither," quoth I, staring sadly at a faded rose-bud





on the carpet, as if I fain wud be ca'd by some ither name if I could get it.

"Eh, it's a nice name," quoth he, wi' a sigh, and then stopped to think about it for the better pairt o' a minute. "I have been switherin'," he resumed, "for sometime about takin' a wife."

"The thing's comin' noo," thinks I, still I never lifted my e'e frae the rose-bud, but it took me a' my time to keep my face straicht.

"Till short syne I had never seen onybody that my heart could lie to. Martha, I needna beat about the bush—that body is yersel'."

I felt my face gettin' red wi' the effort to keep frae screaming, but I stuck to the rose-bud, and never said a word.

"Ye needna blush," says he, "but just tell me oot plain, what I hae jaloused for sometime past—is my proposal no agreeable to ye?"

"This is far ower much kindness," quoth I, twirling my thooms, and shifting my een in search o' a green leaf or something to rest them on for a change. "You wha might get a wife wi' plenty o' siller."

"That's true," says he, "that's true, but love gets the better o' us whiles; hooever, I hae a guid trade, and there's neither o' us bare-handed, I hope."

"As for me," quoth I, "I canna reckon on mair than a thousand pounds sae lang as my faither leeves, yet I'm sure there's plenty o' ladies——"

"Martha," says he, jumping to his feet, "what are fine leddies or siller to me? Love is better than warld's gear; gie me a kiss and close the bargain."

The man cam' dangerously near me, so I got to my feet.

"Na, na," quoth I, "no' a step farther till ye speir my faither's leave."

"I maun hae arles," says he, "we can close the bargain atween oorsel's, and speir leave efter hin'."

There wis spunk i' the body, for wi' that he flings himsel' upon me, puts his arms about my neck, and makes for my lips. I wis gey an strong, so I swings him roon the table wi' a birl, but he still stuck round my neck.

At that moment the parlour door opened wi' a breinge, and Betty Basin, her face scarlet wi' laughin', rushed ben to my succour.

"Oh, ye mean vagabon'," says she, "wud ye tak' advantage o' a virtuous lass," and wi' that she plays clour at his head wi' a blacklead brush, blackening the whole side o' ane o' his chafts, and leaving the breadth o' the brush on the front o' his white sark and yellow waistcoat.

This wis ower much for me, sae I ran into the kitchen and left Betty blackballin' him up hill and doon dale.



In the midst o' the uproar my faither cam' to the door and rang the bell. We were in a bonny pickle; in fact, we were alarmed oorsel's, and as the body begged pitifully to be hidden

somewhere, Betty drew him by the lappit o' the swallow-tailed coat into the kitchen press, clapped him doon on a basket o' wet claes wi' a guid sowse, and snibbed the door.

I brewed my faither an extra strong gless o' toddy that night, and Betty packed the tyler oot when the hoose was quate. I needna say that wis the first and last o' Henry Hernbane's approaches to me. His idle habits had led him into debt everywhere; soon efter that his creditors cam' upon him, and his effects were sold, but my faither, having a first claim by virtue o' the bond, the property fell to him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

P O L E M I C A L.



ABOUT the time my faither became a laird through the failure o' Henry Hernbane, the country wis being torn to pieces by the controversies that led to the Disruption o' the Kirk o' Scotland. That wis an awfu' time wi' their moderates and their evangelicals, their forced settlements and their ungodly presentments. The folk were desperately in earnest, and everybody took sides and focht like mad. The pairish we belanged to wis as quarrelsome owre the great questions o' the Headship o' the kirk and spiritual independence as the lave o' the country; but it happened that for a time the main point wis a' but forgotten in view o' anither that nearly rent the ranks o' the congregation in twain, and caused an unco hub-bub.

Dr. Drumlie, oor minister, wisna in very robust health—being subject to attacks o' jaundice—so they appointed a helper and successor—an^e Horace Haveral, a gey dandyish kind o' a chiel, wha had a great weakness for red stockings. Noo, the twa ruling elders o' the pairish were William M'Nab, the tallow-chandler, and Daniel Nicolson, an^e o' the tobacco lords. Baith men had marriageable dochters; and as the young minister wis single, it wisna against the course o' nature that he should look round the congregation to see where he could get a guid wife.

First he keekit at Maggie M'Nab, but as tallow wis coming doon owing to the growing use o' gas, his choice at last fell on Jeanie Nicolson, whereupon Mrs. M'Nab took mortal offence at the minister's red stockings. First, she stayed awa' frae the prayer meetings; she couldna sit there and see the red legs o' the man danglin' about durin' the singin' o' the psalms. It betokened a lichtness o' mind and heart that wisna to be brooked by a Presbyterian elder's wife, wha wis bound to uphold the sober solemnity o' public worship. The sicht presented, to her imagination, suggestions o' prelacy and visions o' the scarlet-wumman.

Her dochter got a glint o' the red stockings too, and absented hersel' frae the Sabbath schule. This, as ye may suppose, caused a heap o' speculation. Mrs. M'Nab, hooever, wisna a wumman to hae a grievance and keep it to hersel'. Here were twa Christian wummen driven awa' frae the means o' grace, and wis it no richt and just to themselves that at least the ither elders' wives should ken the cause?

The Bible-wumman wis invited to tea—Mrs. M'Nab wis ane o' a committee o' ladies that took upon themsel's the special chaarge o' seeing that this wumman did her duty—and it wis sune made plain to her mind that red stockings were mair like the stage than the kirk, and in that licht were an offence in the eyes o' earnest-minded, religious folk.

This body wisna lang in visiting the ither members o' the ladies' committee wha had dochters; and as it wis earnestly set forth that the minister wore the objectionable articles o' dress not only in defiance o' the solemn traditions o' the kirk, but for the carnal purpose o' pleasing the e'e o' that licht-headed quean, Jeanie Nicolson, the dissatisfaction sune took deep and dangerous root. For a time it wis confined to the women-folk, but it didna lang bide there. Tea meeting efter



tea meeting took place. The grievance grew by being talked about, till at last the men folk, wha were members o' the session, had to enter the field and set the battle in array against each ither. The moderates declared the red-stocking party were interfering wi' the richts o' private judgment; while they, in return, quoted St. Paul's directions to bishops—hoo they should be grave, sober-minded, avoiding onything by which they might cause their brother to offend. Time oot o' mind the vestments o' Protestant ministers had been black, and ony departure frae orthodox forms and principles tended to unsettle the mind, and opened the door to strange and divisive courses.

Meantime the Rev. Horace Haverall, wha had heard o' the dissatisfaction i' the flock, got into a bonny rage, and denounced the agitators as busy-bodies and impident bigots, wha were mair carefu' about the ootside o' the cup and platter than about the cleanliness o' the inside. So he had twa or three guid flings at them ower the pulpit, but, as ye may jalouse, this didna tend to improvement. At first these discussions amongst the moderates and the red-stocking party took place at street corners and in public-hooses, but the matter wis noo carried into the Session-hoose itsel', where they fell to high words, and there wis threatened sic a strong-handed disturbance as wis never before heard of within the four wa's o' a kirk.

At last Dr. Drumlie, wha wis confined wi' a sair attack on his liver, invoked the aid o' four members o' the Presbytery, wha for the time laid aside there ain differences to deal wi' this new element o' ecclesiastical dispeace. They had an unco job. First, they had a hale week o' prayer to solemnise the minds o' the congregation; then they set about takin' evidence, and efter an investigation, lasting the better pairt o' three weeks, they traced the matter back to Mrs. M'Nab and the Bible-wumman. The latter wis dismissed without mercy,

and Mrs. M'Nab got sic steive admonishment that she gethered her skirts aboot her and went ower to the Cameronian Kirk.

As a contribution to peace and compromise, the Rev. Horace Haveral changed his stockings; and before they left us, ane o' the four ministers preached sic a powerfu' discourse on britherly love, as bathed the hale congregation in tears. We a' felt it wis a happy settlement o' a disturbance that should never have taken place.*

Efter that we settled doon steadily to the sterner work o' the Disruption o' the Kirk o' Scotland, the which we managed within the self-same year.

* I mind this case well—being at the time in the first year of my Eldership. The four members of the Presbytery chosen were men famed for their prudence in dealing with disaffected congregations. The changing of the stockings, however, was looked upon, at the time, as an important element in the settlement of a siccar and vexatious quarrel.—ED.

CHAPTER XIX.

A PROFESSIONAL NURSE.



OO, before I go on, I maun tell ye an incident that gied me as bonny a red face as I have haen for mony a day. I had spent three or four very pleasant days i' the country wi' Mrs. M'Cracken, wife o' the cabinet - maker in Renfield Street, at her summer hoose, and, as I had a mile to walk to the railway station, she sent her servant wi' me to carry my portmantay. She had been unco serviceable during my visit, brushing my skirts, and what not, so as I wis stepping into the train I put my hand in my pocket to gie her a mindin' for her trouble.

"O, no," says she, "I'm sure ye needna fash wi' onything o' the kind."

"Toots, lassie," quoth I, "dinna be sae blate; ye've been real kind—tak' it and buy something to yersel'." Wi' that I gets into the train, but I had barely won oot o' the station when I discovered that the twa-shilling-piece I ettled to gie her wis still in my pocket. The coin I had pressed on her, to buy something to hersel' wi', wis *only a barbee*. I felt

mortal affronted when I thocht o' the ostentatious way I had pressed her to tak' the gratuity; but I made up for the mistake when I got back to the town, for I went straight to the Polytechnick Warehouse, and bocht as muckle print-claith as wud mak' a new wrapper, the which I despatched the same efternoon by the Kilmarnock carrier.

When I got hame, I found a letter waiting for me from Maister Fleming, the writer, to say that his housekeeper had been seized with a grievous bodily ailment, about which he wanted to consult me. Poor man, he wis sorely put aboot, having had but little experience o' sickness in his ain person or family. Weel, as he had dune services to me at divers times, it wis but the pairt o' a Christian wumman to do what lay in my power for him in his time o' need. He had twa serving-women, but they had nae hands for a sick invalid that needed carefu' and constant attention. So I saw Dr. Dandylyon wha attended the case, and, wi' his approval, engaged the services o' a professional sick nurse. This wis a sair job! But efter speirin' here, and speirin' there, as to the moral character, steadiness, and the like, o' the candidates, I fixed on ane wi' an excellent Christian character, written by a minister. Noo, thinks I, here is just the wumman for the place, so I gaed hame wi' her, and saw the body settled. Maister Fleming, I must alloo, wis unco uplifted at getting this service done for him, and visited me twa or three times a-week to seek my advice. At first he wis just as jocose and licht-hearted as a man wi' a sick hoosekeeper at hame could be, but at the end o' the second week I saw he had something on his mind. "Noo," says I, "what is't that's fashin' ye? I shouldna offer advice to a professional man, still I've heard tell that doctors dinna like to prescribe for themselves. If ye hae ony trouble at hame, maybe I can help ye." He wis unco sweet to speak oot.

"There is trouble at hame," says he, "but, though I have the gravest suspicions, I have no direct proof. It has been borne in upon my mind that the nurse you were good enough to send me is of intemperate habits."

"What!" says I, "surely that canna be; she wis recommended to me by the Rev. Mr. Pinkerton, wi' a character three pages lang."

"True," says he, "yet my cook and housemaid have been with me three years come the time, and I have never heard any ill o' them."

"But," quoth I, impatiently, "hae ye missed onything?"

"I am sorry to say I have," says Maister Fleming. "I had six bottles of port, three bottles of sherry, and a bottle of whisky, in the sideboard, but they are all empty, and no body can tell how the thing has occurred. Somebody has been guilty, yet there is no conclusive evidence against any one; and, as one might lay himself open to an action for defamation of character, I am at a loss to know how to act."

"Maister Fleming," says I, "this is a thing only a wumman can get to the bottom o'. Will ye leave it to me?"

Of course he left it to me. It wis a question that couldna be settled in court, for nae respectable lawyer wud rin the risk o' layin' a public charge against onybody's character that he wisna prepared to prove. Next day I went to the hoose, and pre-cognosed the cook and housemaid. "Tell the truth," says I, solemnly—just to impress them wi' a sense o' the awfulness o' justice—"Any attempt at prevarication or deceit will bring doon a terrible punishment on the head o' the offender. I'll hand ye a' ower to the tender mercies o' the law, and put the hoose under the surveelance o' Sherra-offishers." Thus warned they telt me as plain and straight-forward a story as ever cam oot in evidence, from which it wis clear that this person,



wha had been sae highly recommended by the Rev. Mr. Pinkerton, wis the party that had thefteously gone into the sideboard, and abstracted therefrom the spirituous liquors, already described by Maister Fleming when he put the case into my hands. In fact, she had been stovin' wi' drink from the hour she entered the place, and, on the cook speirin' ance or twice what wis the matter wi' her, she complained that she wis just a *wee thing fatigued*. This wis enough for me. I discharged her on the spot, and felt that wis necessary for the appeasment o' justice. I learned efterwards from Mr. Pinkerton that he had written her character on the report of a Bible-wumman, who was a friend o' her ain. I wis greatly praised for the courage and legal acumen I showed in managing the case, but that is neither here nor there, what I want to impress upon ye is this—and I think it may be looked on as the moral o' the Chapter—hooever much ye may respect ministers for their public and private virtues, dinna put muckle dependence on their written testimonials o' character.

CONCLUDED.



YOU will nae doot wonder what has come ower me; but for the last three weeks I havena put pen to paper. And even noo, my mind is in sic a happy whirl o' confusion that I hardly ken whaur to begin or what to say first. Maister Fleming, the writer, has proposed to me, and I have consented to become his wife. The thing is like a dream, and when I wauken in the mornings I have to lie still and go ower scene efter scene in the wonderfu' drama o' the last few weeks, before I can believe it is true.

Maister Fleming is just sixty-three—I thocht he wis aulder—but he showed me the Family Bible where his birth is recorded—he gies ye proof for everything—and there it wis, sure enough, just sixty-three! Weel, at his age ye couldna expect muckle romance in makin' a proposal o' marriage; besides he had just buried his hoosekeeper, wha had been his faithfu' servant for thirty years; the proposal wis therefore made in a plain, business-like wye, and at the same time wi' sic grace and tenderness I could have gi'en him twenty hearts and hands if I had had them, or he had dune. I never kent what it wis to be sae won by a man before. And, when at last he put his airms roon my neck it is nae wonder I buried my face on his shouther and telt him I wud be his wife, and do a' in my power to mak' him happy.

Since then we have spent mony a couthy hour thegither, crackin'. I think, for a writer, he's the honestest man ever I met. He has already telt me a' his failings; he thinks it's best to begin that wye, but I think nane the less o' him for that.



"Martha," quoth he, "I wouldna deceive ye for the world; this is no' my ain hair."

"Weel, weel," quoth I, laughing; for I had jaloused as much. "It suits ye braw and weel; dinna fash yer head about the hair."

"Then I have a gran' set o' teeth," says he, "but ye'll be shocked to hear they are no' my ain."

"And yer legs and arms," quoth I, pinching him; "are there ony o' them timmer?"

Wi' that he drew me to him, and gied me sic a kindly rive, I kent baith heart and limbs were hale and sound; and I felt I had great reason to be thankfu' that at his time o' life there wis sae muckle o' him left, and that what wis left noo belonged entirely to mysel'.

Weel, we have had a heap o' things to arrange. Willie Warstle, the bursar, has been a great concern to me from first to last, yet the laddie has gotten sic a hold on my affections, that I canna think to pairt wi' him. It is quite clear to me, we can never mak' him a minister. Efter a' the trouble I've had, and the siller I've spent on him, it turns oot he canna believe in Everlasting Punishment. He's as nice a laddie as ever walket in shoe-leather, is dux in the maist o' his classes, and is perfect cleverness itsel' at a logic argyment, but it wud be complete folly in me to aim at making a minister o' a man that canna believe in Everlasting Punishment.

Weel, it's a great pity, but I suppose it canna be helped. Thae professor bodies have a heap to answer for, in breeding sic notions i' the minds o' growing callants. My auld Sunday-school teacher, David Whammond—God rest him—wud grue in his coffin if he heard the belief noo openly proclaimed, that there is hope for the wicked beyond the grave! Still an' on I canna gie the laddie up; Maister Fleming and I have had the matter through hands in our cracks.

"Make him a newspaper editor," says Maister Fleming; "there's not much belief of any kind needed for that."

Whereupon I fires up—being literary mysel', and kennin', as I did, some real dacent men connected wi' newspapers.

"Na, na," says I, "sae far as that goes, he wud be mair suited for the law, but I canna thole jesting on a subject that has cost me sae muckle."

So at lang and last, as the callant had shown great aptitude in mathymatics, and wis unco ready at figures, we determined to mak' him a chartered accountant; and Maister Fleming used his influence, and got him apprenticed in a first-rate office, that had a great name for floating joint-stock companies.

Weel, the suddenness an' the happiness o' this affair mak' me feel unco strange, and I think I havena muckle mair to say, as a single wumman. Peter Spale, wha is still to the fore, but gey donsie, sent me a beautifu' luggie, made by his ain hand, as a marriage present; and I maunna forget to tell ye that Dr. Threshie is gaun to act as oor best man. I think, however, that name is a mistake, for I am sure the best man to me will be Maister Fleming himsel'.

Noo, I maun bid ye guid-bye, for by the time this gets into print and reaches the reader, my name will nae langer be
MARTHA SPREULL.



CLOSING NOTE.

BY THE EDITOR.



WELL, there is not much left for me to say in bringing these sketches to a close. By a wondrous dispensation of an all-wise Providence the authoress is now more to me than I expected any woman would ever have been. As she has herself told you the story of our courtship in a frank and outspoken manner, it only remains for me to say that our marriage took place in due course. Dr. Threshie, our old friend, acted the part of best man, the which duty he performed with great tact and gentlemanly politeness. The best maids were two young nieces—daughters of my late lamented brother who died in India—who also got through their duties with exceeding ability. Indeed, there was not a hitch, save that I forgot the wedding ring. This caused great consternation to me, though it was productive of much merriment among the younger members of the company; but my partner was equal to the occasion. She had feared my possible forgetfulness, and knowing the minister would not marry

without the ring—a baleful custom that is fast stealing into our presbyterian Zion,—she had most prudently provided one, the which she cunningly slipped into my hand in the nick of time, as the saying is, and thereby prevented what might have been a scene of confusion, not to speak of embarrassing delay.

We had, I think, just as fine a honeymoon as any young married couple could wish to enjoy. At my time of life I did not think to experience such unspeakable pleasure. It was not only a pleasure, but it was a revelation of which, in my long years of studious celibacy, I had but imperfect dreams. Having no powers of descriptive writing, I must content myself by remarking that, under the care of a most merciful Providence, we passed safely through many dangers by land and sea in railway trains and steam vessels. I would fain have settled down at once in some quiet sea-side resort to enjoy leisurely the sweets of matrimony, but my wife would see this and that, and was possessed of such a restless desire for ferlies in the way of sight-seeing, that I was nearly traiked off my feet, insomuch that I took a sore turn of rheumatic pains in the calfs of my legs, arising, as the doctor told us, from too much bodily exercise. This brought us at length to the sea-side. Here we rested for fully a week. My wife has great skill in specifics, and wrought a marvellous cure by the application of hot seaweed boiled in its native water. I make this

remark for the benefit of those who may be overtaken by similar affliction. In three days' time I could bend my houghs, and albeit they were not just so soople as I would have liked, with the aid of two sticks I was able to scramble out on the boulders and poke unwary limpets off the rocks into my wife's hands on the beach below. That sea-side rest afforded me wonderful enjoyment. My wife, who is of a very inquiring turn of mind, spent much time in finding out the habits and modes of life amongst the simple fisher-folk, while I, when I was strong enough to be trusted by myself, would ramble by the lonely sea-beach and in crannies of the shore, filling my pocket handkerchief with whelks and out-of-the-way shells, until I fancied myself back again in the happy days of boyhood.

I cannot fully express my thankfulness for the excellent weather we were favoured with, especially during the latter days of our too brief holiday. My wife lightly says it was only what we deserved, seeing we had waited so long for it; but I fear the remark almost savours of irreverence, for both the weather and the great blessings we had vouchsafed to us are altogether beyond our own poor deserts, and should inspire us both with deep and fervent thankfulness.

Now we are home again and settling down into quiet matrimonial ways. It is a wondrous change for



me. My old housekeeper, whose mortal remains were, six months ago, laid in their last abode by my own hands, was a woman who knew her place—she never presumed. I could sit at the breakfast table and take my coffee, with a book in my hand or a newspaper propped against the toast rack before me as long as I liked, and she would wait patiently without a word till I had drained the grounds of my cup—the signal for rising—before she would stir from the table. But all that is altered now. A strange mutation has taken place, I care for neither book nor newspaper. The morning meal seems not to need such concomitants. Even the air of the breakfast room has a refreshing and inviting callerness that cheers the spirit and improves the appetite. Pleasant and suggestive converse takes the place of the book and the newspaper; the memories of the morning serve to make the day happy, and stimulate the desire for an early return home. We have but one trouble, that is William Warstle, the bursar. In business he is getting on fairly enough, but he is full of restlessness in regard to the fundamental doctrines of our religious faith. The grand doctrine of foreordination is now his great stumbling-block. He has appealed to me as a lawyer, whether this belief is consistent with the exercise of free-will. The question, I have told him, is outwith the bounds of statutory law. My wife, however, with her boundless forbearance, has turned up her standard

authority—David Whammond—but all he says is : “ This is a profound doctrine full of kittleness to the carnal mind, whilk looks like contradictoriness ; yet there are some things ower deep to be grasped by finite wisdom, and when sic difficulties arise we maun e’en humble oorsels reverently before them and submit to the eternal decrees.” But this is not a satisfactory answer to the wayward lad, who wants everything in heaven and earth to square with reason. I wish he would stick to accounting and let theology alone. Such questions have no place on the Stock Exchange, and if they had I fear they would lead to little profit.

What more have I to say ?

My wife tells me that the charm of this book lies in the editorial remarks that open and close it. This, I feel, is the extravagance of self-abnegation under the influence of early love. To my mind, any merit it possesses lies in the part which she herself has contributed ; but it is for the public to judge—not us. *Palmas qui meruit ferat*, which, by interpretation from the Latin tongue, means—Let him who has won the palm carry it.

