

## Saunders M'Glashan's Courtship.

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SAUNDERS M'GLASHAN was a handloom weaver in a rural part of Scotland many years ago. Like many another Scotsman, he was strongly possessed with the desire to own the house he lived in. He bought it, before he had saved money enough to pay for it, and he toiled day and night to clear the debt, but died in the struggle. He bequeathed the debt and his blessing to his wife and bairns. When he was dying, he called his son to the bedside and said, "Saunders, ye're the eldest son, and ye maun be a faither to the ither bairns, see that they a' learn to read their Bibles and to write their names, and be gude to your mither; and, Saunders, promise me that ye'll see that the debt is paid." The son promised, and the father died and was buried in the auld kirkyard. Years passed—the bairns were a' married and awa', and Saunders was left alone with his mother. She grew frail and old, and he nursed her with tender conscous care. On the evening of the longest summer day she lay dying. Saunders sat at her bedside, and they opened their hearts to each other on the grandest themes. Stretching her skinny hand out of the bedclothes, she laid it on his head, now turning grey, and said: "Saunders, ye've been a gude laddie, and I'm gaun to leave ye. I bless ye, and Heaven will bless you; for ye have dune Heaven's biddin', and honoured your faither and mither. I'll see your faither the morn, and I'll tell him that the bairns are a' weel, and that the debt was paid lang or I left the earth." She died, and he laid her in the kirkyard beside his father, and returned to the house he was born in—alone. He sat down in his father's chair crowned with the priceless crown of a deserved blessing, but there was no voice to welcome him.

"What'll I dae," he said. "I think I'll just keep the hoose mysel'." This was easily done, for he lived very simply—parritch or brose to breakfast, tatties and herrin' to dinner, and brose or parritch again to supper. But when winter set in, his trials began. One dark morning he awoke and said, "What needs I lie gantin' here, I'll rise and get a licht." So he got his flint and steel and tinder-box and set to work. Nowadays we strike a match and have a light, but Saunders had no such easy task. The sparks from the steel and flint would not ignite the tinder, he struck vehemently, missed the flint, and drove the steel deep into his knuckles. "This'll never dae," he cried, "I'm tired o' this life—I'm determined to hae a wife." He succeeded at last in lighting the fire and made his parritch, but he burnt them, and the soot came doon the lum and fell into them. "I'm pooshinin' mysel'," he said; "I'm fa'in' awa' frae my claes, an' my breeks are hingin' in wrinkles about me. I said in my haste this mornin' that I wad' hae a wife, an' noo I say in my solemn leisure, '*This very day I shall have a wife!*'"

Saunders was a simple-minded man, but no simpleton. He knew nothing of the ways of women. Various maidens had set their caps at him, but he had never seen it. He knew his Bible well, and naturally turned to Solomon for advice, but did not get much comfort there. "Hoo am I to understand women," he said, "for Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived, and he said that *he* couldna understand the ways o' women—it was'na for the want o' opportunity ony way."

Instinct told him that when he went a-wooing his best dress should go on; and looking in the glass he said, "I canna gang to see the lasses wi' a beard like that." So he shaved himself, altho' he was never known to shave except on Saturday; and he was such a strict Sabbatarian that if he began to shave late on Saturday night, and the clock chappit twelve when he had but one half of his face scrapit, he would leave it till the Sunday was over. The shaving done, he rubbed his chin, saying, with great simplicity, "I think that should dae for the lasses noo." Then he turned and admired himself in the glass, for vanity is

the last thing that dies, even in man. "Ye're no a very ill lookin' man after a', Saunders; but its a' very weel bein' guid lookin' and weel drest, but whatna woman am I gaun to seek for my wife."

He got at length paper and a pencil and wrote down with great deliberation six female names in large half text, carefully dotting all the "i"s and stroking all the "t"s, and surveyed the list as follows: "That's a' the women I mind about. There's no great choice among them, I think—let me see," putting on his spectacles, "it's no very wiselike gaun courtin' when a body needs to wear specs. Several o' them I've never spoken till, but I suppose that's of no consequence in this case. There's Mary Young. She's no very young, at ony rate. Elspeth McFarlane, but she's blind o' the richt e'e; and it's not necessary that Saunders M'Glashan should marry an imperfect woman. Kirsty Forsyth—she's been married twice already, an' surely twa men's enough for ony woman. Mary Morison—a very bonnie woman, but she's gotten a confounded lang tongue, an' they say the hair upon her head's no' her ain hair—I'm certain it's her ain tongue, at ony rate! Jeannie Miller, wi' plenty o' siller—not to be despised. Janet Henderson, wi' plenty o' love. I ken that she has a gude heart, for she was kind till her mither lang bedfast; an' when ony barefoot laddie braks his taes, he rises and gowls, and runs straight to her house, and she dights his bubbly nose and claps him on the head, and says, 'rin awa' hame noo, ye'll be a man afore yer mither!' Noo, which o' thae six will I go to first? I think the first four can bide a wee, but the last twa—siller and love!—love and siller! Eh, wadna it be grand if a person could get them baith! but that's no' allowed in the Christian dispensation. The patriarchs had mair liberty. Abraham wad just hae ta'en them baith, but I'm no' Abraham. They say siller's the god o' the warld—I never had ony mair use for siller than to buy meat and claes, to put a penny in the plate on Sabbath, and gie a bawbee to a blind fiddler. But they say heaven's love and love's heaven, an' if I bring Janet Henderson to my fireside, and she sits at that side darnin' stockins, and I sit at

this side readin' after my day's wark, an' I lauch ower to her, and she lauchs ower tae me, isna that heaven upon earth? A body can get on in this warld without siller, but they canna get on in this world without love. I'll gie Janet Henderson the first offer."

He put on his best Sabbath-day hat, and issued forth into the street. Instantly at all the windows commanding a view of the street, there were female noses flattened against the panes. Voices might be heard crying, "mither! mither! mither! Come here! come here! come here! Look! look! look! there's Saunders M'Glashan wi' his beard aff, and his Sabbath-day claes on in the middle o' the week; he's looking awfu' melancholy,—I wonder wha's dead."

Quite unconscious of the sensation he was creating, he walked gravely on towards the house of Janet Henderson. She at this moment, not knowing that her first offer was so near, was sitting spinning, sighing and saying! "Eh preserve me! its a weary warld! I've been thirty year auld for the last ten years (sings)—

' Naebody comin' to marry me,  
Naebody comin tae woo!  
Naebody comin' to marry me,  
Naebody comin' tae woo.'

The door opened, and there stood Saunders M'Glashan. "Eh! preserve me, Saunders, is that you? A sicht o' you's guid for sair een!" The maiden span and took side-long glances. A woman can see mair wi' the tail o' her ee, than a man can see with his two eyes wide open. "Come awa' into the fire. What's up wi' ye the day, Saunders? ye're awfu' weel lickit up, ye are; I never saw ye lookin' sae handsome. What is't ye're after?" "I'm gaun aboot seekin' a wife!" "Eh, Saunders, if it's that ye want, ye needna want that very lang, I'm thinkin'." "But ye dinna seem to understand me; it's *you* I want for my wife." "Saunders M'Glashan! think shame o' yersel', makin' a fool o' a young person in that manner." "I'm makin' nae fool o' ye, Janet. This very day I'm de-

terminated to hae a wife. You are the first that I've spoken till. I houp there's nae offence, Janet. I meant no offence. Eh! oh very weel, if that's the way o't, it canna be helped," and slowly unfolding the paper, which he had taken from his waistcoat pocket, "I have several other women's names markit down here tae ca' upon."

She saw the man meant business, stopped her spinning, looked down, was long lost in thought, raised her face, and broke the silence as follows, "Saunders (ahem) M'Glashan (ahem), I've given your serious offer great reflection; I've spoken to my heart, and the answer's come back to my tongue. I'm sorry tae hurt yer feelins, Saunders, but what the heart speaketh the tongue repeateth. A body maun act in thae matters according to their conscience, for they maun gie an account at the last. So I think, Saunders,—I think I'll just—I'll just"—covering her face with her apron—"I'll just tak' ye. Eh, Saunders, gae 'wa' wi' ye!—gae 'wa'! gae 'wa'!" But the maiden did not require to resist, for he made no attack, but solemnly sat in his seat, and solemnly said, "I'm rale muckle obleeged to ye, Janet: it'll no be necessary to ca' on any o' thae ither lassies noo!" He rose, thinking it was all over, and turned towards the door, but the maiden was there first, with her back at the door, and said, "Preserve me! what have I dune? If my neebors come tae ken that I've ta'en you at the very first offer, they'll point the finger of scorn at me, and say ahint my back as lang as I live, 'that woman was *deen'* for a man': so ye maun come here every day for the next month, and come in day licht, so that they'll a' see ye comin' an' gaun, and they'll say, 'that woman's no easy coortit I can tell ye; the puir man's wearin' his shoon aff his feet!' For, Saunders! though I'll be your wife, Saunders, I'm determind to hae my dues o' courtship a' the same." She lit the lamp of love in his heart at last. For the first time in his long life he felt the unmis-takable, holy, heavenly glow; his heart broke into a full storm of love, and stooping down he took her yielding hand in his and said, "Yes I wull, yes I wull! I'll come twice every day, my Jo! my Jo—Ja Janet!" Before the unhappy man knew where

he was he had kissed the maiden ! who was long expecting it ; but the man blushed crimson, feeling guilty of a crime which he thought no woman could forgive, for it was the first kiss he had gotten or given in fifty lang Scottish kissless years—while the woman stood with a look of supreme satisfaction, looking for more, but as no more seemed coming—for a woman can see a kiss a long way off—she lifted the corner o' her apron and dighted her moo, and said to him as she dighted her moo, “eh, Saunders M'Glashan ! isna that rale refreshin !”