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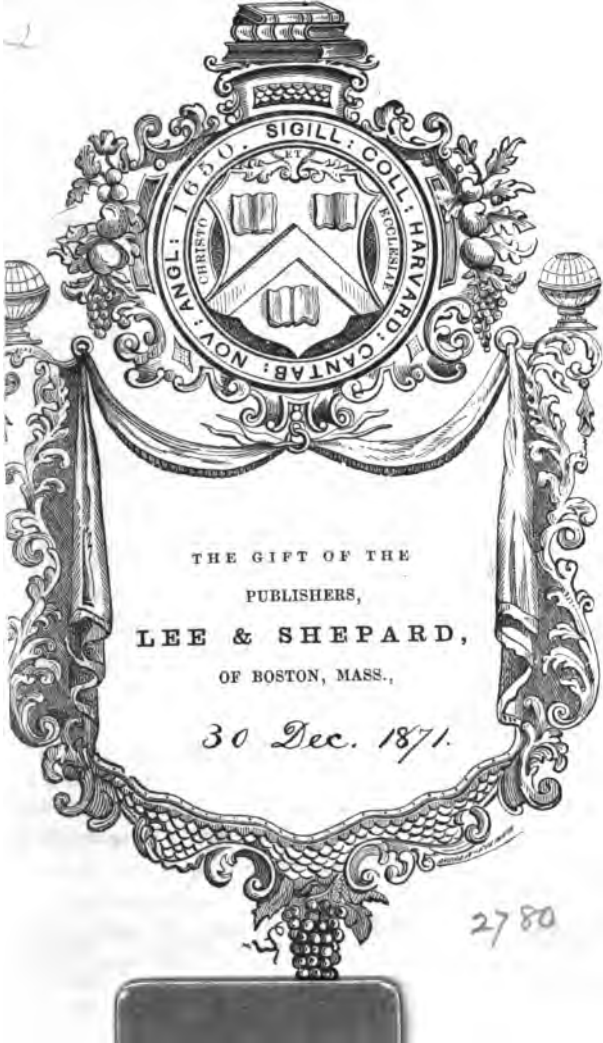
SINGULAR

MRS. CUPPLES

CREATURES.

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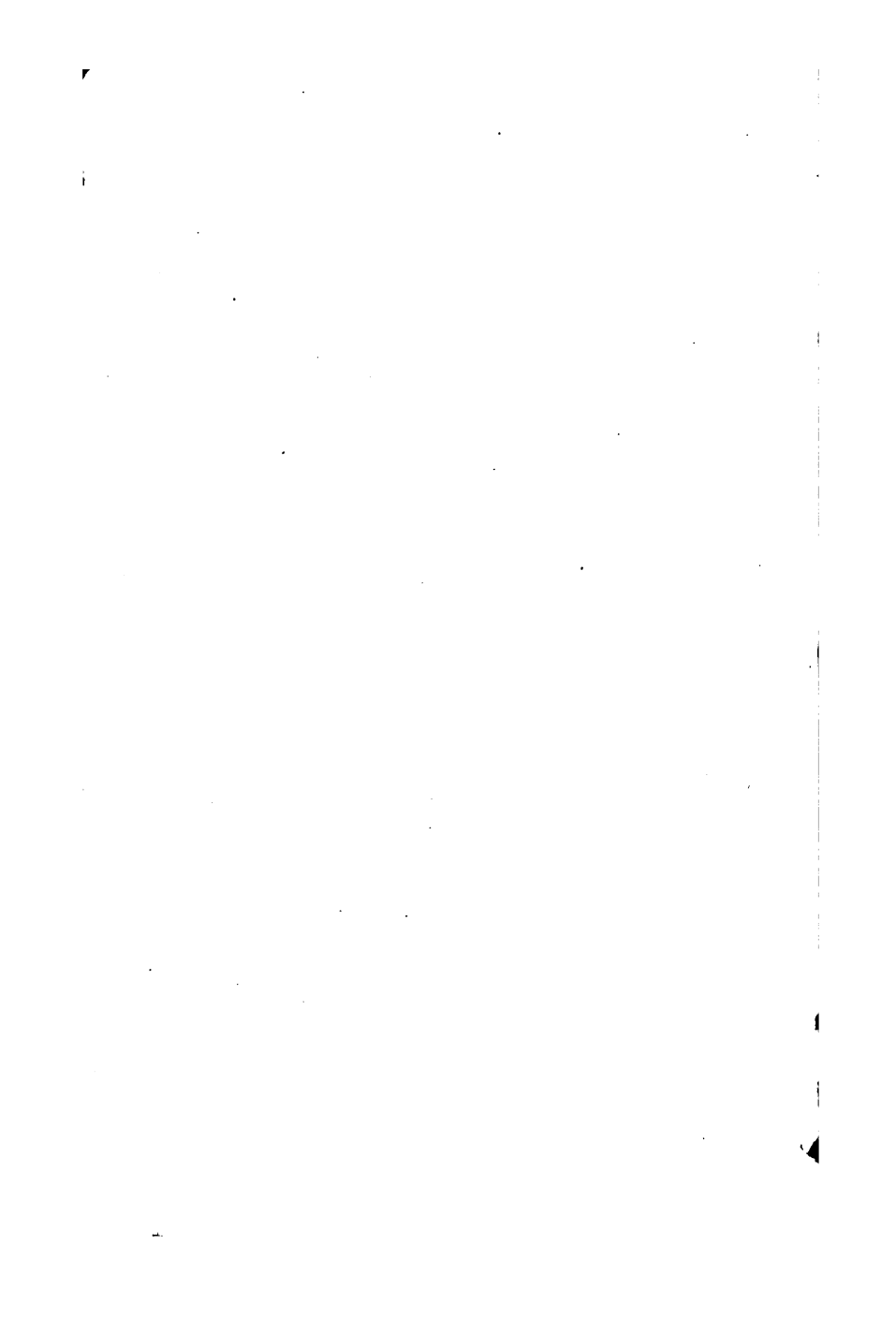
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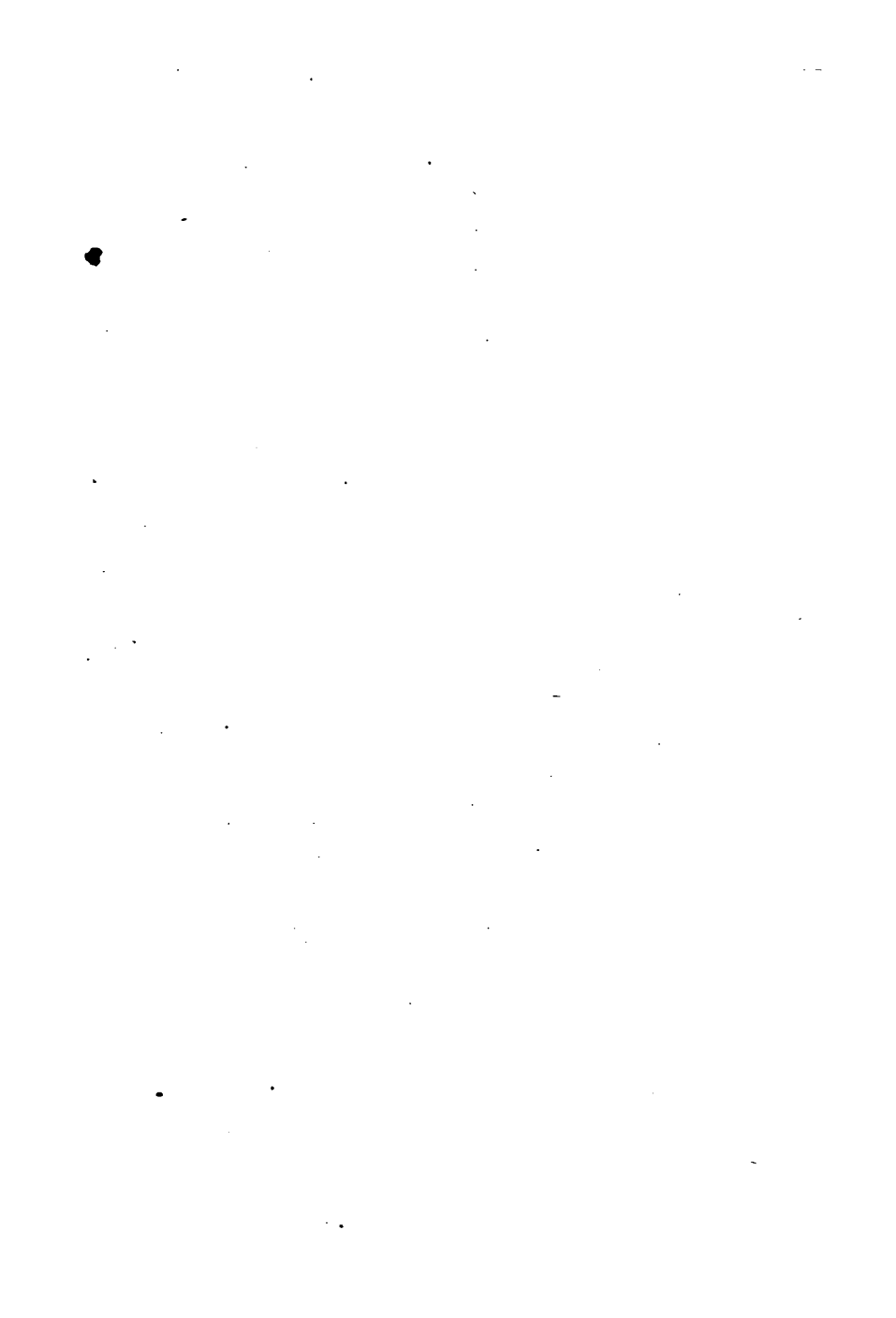
Oliver Optic is the apostolic successor, at the "Iliad," of Peter Parley. He has just completed the "Woodville Stories," by the publication of "Haste and Waste." The best notice to give of them is to mention that a couple of youngsters pulled them out of the pile two hours since, and are yet devouring them out in the summer-house (albeit autumn leaves cover it) oblivious to muffled time. — *N. Y. Leader.*

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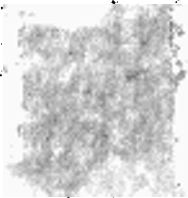






NETTLE, THE COBBLER'S TERRIER.

PLATE I. THE COBBLE'S TEXTURE.



SINGULAR CREATURES,

AND

HOW THEY WERE FOUND:

BEING STORIES AND STUDIES FROM THE

DOMESTIC ZOOLOGY OF A SCOTCH PARISH.

BY

MRS. GEORGE CUPPLES,

AUTHOR OF "THE LITTLE CAPTAIN," "DRIVEN TO SEA,"
"MISS MATTY," &c.

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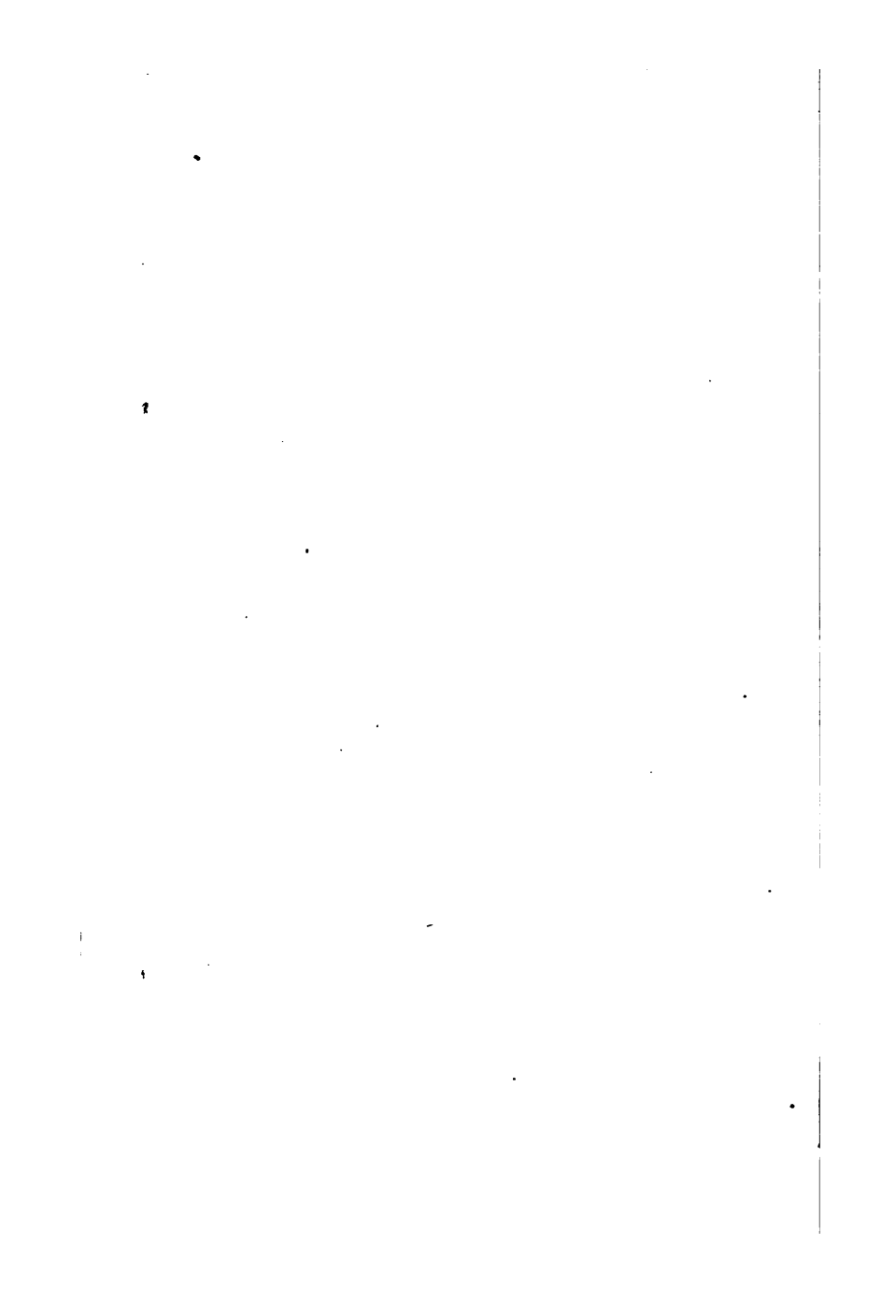
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SINGULAR CREATURES.

TAPPY AND HER CHICKS.

"SHE 'S the bonniest hen in a' the kintry-side, mem ; an' see till her tap."

This was what old Janet Keddie said when I went to buy a brood-hen from her, as she stood with her bare shining arms akimbo, looking down with a loving, critical eye upon her favorite, — a buxom Dorking, in color a rich mottled brown, with a much lighter breast, and on her head a spreading tuft or crest of the same yellowish hue.

"Yes, she has certainly a fine top-knot, Janet, but what I want is a good clocking-hen, one that will bring up chickens well. Now, can you recommend her for that?"

"Ay, that wull I!" said Janet, heartily; "see till her yersel', mem, hoo fast she's sittin' on the eggs I shoved in aneath her, just to keep her pleased till I get a gude settin' for her. For ye see, mem, she's an uncommon big hen, an' ll tak' sixteen eggs in aneath her as easy as anither can tak' twal', — she's worth takin' pains wi'."

Accordingly Mrs. Tappy was lifted out of the barrel in which she sat; and after much pecking and dabbing at her old mistress's hard red arms, she was placed in my basket; the egg being put under her "to make her feel at home," as Janet said. We carried her tenderly, and when we had put some nice soft straw in the bottom of an old tub, we opened the lid very carefully to let her out. Mrs. Tabby must have known we were strangers, for the moment the lid was opened, out she flew with an angry cluck, and had the outhouse door been left open there is not the slightest doubt she would have flown straight back to her old home, for we discovered Mrs. Tappy was an uncommonly wise fowl,

"What's to be done now?" I cried, in despair; "we shall never get her to sit; see how her feathers are ruffled with anger."

My little servant Barbara, however, knew a great deal about hens, and their ways also; so taking a few of the eggs, she put them in the nest, and gently coaxed Mrs. Tappy over to that part of the shed. No sooner did she see the eggs than, with a deep cluck-cluck and a long whir of delight, in she walked, and after a few shakes to her ruffled feathers, she spread out her wings over them, and sat quietly.

We then put the eggs down one by one, and after looking at each of them, first with one eye and then with the other, as if she were meditating

whether or not a chicken would come out of it, Mrs. Tappy laid her bill on it, hooked it towards her soft fawn-colored breast, and with a low coo of intense satisfaction, lifted herself up a little, drew in the egg, and so on till all were taken in.

She was so fond of her eggs that she had to be lifted off every other day and made to take her food, and it was with the greatest difficulty we could prevail upon her to cool her wings in the nice soft sand we had procured. Mrs. Tappy knew quite well that the sand was for her, and the fresh grass also, only she grudged to be away for a minute from her lovely eggs; but when she saw we were determined she should make herself comfortable, she gave up making a fuss, and lay down in the sand, rolling and fluttering it all over her back, and stretching out her legs in it, as if she were swimming. Then up she would come with her great top-knot hanging over her eyes in a most dishevelled way, and with a queer look turned up to us as if she were saying, "Well, it *is* very refreshing, but now that I've had enough, you will allow me to return to my duty." Thereupon she would shake out the sand from her feathers, and away to her nest once more.

After this had gone on with variations for three weeks, the morning of the magical twenty-first day arrived, on which it was expected, according to all rule, that the chicks should appear. We listened very quietly for a few minutes, when

Barbara suddenly whispered, "I heard a cheep, mem!"

"Are you sure, Barbara?" I said. "It may be Tappy herself; she sometimes chirps to her eggs." But while I was speaking, a tiny bill projected itself from the very centre of Tappy's breast, and then the bill was followed by the smallest and brightest of yellow heads. We lifted Mrs. Tappy very gently, but we found she had only this little yellow one as yet, so we left her till the afternoon. When we returned again she had eight, this being her whole brood, for the other eggs were addled, or, as Barbara emphatically said, "rotten." It was not Tappy's fault she had brought out so few, for she certainly gave them all full justice, sitting a whole day beyond her time to see what she could make of the defaulters, for the maternal instinct was terribly strong in Mrs. Tappy. She would no doubt have sat a month, had we not taken the useless eggs out of her sight, and left her with her seven dark chickens and the little canary-colored one.

That very afternoon a hen belonging to a woman in our village brought out twelve chickens, and a few hours afterwards died. Mrs. Brown came to tell me of her loss and offered to sell me the whole brood, saying, "Your tappit hen would maybe tak' to them." I agreed to the proposal, provided our worthy Dorking approved of the addition to her family; and accordingly the twelve little mother-

less chickens were brought over ; whereupon Mrs. Brown, having great experience in the rearing of poultry, managed to get them slipped under Mrs. Tappy, without one of them having been seen by that wise hen, or, at any rate, having been taken any notice of. Mrs. Brown, indeed, drew attention to the manner in which the hen "bumfled up her wings to make more room ;" and the good woman left, remarking that Tappy was "a grand crater." For a few days she appeared to be very happy, and if one of the chicks throve more than another, it was "Tiny," the little yellow one. This was the only light-colored chick of the whole twenty, and because of this it seemed to give itself airs, and must have felt we took more notice of it than of the others. Tappy, too, appeared to be very fond of it, and bore with patience its little impudent ways, when it mounted on her back, or flew up on her top, and forced it down over her eyes, thus tickling her poor old nose somewhat.

But when they were ten days old, it became necessary to confine poor Mrs. Tappy in a coop. She had got into a habit of wandering from home, and bringing her chickens back bedraggled and exhausted, not to speak of the destruction she caused to our neighbors' gardens. I cannot say she liked this arrangement at all, because her chicks would disappear round the corner beyond her sight, forcing her to stretch her neck between the bars of the coop, and to strain her old legs to

get out to them, in attitudes which were almost affecting, and certainly humiliating. She went on cluck-clucking all the time, but with little effect; and, as a last resource, she would cry cluck-cluck-cluck very fast indeed, pretending she had found a delicate sweet morsel, which would bring the chickens flying back from all quarters; and so busy was she looking about in the bottom of her coop, that they would even condescend to wait for a little, to see what all this scratching and clucking would turn up. There were a few of the chickens, however, who began to understand Mrs. Tappy and her false alarms, and foremost among them was yellow Tiny. Such an impudent chicken it was, to be sure! When it saw all the others running off as fast as their little legs could carry them, it would hold its small tail more erect, and strut about by itself, or take advantage of the quietness to have a good scrape in the soft earth which a stronger companion had stirred. As Barbara used to say, it was a most forward chicken to think of its having a tail at all! when none of the others had any as yet. But this just suited its impudence; and for her part she wondered the others did not fall upon it, and pluck every feather out by the root.

Every day Tappy's imprisonment became more irksome, and her chickens more unmanageable. Instead of coming in every now and then to be "clocked up," as Barbara called it, they would

nestle down under a bush, sometimes stretching their necks to look at their mother, wondering, no doubt, why she did not come to them. They would all go to their proper bed, however, when the nestling-in hour arrived, regularly enough; for the evenings were chilly, and by far the most comfortable place was under their mother's soft breast. It was then delightful to see the recovered complacency and intense happiness of poor Tappy. She seemed to have forgotten all the various frets and slights of the past, with her anxieties and alarms when rats might be supposed to lie in ambush at a corner, or hawks to be hovering above the trees. Now she swelled herself out in peace over the whole twenty, with a sort of cooing or purring of high satisfaction, composing herself and them to rest for the night; though, to be sure, here and there were to be seen sticking out the legs or tails of some, while the heads of others were visible on the other side, as if Tappy were supported by them, so to speak, as the great brazen laver was borne by the circle of brazen bulls in the old Bible picture.

Miss Tiny was generally the first to return home to secure a good place, for it required a little contrivance to "clock up" twenty chickens even with the willing help of Barbara. This operation was generally performed after our little maid had brought in the tea-things; and one evening, while engaged making the tea, I was startled by hearing

a scream from Barbara, at which, laying down the teapot, I hastened out. There I found her on her knees before the coop, holding the little yellow chicken close to her breast.

"O, you horrid thing!" I heard her say, shaking her fist at Tappy; "you cruel hen, ye, to turn out your bonniest chicken, yer *ain*, tao, an' the cleverest o' them a'. Here, noo, tak' her in, like a gude Tappy, an' we'll say nae mair about it." With this Barbara tried to pop the chicken into the coop, but Tappy pounced down upon it and gave it such a peck that she was forced to draw it away.

"Jest see to that, mem," said Barbara, becoming aware of my presence; "Tappy'll no allow wee Tiny in aneath her! What ails ye, hen, I wonder?" At my suggestion Tiny was carried away and was put down at the end of the walk out of Tappy's sight, and allowed to go back to the coop by herself; for we supposed a hen had a very short memory, and Tappy would no doubt have forgotten her ill-nature. But our "tappit Dorking," as I said before, was not an ordinary hen, by any means. Little Tiny was very sleepy, and no sooner was she put down than off she ran to the coop once more; but Mrs. Tappy was as sharp as a needle, and at whatever hole poor Tiny tried to pop in her head, it was barred by her mother's sharp bill. Tiny went back a little, and stood looking in bewilderment; then she stuck up her

tail and began to walk about, as much as to say, This is certainly a very funny time for our mother to be giving lessons. After walking about, making a pretence to be looking for flies, she made another attempt to get in, but still with the same result; and she was forced to see it was n't fun, and no doubt agreed with Barbara in fancying her mother must either have eaten something that had disagreed with her, or that she had offended her unwittingly.

Barbara waited patiently for another hour, but the hen, instead of getting better, seemed to grow worse, and Tiny had to be brought into the house and kept warm till it was quite dark, when Barbara managed very cleverly to slip the poor little chicken in, unknown to Tappy, as she supposed. However, when the next night came, the hen went on in the very same way; except that while Barbara was present she did not try to peck at it then, but sat quite quiet. But the moment Barbara turned to go away, Mrs. Tappy rose up, and shaking all the chickens out from her wings and breast, she caught poor Tiny by the wing, and giving it a great twist, dashed the little creature on the ground, and then flung it out of the coop.

Tappy's behavior always remained a mystery, unless it is to be accounted for by the fact of her imprisonment and the number of chickens with which she had to deal, perhaps making her more

martial in her discipline, and more Roman in her conduct.

The little wing was dislocated, and stuck up in a most uncomfortable manner, making poor Tiny look to a stranger quite grotesque, even though it was a sad spectacle. We had to roll her in flannel, and put her in a little round basket; but she chirped so pitifully, and kept pushing up her head so constantly, that we determined to find out how we could make up to her for the loss of her mother. It was not till after the first night that we discovered she liked a heavy weight laid over her. We thereupon contrived to fasten a piece of wood to the basket, so that when she pushed up her head to the flannel she would fancy it was her mother's body.

Although Tiny continued to play and feed with the other chickens, it was very amusing to see how, instead of walking round with the others to "clock up," she hop-hopped up the front steps of the house, and into the parlor, where, after picking up all the crumbs, she would give a peculiar "twirr-twirr," and peck at my gown as a signal that she wished to go to bed. Sometimes, if tea was not quite over, I would roll her in flannel and stuff her into my Garibaldi jacket, when I could feel her creeping under my arm till she felt the weight of it; then, with a very satisfied twirr, she would quietly drop off to sleep.

Tiny was known to every child in the little ham-

let near us. When they saw me going down to the post-office they would come running from all quarters, knowing that Tiny would either be following me like a little dog, or be perched on my shoulder. She would allow the children to stroke her back, and would eat out of their hands; and when they tried to imitate the chuck-chuck of a hen, she would look at them with a side glance, and twirr-twirr back in reply. One day a woman happened to be passing, and came forward to have a peep at the little group; but when she saw Tiny she declared it ought to be put to death, for it would never grow to anything, and what was the use of a deformed hen? The children were so indignant, the boys especially, that I had some difficulty in keeping them from hooting her out of the village. "O, the cruel crater!" said one of the boys, "she'd daur to thraw (draw) wee Tiny's neck! She should try how she likes thraw-in' her ain."

"But, David," I replied, "the woman does not know how clever our Tiny is. Speaking of cruelty, there's many a boy here thinks nothing of taking the nests from my garden and drawing the necks of the poor little sparrows." Whereupon David mumbled something about a sparrow being a very different thing from wee Tiny; but as the birds were rather a sore subject, he did not continue the conversation further.

Tiny did not seem to grow very fast; indeed,

her little body scarcely grew at all ; but when the other chickens got the length of roosting, she astonished us one evening by hopping on to a stool, and then fluttering up on to the back of a kitchen chair, where she quietly settled herself. Barbara was not quite sure that this was a good arrangement, fearing that when the fire died out Tiny would feel the cold ; but when she went forward to lift her down, our little maid got nothing but a good peck for her kindness. So we came to the conclusion that Tiny knew what was best for her, and, as Barbara said, she was the first hatched, and naturally did not like the idea of being more backward than her neighbors.

A few days after this one of Tappy's foster-chickens caught a severe cold. Barbara brought it into the house and tried all sorts of cures, putting snuff and butter down its throat, giving it a hot bath every two hours, and various other things. It really was very distressing to hear it, breathing just like a child ill with the croup ; and had it not been for Barbara, I should certainly have had it killed to put it out of pain. But if Barbara was attentive to it, poor Tiny was devoted. She would not go away, but sat on the fender close to the little basket where the chicken lay, chirp-chirping, coo-cooing, twirr-twirring, the whole day long. With all this good nursing, the little sick chicken got gradually better, and by the second night was able to perch on the chair beside Tiny,

who was delighted to have a companion ; indeed, she kept pushing and squeezing it so hard, to show how glad she was of its society, that she pushed it off altogether. We were therefore obliged to give them a small clothes-screen for a roost, and it was very curious and amusing to see Tiny take up her position at the end of the bar farthest from the wall, till, with Barbara's assistance, her little companion was placed at the other end ; then she would creep along and seat herself as close to the chicken as possible, and stuff her head under its wing. As nothing would induce Miss Tiny to leave the chicken, not even to snatch a mouthful of fresh air, Barbara was obliged to let her stay in till the invalid was well enough to go out for an hour or two in the sunny part of the day. Accordingly, as the chicken got gradually better, Barbara waited for the first extra fine day, and put them both out. In an hour or two she brought them in again, apparently much the better for the fresh air. I had just returned from a visit to them in the kitchen, when the parlor door opened, and in rushed Barbara, somewhat unceremoniously crying, —

"O, mem, what dae ye think wee Tiny did the noo (just now)?"

"I really could not say," I replied. "Pushed the chicken off its perch again, perhaps?"

"No, she just tried to crawl like a cock, mem!" said Barbara, almost in a whisper.

"Well, Barbara," I said, "nothing very wrong in that, I hope, — though there *is* a saying that crowing hens are no canny."

"But what if she *is* a cock, mem?" said Barbara, with a gasp; "no *hen* at a'."

The thought of such an idea flashed upon me for the first time, and my look of surprise must have expressed itself in my face to Barbara, who said, "I never thoct the crater could be onything *but* a hen. It's awfu'!"

This was certainly a rather alarming piece of news, and what no one had ever supposed could happen; but as Tiny continued to crow every day, it became evident to all that the "crater" was really a cock after all; and, as Barbara said, "It was just another proof of its impudence, to deceive folk that way so lang!" Its name was formally changed from that of Tiny to one suggested by Barbara, — *why*, I cannot say, — namely, Abram; and as the little black chicken, though now quite well, continued to come in every night to roost beside him, she in her turn naturally took the title of Sara.

They were always to be seen together, these two chickens; and when outside, they kept themselves quite apart from the other poultry. Abram was as yet about the size of a bantam, never having grown much, and was in color of a similar lively red; while Sara was pure black, promising to become one of the largest hens of the whole

brood. She stood up for her little friend on all occasions, fighting for him if they were compelled to pass the other fowls. She even saved the daintiest morsels for him, as if she had almost come to consider him her own chicken.

For some time he had seemed to be so happy with Sara, that he would not follow me to the post-office; but one day he repented, and after allowing me to go as far as the gate, he came flying down as fast as his little deformed wing would permit, and with a great effort flew up on my outstretched hand and thence on to my shoulder. There he cooed and twittered into my face just as he had done when a tiny chicken, and made so much of me, that in joke I said, —

“What’s the meaning of all this, chickie? You are surely not going to leave me, or go off to the hen-house to become a common vulgar fowl?”

He took no notice of Sara in passing up again, but came into the house with me and picked up the crumbs on the parlor floor; then he lay down on my skirt as if he were a lapdog, and fell asleep with his head under his sound wing. In an hour or two Sara came in at the open door to look for him, and they trotted away together into the open fields, Abram twirring up into her face as if apologizing for his desertion.

When evening came they did not return at their usual hour, and Barbara went to look for them. She found Sara coming up the walk with

her feathers all ruffled and patches torn out, evidently in a state of agitation; but Abram was nowhere to be seen.

The whole hamlet was searched, and every field for half a mile round our cottage was examined by the willing helpers, regardless of the crops; but Abram was not found. We offered a reward of a shilling to any one who could find him and restore him alive, or a sixpence for his poor little dead body; but neither reward was ever claimed.

We missed the chicken more than we thought could be possible. I am not ashamed to say we even shed tears when night closed in and our eyes fell on the little empty perch by the kitchen fire; for poor Sara, who could not get over her loss at all, refused to roost in-doors any more. She would not go into the hen-house either, but preferred to sit by herself on one of the branches of a tree in the front plot. Fowls upon the whole are stupid and uninteresting to look at, and until now I had never imagined they were the least intelligent; but, strange though it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that Sara, after losing her little companion, pined every day more and more, till at last she refused to eat any food whatever. About a fortnight after Abram disappeared, she died.

"It's weel kent" (known), said Barbara, with the tears standing in her kind, honest gray eyes, "what Sara has died o', mem, an' that's nothing

but a broken heart, for she was the brawest hen in a' the village afore Abram was lost, an' nothing ailed her that I could see."

We made a grave for the poor hen at the foot of the tree where she and her little companion used to scrape and scratch, and lie stretched out in the sun. Somehow the children in our hamlet heard what we were about, and first one little face peeped through the railings and then another, till all were present.

"They've come to the burial, mem," said Barbara, evidently much gratified by the attention. "May I let them in?"

Permission was at once granted, and they stood round with sobered faces, while we laid Sara tenderly in her grave; but when it came to covering her up with the earth, Barbara fairly gave way, and cried out, "I canna thol't (bear it), mem; ye can bury her wha likes, I canna do it." Whereupon one of the boys, saying, "Such havers!" stepped briskly forward, shovelled in the earth, and so Sara was buried.

"I declare to gudeness," said Barbara, when they had all gone away, "that Davie Cleark must hae a heart o' stane. To see the way he happet puir Sara in, and he wad likely hae done the same to wee Tiny! It's awfu' hoo laddies can be sae cruel."

It was some satisfaction to Barbara to be allowed to plant a rose-bush and some pretty creepers on

Sara's grave ; but though she had a good deal of work attending to the poultry generally, she never ceased to lament the untimely fate of her two little favorites.

OUR JOCK, THE TURKEY-COCK.

I HAVE said before that Mrs. Tappy was by no means an ordinary hen, either in appearance or disposition. She had a business look always, whether engaged in laying eggs, in sitting upon eggs, or rearing chickens.

"O, Tappy," I heard Barbara saying one day, "but you are an auld-fashioned crature; ye're awfu' cunnin';" and on inquiring why she thought so, I was informed that every time Tappy laid her egg she did not begin to announce the fact the moment she stepped off her nest, but walked sedately down to the back door, and began "to ceckle" as loud as she could, till Barbara ran out to give her the private handful of corn. However proud Tappy was of her large white eggs, it was evident that "clocking" was her chief delight. She laid her eggs as a matter of course; but she never looked perfectly at her ease then, and seemed as if she were dissatisfied with her position.

Early in the following spring I was presented with some beautiful turkeys' eggs, and a few days

afterwards Tappy opportunely showed signs of clucking again. Accordingly, Barbara carried her off to her old quarters in the shed; and to make sure she was not playing us a trick, we gave her two nest-eggs to sit upon by way of trial. Tappy no sooner understood that it would be agreeable to our wishes if she continued to cluck, than she "bumfled" up her feathers, and cooed away as she had done before, showing that she did not mean to lose her character as a "clocking hen," and that the rearing of chickens was her great object in life. When it was thus proved, beyond a doubt, that Tappy really did mean to sit fast on her nest, we put the turkeys' eggs under her; and though she stood up and looked at them rather suspiciously, as if not quite sure of their mottled appearance and large size, she nevertheless covered them over with her warm breast and wings. At Barbara's suggestion we gave her only eight, and a week afterwards we slipped in seven hens' eggs, as they required a week less to hatch. It was known that turkeys were difficult to rear, and if she lost many of her brood, Tappy would be sadly discouraged.

"Besides, mem," said Barbara, "Tappy will maybe tak' an ill wull to them, she's sic a queer cratur. For ye see, turkey-pouts are sic peepie things, an' if she wanna help them to eat, the chickens will soon show them hoo."

As Barbara had great knowledge of hens, and

of Tappy's disposition in particular, she was allowed to do just what she thought proper. At the end of the month seven turkeys and seven chickens came out; and as we were anxious to preserve them, the gardener was called in to lend his assistance in the building of a house for them. Old Andrew was "rather grumpy" when he discovered we meant to invade his premises, and actually had selected a corner of one of the garden walks for the purpose; but when told "it was the master's doing," he began the work, though still sulky, and contrived to make the neatest house imaginable. A little barrel was to be Tappy's sleeping apartment, and the old coop was placed at the side for use during the day, as a "clocking-up" place when the chickens were tired; while a portion of the walk was fenced off as pleasure-grounds, where Mrs. Tappy could strut about and scrape to her heart's content.

The weather being favorable, and every member of the family being interested in the little turkeys, it was only natural that they should grow up into strong healthy birds. At first, Tappy was a little annoyed with the turkeys' constant and melancholy "Peep — peep — peep"; and had it not been for Barbara's superior wisdom in having the chickens along with them, they might never have seen the end of the first week. Instead of pecking at the tiny seed which Tappy had scraped up, and was emphatically pointing out, they kept staring in the

air as if they expected their foster-mother to drop the sweet morsel into their very mouths. But in course of time, after watching the movements of their sharp little brothers and sisters, the chickens, they began to understand that they must bend their long necks, and look lower down for their food. There was an additional source of annoyance, too, to Mrs. Tappy, in the extra care that had to be taken with their diet, in which there was included a regular course of minced cresses, or chopped nettles; indeed, occasionally a whole pepper-corn needed to be stuffed down their throats, to produce that stimulant to their appetites which turkeys require.

In spite of all our care, however, two of them met with an accident and died, leaving four light speckled ones, and a large black one, which, from its color and size, every one pronounced to be of the masculine gender. He was as mild a tempered bird as one could see anywhere, and on looking at him one was apt to conclude that all the stories about the ferociousness of turkey-cocks were a mere delusion. I heard it said by a gentleman, that according to his notion a turkey was perhaps the most stupid and uninteresting bird under the sun, and certainly I held this opinion of our Jock for a long time. Whether he would always have remained a stupid lumpish fowl is difficult to say, but one day he met with a sad accident, and from that time we discovered there was a great

deal of sense, and even sagacity, in our turkey-cock.

Jock had either been so dull, or so heavy, that he could never get on to his perch at night as the others did. He had always to be assisted up. One evening, when this operation was being performed, Jock lost his footing, and to save him "the master" caught him by the leg, intending to hoist him up; but somehow the bird's weight twisted him round, and, melancholy to relate, the leg was dislocated. For many days Jock was barely able to stand up to eat his food, but in time he recovered the use of his limb somewhat, and could walk about a little, though always limping in a most awkward manner. The "master" was naturally very sorry for having caused the accident, and was constantly looking for Jock's welfare; and Jock, as if to show that he cherished no bad feelings, became sensible of the kindness in his turn, till he actually got to return the attachment. As little deformed Tiny had followed me about, so now did Jock follow his master; and every morning when he saw his friend coming, he lowered himself, with his breast on the ground, very much with the air of a camel kneeling down to receive its load. The resemblance was increased by the look of his neck and head, as he submitted to be stroked and petted; and this over, he was generally taken up to sit on the shoulder of his patron. He seemed to enjoy being thus carried

about in the warm sun, and when placed on the ground would rear his broad tail, and let down the uncouth red pendicle from over his nose, "blethering" out indignantly, if he fancied more notice was taken of Bran the deer-hound. Yet, in spite of these occasional jealous fits, the two were very good friends, and Jock was indefatigable in assisting Bran to chase the beggars and small boys from the avenue.

We had a very ancient apple-tree in the avenue, and though it bore plentifully every year we never managed to get one apple off it, for the boys seemed to consider it their especial property, and carried the fruit away long before it was ripe. This old tree Jock selected for his favorite roost, and into it he had to be hoisted every night, managing to scramble down by himself, from its low crooked branches, in the morning. When the apples began to show themselves, the children kept hovering about the approach; but no sooner did Jock see them than off he set in chase, driving them ignominiously far beyond the gate. At last one night, when the apples were temptingly ripe, the most daring of the boys planned to rob the tree while Jock slept. It was a pleasant autumn evening, and I had gone out-of-doors for a little to enjoy the bright moonlight, when I observed several small figures creeping stealthily among the shrubs. I instantly understood what was up. As I had long been anxious to find out

who the ringleader was of the robbers of my garden, — for they did not confine themselves to the one apple-tree, — I sat down quietly on an old stump, as close to Jock's roost as possible.

"Are ye sure Jock 'ull no flee doon?" I heard one of the smallest of the boys saying in a half-frightened whisper.

"I daursay no," was the reply; "birds are aye awfu' stupid at nicht. See, haud the pock, an' I'll climm up an' shak' them doon, but mind, gather them quick, for the mistress 'ull maybe come oot. I'm mair feared for the mistress than for Jock."

"I wish I hadna come," said another; "for ye mind the mistress said, gin if she catched us, she wad hae's ta'en to the police-office."

"Gae awa' wi' ye," said Robbie Berry, the smith's son; "nae fear o' her. She aye says mair than she means. But see, be quick, I dinna want her to see's for a' that."

Robbie hereupon began to ascend the tree, but no sooner was he well off the ground, than Jock gave a great hoarse roar or gobble, which frightened poor Robbie so much that down he tumbled, and off ran all the other boys, with Jock flopping after them as briskly as if it were broad daytime. Before Robbie could recover from his surprise, I was down upon him, and had him safely in the house in a few minutes.

"And so it's you, Robbie, that steals my

apples," I said, after I had him in my own room, out of hearing of the "master," who was apt to be a little more severe with the boys. Robbie held down his head, looking uneasy, and mumbling something about not having taken one this year.

"No thanks to you, Robbie," I said. "If Jock had not been there to look after them, they would all have gone. But I must get a policeman this time, if only to keep me from breaking my word."

"Ye'll no tell my father, mem, wull ye, for he'll murder me? Mither's no weel, ye ken, mem, an' it'll mak' her waur when she hears father flytin'."

"But if I let you off this time, Robbie, you will steal my apples again, for I heard you say I spoke more than I meant. Now we must punish you in some way. I don't want to harm your good mother, so I will let you off for the present, only you must write down on a piece of paper that you promise never to steal an apple again, and I will give it to the policeman to keep for us, so that if you break your word at any time, he can carry you away in a moment."

This idea seemed to frighten poor Robbie as much as the actual presence of the policeman could have done. But as I would not listen to any of his excuses, he was compelled to write it out in his largest text handwriting. It was at last

finished, though not without having been blotted several times, not only with his hands, but his tears also ; and with an apple in one pocket, and a biscuit in the other, Robbie was dismissed, evidently much subdued.

Jock, on being looked after, was discovered sitting on the top rail of the gate. How he had got up no one knew, but as he now chose this for his perch we had no more visits from the children, and consequently the "apple closet" had never been so well stored. To my great annoyance, we were compelled to give up keeping turkeys, the farmers having complained that they damaged the crops ; and though Jock was such a pet and favorite, and so useful too, still we thought, if we sent the others away, we must send him also. He might have pined when separated from his companions ; and as the people who bought them promised to be especially kind to Jock, we made up our minds to part with him.

I do not think our little maid ever forgave her master for consenting to give up Jock. "The puir beast was so fond o' him," she said, "how could he let him gang awa', a beast that never harmed a field in a' his life? And as for the farmer, he weel deserved to lose more than he complained about." When reminded that Jock and she were not always good friends, she replied somewhat hastily, "Aweel, mem, I canna help being cross whiles, for he's that provoking. He'll no stand

up for hissel', and I canna bear to see him rin awa' frae the wee'st chicken. The muckle sumph! An' yet, see hoo he'll flee after the laddies, and he's no-a bit feared for me when I tak' a stick to him. Isn't it awfu' strange, mem, he has sic an ill-will to me wearing a white petticoat on the Sabbath days, and my hat wi' the red feather? He splashed me a' ower wi' mud, mem, nae farther back than yesterday, and he flew up to tear the hat aff my heid."

Yet with all his faults Barbara liked Jock, even though he tried her patience greatly, and perhaps objected to the finery of her Sunday dress. We sent her out of the way to the market town, on the day that Jock and his friends had to be parted with; and when the cart drove off with the poor birds, we wished we could have gone with her. Barbara took no notice of what had taken place during her absence, and the only time I heard her speak about Jock afterwards, was when she was saying to the stable boy, "I've never as much as said *turkey* tae the mistress, nor her tae me, an' when the maister said, 'An' so poor Jock's awa',' I never let on I heard him. Hoo *could* he let Jock gang? An' to think the crater looted down for the mistress to lift him up into the cart that took him awa'!"

"But the mistress was greetin'," said Tommy; "I think she was awfu' vexed."

"I'm glad to hear't," said Barbara, with a slight

toss of her head; "she *ought* tae have grat, and grat sair tae."

As listeners never hear any good of themselves, I thought it best to slip away; for in Barbara's present state of indignation, I might have heard more than in a calmer moment she would like.

TAPPY'S DUCKLINGS.

IN the autumn of that same year in which Tappy brought out the turkeys she "clocked" again, and as it was rather late in the season for chickens, I was advised by one of the neighbors to try her with a setting of ducks' eggs. As usual, she brought out her birds well, and as there was nothing in the garden or in the fields that could be destroyed, she was allowed to strut about wherever she pleased, — or, rather, wherever her brood chose to lead her, for Mrs. Tappy seemed now to have met her match. If she wanted to go up to the wood, where it was sheltered and warm, the little imps loitered round every dirty puddle; and they were so independent, that if she would not accompany them, they waddled off by themselves.

This style of behavior would have annoyed any ordinary hen; but to a hen of such steady and methodical habits as Tappy, it was distressing beyond measure. Much she had to put up with in the first week or two of their ducklinghood, but it was nothing to what she endured when one day they found their way down to the river, and swam

off, forming a regular procession. They ducked their impudent little heads down, and stood up in the water flapping their scrubby wings in her very face. Tappy's love for the creatures she had hatched was still so powerful that she even tried to overcome her dislike to the water, and waded in till her pretty breast was soaked, and she herself looked draggled. It was no use, she found, to stand there cluck-clucking; they much preferred their congenial element to her kind care; and after a few more vain attempts, Tappy wisely gave it up, and turned home without them. They duly came home for a few nights, however, when she condescended to take charge of them, seeming to be happy to have them round her once more. But she had caught cold, whether from getting herself so wet in the river, or by having the ducklings' wet feathers close to her, I cannot say.

Barbara took her into the house, and nursed her tenderly, but Tappy grew worse and worse. "It's all thae ducks, mem," she said; "I was quite sure Tappy wadna like them, an' couldna get on wi' sic nasty cratur. Ye'll mind, mem, hoo I set my face against having them. Puir auld Tappy, ye deserved bettér, for you're as braw a hen as ever lived."

For some days Tappy struggled hard to shake off her illness, but it was no use; and on the Sunday afternoon, when I returned from church, Barbara came running to tell me that "puir Tappy had slippet awa'."

We buried her in the same place where Sara, her chicken, had been laid. A few more flowers were added to mark the exact spot, and in the early spring some cress seed was sown, forming the first letters of their names, which, to Barbara's great delight, came up beautifully.

Other subjects of care had arisen to Barbara, and other fowls had even to occupy her attention; but it was obvious that she kept herself from forming any special attachments among them. Tappy and Abram were evidently still in her mind, and she said "she culdna be fashed wi' birds. The less ye set your mind on them the better, mem," she would even go the length of advising; "for dae ye see, if there's ane that ye begin to mak' a pet o', it's sure to meet wi' some orra mischance or anither? It's weel that there's seldom ony like our Tappy, puir woman,—there was aye something bye ordinar' in *her* clockings."

But what of Tappy's ducklings? Did they pine for want of her soft breast and kind motherly ways?

Nothing of the sort. They seemed rather glad than otherwise to be freed from the sound of her anxious cluck-cluck, and the fuss she made when they went into the water. Being now their own masters, they made the most of their liberty. Had the ducklings confined themselves to the river or to its banks, it would have been well both for

them and for me, as you shall hear ; but, having been reared by such a mother, it was to be expected they would be enterprising.

I must here explain that our little hamlet is particularly well suited to the keeping of ducks. Every house has as good accommodation for them as for the pigs ; and each female inhabitant prides herself upon their whiteness, their size, or the quality of their eggs. The hamlet is close to the edge of the tidal river, whose broad, shallow bed and muddy flats are by turns covered with water and left bare again, the real river being but a narrow current in the middle, which at low water oozes its zigzag way towards the sea. At full tide the ducks can disport themselves in the abundance of its waters ; and at low tide they have acres of mud to waddle up and down in, beyond reach of any disturbing influence. But though our little village is thus, as we may say, peculiarly ducky, our own house, the cottage *par excellence*, is not so conveniently situated for rearing this particular fowl. It stands on the rise of the hill, some way back from the water ; and if we keep ducks, they have to pass through a considerable space to their favorite element.

This, however, only made Tappy's ducklings more self-confident, for they could vary their life a good deal. Sometimes they wandered along the little wood at the back of the house, sometimes they even paid a visit to the large farm still

farther into the country. They would even take a roundabout way across the cornfields, reach the river, and would sail down till they came opposite to their own home. The village ducks, on the other hand, who had so little trouble to get afloat, seemed to go on in the most methodical style, passing most of their time in the water, or on the river's bed.

We called our ducks ducklings — Tappy's ducklings — long after they had any title to the name, even after we had discovered, by the hoarse cry of more than half of them, that they were drakes. The good wives of the village smiled good-naturedly at my persisting in keeping five drakes and only three ducks; but, apart from their being Tappy's last legacy, they were all so beautiful that I could not make up my mind to set one before the other.

Two of the drakes were of the prime Aylesbury kind, white as snow, with slightly turned down bills, long necks, and large bodies, almost like geese. The other two were mottled brown, with ticks of gold, as it were, peeping out about the breast; and the fifth — I fear I did favor the fifth — was lavender, with a lovely changing-colored neck, like a peacock's. It was a sight to see them streaming off in a body, with the green-necked drake in the front, supported by the two Aylesbury ones on either side; the two brown ones following together, close behind, while the three

gentle-looking ducks, white and gray, came modestly in single file.

The harvest had been a late one, and, owing to the rain that fell incessantly after the grain was cut, the corn was still left standing in the little paddock that belonged to Robert Berry, the smith, and sloped down to the river. It turned out that when Tappy's ducklings were tired of swimming about, and diving for fishes, they got into the habit of marching up to the barley shocks, where they made a hearty meal, without troubling themselves whether they had a right to do so or not. For a day or two we wondered why they did not return at their usual lunch hour, and in the evening they ate so little that Barbara came to the conclusion they must be getting "such a routh o' sea-ware and sea-beasts, no to speak o' fish, that they turned up their yellow noses at good food." As this was my first experience of ducks, I began to think they were such thrifty fowls, that next season I should set every hen that clucked with ducks' eggs, whether that wise young woman Barbara approved or no.

I was still much pleased with this idea, when one day, on passing the smith's shop, Robert accosted me in rather an abrupt manner, taking no notice of my polite "Good-day."

"I am loath to complain, mem, but thae ducks o' yours are hashing my barley stooks most awfu'," he said.

Was it not natural that I should feel indignant at such an accusation? What! were such economical, well-behaved ducks to be maligned in this manner?

"I think you must be mistaken, Robert," I replied, with as much dignity as possible; "my ducks are constantly in the water, and so I cannot see how they can trouble anybody."

"I wad hae spoken afore, mistress," said Robert, a little more politely, "but the guid-wife, she wadna hear o't, for ye've been a guid freen to huz, mem; but folk maun tak' care o' their ain, specially when they hae sic a lot o' bairns to fend for. Ye're aye open to reason, mem, and I thought ye wadna mind me speaking about it."

"O, of course it was right to speak about it, Robert," I said, — although, I must own, in anything but a pleasant tone of voice, — "but still I cannot understand it. Are you quite certain they were my ducks?"

"'Seein's believin',' they say," said Robert, with a grim smile; "maybe ye'll be able to identifee them, gin ye come wi' me. I dinna doot but ye'll find them hard at it. Water, indeed! it's little they've troubled the water this week."

The smith led the way, with his strong bare arms rolled in his leather apron, and I followed him down the bank, and along the footpath by the river, without exchanging a word more, on this or any other subject. All of a sudden he stopped,

and pointed towards six or seven shocks of barley that looked as if they had been overturned by the wind. But what was my dismay, on looking closer, to find Tappy's ducklings, in a body, engaged in assaulting one of the said stooks in a most determined manner.

Yes, there they were, there was no mistaking them, — the gray, the white, and the brown, even to the favorite green-necked drake himself, — all rushing together up the sheaves, to the very top, or standing on tiptoe below, gobbling at the grain. You heard it rustling and trilling down their broad bills, in the very perfection of enjoyment; and really it was extraordinary to see how cleverly they shot themselves up to the highest point, till their united weight toppled the stooks over, — how determined they were, and what destruction they committed.

"This is frightful!" I exclaimed, making a dash at them with my parasol, while the smith remained provokingly still. "You wretches, you!" I cried, "be off! you shall be shut up for the future." Away they all floundered in a heap, quacking and screaming, then waddled into line, and streamed off into the water.

"Wha's richt noo, mem? Hae I complained without cause?" was all Robert said.

What could I do but express my sorrow, and promise that the ducks should be carefully shut up, and the damage paid for? They defied Bar-

bara's efforts to drive or coax them home, and the more she cried "Wheetle-wheetle-wheetle!" the more they quacked and shook their tails and wings, as if highly amused at her discomfiture. The only thing I could do, therefore, was to hire the smith's youngest boy, Sandy, to act as herd, till the hour came when they usually returned home in the evening. A hard enough time poor little Sandy had, I assure you, for Tappy's ducklings had a will of their own, and were determined not to give up gobbling the smith's grain without a struggle. At last we got them safely secured in the hen-house. It was large, but notwithstanding Tappy's ducklings could not make themselves happy in it. They were supplied with a large dish of the food they liked best, and with another full of water,—and certainly so long as the former lasted they were quiet enough; but they waded so often in and out of the wide basin, that in a very few minutes they had emptied it completely all over the nice warm straw where the hens delighted to make their nests. This disagreeable state of things was made known to Barbara by all the hens setting up a loud cackle the next morning, and they refused either to lay an egg or be comforted till these disagreeable ducklings were put out.

But it was impossible to put them out, for we had no proper court to confine them in. The hens, however, were nearly distracted, or rather nearly drove us distracted by their incessant noise, so

that in the end we were compelled to let the ducklings out till the eggs were laid; while Barbara waited beside them to prevent them from roving away. By way of amusing them she began to turn up the earth in search of a worm or two for them. No sooner was the first one found and thrown towards them, than they were watching with sharp, eager eyes for the turning up of the next spadeful of earth. I could not understand what all the laughing was about, but on looking out, there was old Andrew the gardener, who had evidently volunteered his services, digging away with all his might, while the ducks stood close round watching. They were so full of confidence, and had so little fear about them, that they stood upon the clod Andrew was going to turn over, or got behind it, or rushed into the hole before he had time to get his spade away. It was no doubt "sport" to Andrew, but for me a sight by no means calculated, to plead in their future favor. Barbara, indeed, could see no harm in it, and perhaps because I had turned my back on them she was determined to stand their friend. I fear she even carried her indulgence for them so far, that she left the hen-house door unfastened purposely the very next morning; at all events, I found they had made their escape, and were down at the river as usual. I had to go from home that day, so that Barbara could not be spared to go after them; but she promised to get one of the village children to

herd them, so that I might keep my mind easy about the corn. It was late when I returned that night, and I had forgotten the ducklings altogether; but next morning, while I sat at breakfast, Barbara came to tell me that Robbie Berry wanted to see me. I was just going to remind her that we disliked being disturbed while at breakfast, when she anticipated me by saying, "Robbie says he maun see ye, mem, an' this very minute tae, for he's in a desperate hurry."

Thinking it had to do with his mother, who was delicate, I hastened to the back door. There stood Robbie with a great long old-fashioned gun over his shoulder; and before I had time to recover from my surprise, he blurted out, "My faither's gaen frae hame, an' he's tae bide four days at Needie Mill; he's bought poother an' shot, and sent huz tae tell ye, that gin yer ducks come doon tae oor stooks *again*, I'm tae shoot every ane o' them."

I was turning to ask Barbara if she had allowed the ducks to trespass during my absence the previous day. But Robbie, who seemed in too great a state of excitement to wait for my reply, continued, "Mind, it's no my fault, mem, if the beasts are shot; it's father has buden me, an' gin a' the polismen in the kintra-side suld come I *maun* do't."

It was my constant injunction at the Sunday school, "Children, obey your parents, even against

your own wishes." I felt that Robbie had the best of the argument; but at this point out came Barbara, and regardless of my presence she cried, "Gae wa wi' ye, Robbie Berry; I dinna believe yer faither said sic a thing. I'd jest like to see ye shoot ane o' Tappy's ducks! Gae wa wi' ye, ye haverel, an' shoot yer ainsel'!"

I ordered Barbara to go into the house, and then said to Robbie that I would see that the ducks were locked in myself, so that he would not be put to any trouble. Robbie then hoisted up his gun, — or rather, I ought to say, blunderbuss, for the mouth was more like that of a miniature cannon than of a gun, — and then strode away. Barbara, thinking I was out of hearing, could not resist the temptation of shouting after him: "Stop, an' I'll mak ye a paper cockit hat: ay, man, ye wad look grand. But hoots, I'm forgettin' yer carroty pow nicht set it afire, an' then yer grand big gun wad gae aff and blaw the head frae ye."

There was a sound as if Robbie was replying, and then something came with a crash against the back door, which proved to be a piece of turf he had flung at Barbara's head. As she had been a little provoking, I declined to take any notice of his "bad manners," as Barbara called it.

That very afternoon I was telling a visitor about Robbie and the ducks, and our friend laughingly proposed to send a body-guard for

them, in the shape of a little terrier dog called Missie, who was said to be so sagacious, that she had only to be told to keep the ducks from wandering, and not one of them would be allowed to pass out of the court. The offer was certainly a very tempting one, and we agreed to have little Miss on trial, and next morning he brought her. When the ducks were let out, Missie was told to lie down and watch, and we could not help laughing at the idea of the little creature being supposed to understand what was required of her. We expressed our doubts, therefore, as to the success of the experiment, and we felt a little uneasy, especially as Robbie could be distinctly seen walking about the little field with his blunderbuss.

The terrier lay down as desired, looking, I thought, rather stupid than otherwise; and we walked away to see what the ducks would do next. They soon began to get restless, and drew closer together, quack-quacking in unison, as if they were holding a council of war. They then made a bold dash forward, but Missie, who was lying with her nose on her paws apparently fast asleep, was up in a moment, and with a sharp yelp and a bark drove them into the inclosure again.

The question naturally suggested itself, could n't the dog keep them out of Robert Berry's field? So the ducks were driven down, and Missie was stationed in the field to keep them in the water.

There was a little island, or rather sand-bank, in the centre of the river that they could rest upon, and plenty of waste ground on the opposite side, so that, with a good breakfast before setting out, they did not require anything till bedtime.

We informed Robbie that Missie was the duckling's herd, or guardian, and we advised him to lay his gun away, and go out with the other boys to the potato-gathering. But Robbie greatly preferred strutting about with his gun to doing such commonplace work as picking potatoes. The next day the smith returned, and took in some of the outstanding corn, leaving only a few shocks at the top of the field away from the water. Consequently, as we thought the ducks could now do no harm, I intended to send down for Missie; but Barbara was busy at the time, and so it had to be left for an hour longer. The ducks, however, must have got tired of being prevented from coming out just when they pleased. It was supposed afterwards that they must have sailed up the river, then landed, and made their way across a large stubble-field to the farm. It was easy for them then to get out along by the wood, and down to the smith's field at the end where the shocks were left standing.

The tide was out, and all the ducks belonging to the village were busy in the shallow bed of the river; so that Missie, who lay peacefully asleep under a bush by the water's edge, must have been

quite deceived, and fancied her charge was quite safe also.

But Robbie had been lying in ambush along with some boon companions, and no sooner were the ducks fairly in the field, than up he jumped, and levelling his blunderbuss, fired. I happened to be looking out of the window at the time, and for a minute scarcely understood what had happened. The effect was as if Robbie's gun must have been charged with ducks, for from out of the smoke appeared to come legs and wings and ducks' heads, sparkling out like stars from a Roman candle, all being mixed up somehow with the legs and arms of the valiant Robbie. When the smoke had cleared away, there he lay apparently lifeless, while the ducks were making their way to the water as briskly as possible, with Missie barking at their tails.

There was no time to laugh at the ludicrousness of the scene: Robbie was to be seen to; so, calling Barbara, we hastened down to his assistance. He was not hurt, only stunned a little; but on making inquiries we were informed by his most intimate friend, Davie Clark, that the smith had only given Robbie "a wee tait o' pouter, hardly enough to kill a sparrow." They had, however, contrived to make some bullets themselves, and had added "some chips o' iron from the smithy." Then the gamekeeper had given some more powder and half-used waddings, in the belief that the

gun was empty; so that, as Davie proudly said, "the gun was nigh-hand fu'."

It was the greatest wonder the barrel had not burst, and I was thankful to see the boy was safe, for with all his faults we liked Robbie. Hence I could not feel angry when Barbara held up the lifeless body of one of the brown drakes; its head, to be sure, was shot completely away. At sight of it Barbara was so indignant that it was with difficulty I could prevent her from giving Davie, who had laughed, "a gude skelping. It's jest as well for you, my man, it wasna the green-neckit drake," she said, shaking her fist at Robbie. "Losh! I'd hae ta'en the life o' ye! But, my certy, if ye harm anither o' them, I'll — O ye —"

I had to scold and coax her by turns, and it is impossible to say how long she would have gone on, had not her feelings got the better of her, and she turned and fled, "in case the laddies suld see her greet."

Poor Robbie had certainly exceeded his instructions, and, unknown to me, the smith gave him a sound thrashing. What was even worse, he locked up the gun.

After this, the corn being all in, we had a time of comparative peace. There was always, to be sure, some slight skirmish between Barbara and Robbie, assisted by the terrier, who had taken a strong dislike to the boy. Barbara was constantly

accusing Robbie of throwing stones at the ducks as they passed down to the river, which he stoutly denied; and though they did come home showing marks sometimes of a stone upon their bodies, he was never caught in the act.

At last one day the remaining brown drake disappeared, and a few days after one of the white Aylesburys was nowhere to be found. We must confine them, else they would all disappear together. A strong inclosure was made by Andrew, who also contrived a little pond in the centre for them; and though they were scarcely so fat and glossy, they throve pretty well, so long as the weather kept free from frost.

When the winter set in fairly, and the pond was frozen over, we could not bear to see the poor things sliding on the ice as they peered down in search of water, and so we gave them their freedom once more. About a fortnight after, the remaining white drake disappeared as mysteriously as the other two, and it was evident there must be a thief lurking somewhere. Barbara shook her head when I suggested that it might have been the tramping hawker who had come to the door that forenoon. The drake was there long after the man had gone away, she said, and she muttered something about its being "a hawker nearer home." As Barbara was fond of dealing in mysteries, there was no use asking her to explain herself; so I was turning to go, when she said

suddenly, "If you please, mem, will ye let me oot the nicht after tea? I'm determined to find that drake afore I sleep; for, losh me, if this is no pit a stop tae, the green drake's turn 'll be next."

I was reading in quiet about an hour after tea, when Barbara came and asked me to speak a moment privately. She was apparently excited, and, to judge from her cautious way of tapping at the door, and standing there on tiptoe, had something of real importance to communicate.

"Well — then you can come in, Barbara," I said, somewhat impatiently. "What is it? Yov may speak here — your master has gone out."

"O, I'm sae glad o' *that*, mem," she broke out, "else gin he heard what I'm gaun to tell ye, there wad be murder committed this nicht, or at ony rate he 'd have the wretches put in the polis-office for certain."

"What's the matter, girl? Murder who?" I exclaimed, in no small surprise.

"O!" replied Barbara, with a gasp, "it's just Sandy Terris, the smith's apprentice, that wild haverel that's aye leadin' the laddies intil mischief, an' slippin' oot o' the blame hissel', like an eel. I *had* a feelin' he had to do wi' that drake, an' I'm no wrang."

As the master was out, I consented to put on my bonnet and cloak, when I was to be taken to see the last of my drake. The smith's shop was only a short distance from our gates, and stood

quite alone and away from the hamlet. There was a faint light shining out of the window at the gable end, which I thought strange, as both the smith and his man were away from home. I moved cautiously to the window, according to Barbara's whispered suggestion. There was a jacket or some dark object hung up against it, but by an unlucky hole one could see the interior of the smithy pretty plainly. There sat Robbie on the edge of the great fireplace, steadily blowing at the great bellows; while in front of the glowing embers, laid ingeniously on some cross-pieces of iron, lay my plump Aylesbury drake. It was impossible to mistake it, for its snowy neck and head was hanging down over the stone edge of the fire. Davie Clark was looking after some potatoes that were roasting in the embers, while Sandy Terris sat in front, surrounded by half a dozen youngsters, some kneeling, some sitting on anvils, or tubs turned upside down, listening to some frightful ghost story he was relating. They crouched close to each other, terrified to look round into the blackness of the smithy, the keen forge-light glowing on their gathered faces, as Robbie kept up the blast. It seemed almost cruel to interrupt them, but Barbara's terror lest the "green drake" should be served up in the same manner could not be hushed down. We therefore opened the door, and before they had time to start up, much less run away, we stood beside them.

I gave them a lecture of course, but I shall not tell you all I said; yet I remembered they were boys, and as there was one from almost every house in the village, it would be the mothers who would suffer most. Sandy Terris was the only one I felt inclined to punish on the spot, for he instantly cried out, "It was Robbie, mem, wha took the duck"; forgetting to tell us that he had prompted him to do the deed. Poor Robbie jumped down and frankly owned his fault, and courageously stepped forward with a gulp in his throat, "I *maun* gang wi' the polisman now, mem," he said; "but ye wanna let my mither see him tak' me awa'?"

Robbie remembered his own written agreement to this effect, but he faced it like a brave boy, showing there was good in him still. We therefore compromised the matter. My fowls, and indeed all the fowls in the village, were to be held sacred henceforth. If at any time they wanted to have a feast along with their stories by the smithy fire, they were to come frankly and let me know, instead of stealing it. Robbie was to be forgiven out and out, because he had owned his fault, but Sandy, — "What is to be done with Sandy? His name must be struck off the list when the grand Christmas-tree bears its fruit."

This was even a worse punishment than telling his master, and Sandy's countenance fell, and he muttered something about it "no being fair"; but

Davie Clark, who stood next to him, said, "Ye suldna hae turned the blame on Robbie, then. The mistress canna thole a tale-pyot, an' ye ken puir Robbie wadna hae ta'en the bird, had ye no ca'ed him a cooard at the first when he said No."

Tappy's ducklings were never molested further. In the spring they laid their eggs, large and white or sea-green, then trotted off to the river or wood, or anywhere they pleased. In the early summer, to be sure, one of the ducks did disappear; but after a careful search she was found quietly sitting at the foot of a whin, or furze-bush, close to the trough where the cattle belonging to the farm came to drink. She had made herself a nest, and after laying her eggs in it, had set herself to hatch them; and one fine sunny day, at the end of the month, she came waddling home, followed by a perfect troop of bright yellow ducklings, like puff-balls. When they in turn went down to the water, it was a very different sight to see them set out, with their mother in the midst of them, from seeing Tappy standing on the shore breaking her poor old heart with fright.

As they launched out that day of their first trial on the water, Barbara stood watching them with wistful eyes; then she turned, and smiling archly, said, "I think, mem, had auld Tappy lived, — Tappy's a granny noo, ye ken, — she wad hae been fell pleased wi' her grandbairns."

OUR BARBARA.

IN the hope that the reader has taken some interest in the careful attendant of Tappy and her broods, I now give a more particular account of Barbara herself.

As we intended going abroad, we had broken up our establishment and parted with our servants. Circumstances occurred, however, to alter our plans, and we took up our quarters for the summer in a well-known quaint little old city in the North of Scotland. Things had just got comfortably settled, when the servant we had brought with us had to leave to attend a sick relation. In spite of all manner of inquiries, there did not seem to be one maid-servant at liberty in the whole town. Just when I was beginning to despair of getting one, a girl presented herself "to look after the situation." She seemed to be so very young that I had doubts as to the propriety of engaging her. However, she assured me, with a bright eager look in her gray eyes, "that she was older than she looked," adding, "that although small for her years, she was stout

and strong, and able for a good deal of work." I engaged to take her on trial.

Noticing that I seemed to have got more work on my hands than I could well manage, she politely volunteered to stay then and there, "till everything was rede up." It had been a weary two days to me, and every hour I seemed to be getting more helpless. The kitchen was a perfect sea of confusion and disorder. Into this disagreeable state of affairs Barbara stepped like a homely fairy, bringing a sunbeam with her, and drawing order out of chaos itself. She had on her best clothes, with far too much finery for my taste. But she took off her bonnet, carefully turned in the bright ribbons, and laid it along with her shawl neatly folded on a chair. When she had tucked up her dress in a great bunch behind, and pinned on a towel instead of an apron, she seemed as if she quite enjoyed the idea of setting matters to rights where her betters had so grievously failed. It was humiliating to watch with what ease she worked, never getting the least confused, washing and setting things in their places as if by magic.

"I cannot understand it!" I remarked, half involuntarily. "I never could get that grate to do anything with me, it almost seemed bewitched; and the crane of that water-pipe never would turn. Really, Barbara, one would fancy you had been always amongst them."

"There's a deal in custom, ye see, mem," she replied, looking up from brushing the kettle. "If ye had been born to't, ye wad maybe hae got on as weel as I do."

There is a popular maxim about the difficulty of putting an old head on young shoulders, but we seemed to have met with the exception to the rule. Barbara took an interest not only in her work, but in the family and its concerns, and her quaint calmness made one fancy that this summer was going to be a real holiday time. From the first we observed that the girl was original in her disposition. One of her peculiarities was, that she disliked the idea of being watched from neighboring windows while at her work. Our house was situated in a regular town street, and was thus exposed conspicuously to view. It could be seen through and through if a passage door happened to be open; but, besides that, the houses over the way and those on either hand were tall, the town was so constructed in our quarter that there was behind us a court of workmen's dwellings, and over it again whole back ranges and steep alleys of windows, with their meat-safes, fish-racks, and clothes-lines, looking towards us. The faces that appeared at these windows Barbara regarded as those of personal enemies. There were three individuals, however, who annoyed her more than all the others put together. Two were young men who lived directly over the way, and

nothing would persuade her that they did not see into her kitchen. They came in at regular hours during the day; and the moment she saw them she drew down the blind, going on with her work in the dark, at great inconvenience to herself.

"Impident fellows," she would say, "staring into any gentleman's house! If they hae nae manners, the sooner they learn them the better; an' surely, if they see the blind pu'd down afore their noses every day, they'll hae the sense to turn their een another airt."

She was even more indignant at the inmates of a house whose kitchen window looked into our back yard. She declared that the servant, and the mistress too, did nothing but watch her, though, if the truth were told, the watching was all on the other side. If the window was thrown up, Barbara's head would peep cautiously round the corner of the door-post "to see what that lassie was after"; and if she came upon her shaking a table-cloth or a rug over the window, she not only threatened her with the police, but with a good thrashing the first time they met.

Another peculiarity she had was a habit of talking to herself, or rather of addressing inanimate objects. "Stand there," she would say to my work-table; "you are always out o' your place, and as for you books and bits o' music, I wonder whar ye'll be next; is't yer ain faut, or the mistress's, that I find ye a'-gates about the room?"

But it soon appeared that Barbara much preferred to have living creatures to talk to. I think she must have had a good deal of vivid fancy, but still more a quick sensibility to the life of nature and animals, and that to a degree not generally shown by uneducated people.

"You see, mem," she said one evening, when I was assisting her to wash up the tea-things, and drew her out a little; "there's a big family o' us at hame, and I had mostly to bide out in the country with our aunt, an' she's a lone woman, and it's a lonesome sort o' a place. So I used to be aye wishing to be back at our ain hame, so I wad keep fancying I saw their faces, and wad speak to them, till it's maybe got to be a habit wi' me."

After spending a very pleasant six months, it was decided that, instead of going back to our own home, we should go still farther north, and pass the winter in the Highlands. The question arose, how would Barbara like this idea? We had got attached to the girl, and she suited us well. When I spoke of it at last, she said she would "think over it." This was as much as we could expect from such a cautious old head; but after some hours' deliberation she came to tell me that though she would prefer living in the country, she could not go so far away from her mother. We were all very sorry at her decision, but had to look about for another to supply her place, when who should apply but the girl who watched Barbara from the

back yard! When she had gone out, Barbara tapped at the door and asked to speak with me a moment; and on my going into the kitchen, she suddenly burst into tears.

"O, mem," she said, through her sobs, "hae ye arled [engaged] her?" And when informed to the contrary, her mind seemed greatly relieved, and she continued, "Set her up wantin' to fill *my* place! It's quite plain I maun gang for the sake o' thae pair dogs."

She referred to a litter of young deerhound puppies we had, her love for them being intense.

"I'd like tae see how *she* could manage them," she continued, in great indignation. "She hates them. Did I no see her my ainsel' fling a big bit o' coal at Vena? An' ye ken, mem, the beast couldna be doin' her harm. No! if it was for naethin' else than to spite her, I'd gang, let-a-be the dogs."

Though it was by no means flattering to have the dogs thus put before their master and mistress, Barbara was too good a servant to part with for a trifle, and I was glad to keep her on any terms. When she was feeding the dogs that night, she informed her especial favorite, Vena, that she was not going to leave her to the mercy of strangers, so she might keep her wee sel' quite easy; and when the puppy jumped up to lick her face, she seemed to be thoroughly satisfied with the decision she had made, for she added, "No, no, I couldna

leave ye, puir beasts ; an' I daur say my mither 'll be pleased at me stoppin' wi' the mistress after a'."

The village where we had chosen our home for the winter was a fashionable summer resort, and the house was one of the new-built villas furnished in the most modern style, having, amongst other new inventions, a close kitchen range. This range proved almost the only drawback to Barbara's happiness, for the house being away from all prying windows, she was delighted with it. But the grate was constantly annoying her in some way, and the amount of conversation she addressed to that black object, really ought to have made it blush. "If I were tae pit twenty scuttles o' coals into ye," she would say, wrathfully, "ye wadna keep the pots boiling ; ye 're waur than the horse-leetch that folks crack about, but some day I 'll hae ye tried how much ye *wull* tak'."

One evening, when the house was still and quiet, we were startled by a tremendous roar. It sounded almost unearthly through the quietness of the large house. The next moment it rushed Barbara with a scared white face. "O, mem!" she gasped, "it's the last day come noo ; let me hame tae my mither."

All this time the strange noise was going on, coming in gasps, followed by a shriek and a swish ; which made others beside Barbara tremble. We soon discovered what was the matter : Barbara had

succeeded in making an extra good fire at last, which had heated the water in the great boiler, and caused it to let off the steam at the escape-pipe. Though this was explained to her, she was determined to lay it simply down to the grate's provoking tricks, and its wish to annoy her, and nothing more.

With this exception she seemed to like the house, and enjoyed the wild mountain scenery almost as much as we did. She never wearied, even through the long winter nights, but seemed to be perfectly happy with old Bran, and a little white kitten with a black tail, for company. Instead of it being a pleasant change for her to be sent with a message to the village, it was a positive pain. The men jabbered Gaelic to her, having the impudence to laugh at her in that "outlandish language"; and the women, wishing no doubt to be kind to the stranger, spoke to her in passing. These advances she considered an insult, and soon put a stop to them by her curt replies. Hugh the gardener was therefore coaxed to deliver the orders for her, and, unless on very rare occasions, she never went out of the premises.

One day, in the coldest part of the winter, when everything was covered with snow, I asked her if she did not feel dull.

"O, no, mem," was her answer; "I like this weather afore any other; it's grand for telling mysel' stories, and I never weary."

"What sort of stories?" I asked.

"O, they just come to me, mem, when I look up into the wood, with a' thae fir branches covered wi' snow. They look like so many queer things, and I mak' up that the Frost King bides there, and a lot o' nonsense o' that kind."

She was pleased if I could make out the resemblance to fairy-like castles and houses which some of the trees had; and on one occasion she, in her eagerness, gave my head a good emphatic push down to the exact point from which her fancy perspective was to be caught. The snow melted, filling the river till it overflowed its banks, and covering the great meadows with sheets of water. Then the frost came suddenly again, with still greater severity than before, sealing up the little ponds and lakes on the meadows, although it could not make any impression on the river itself, which was a true Highland one, with the life and force of the mountain in it.

One afternoon Barbara had asked to go to the village, and to take two of the young puppy deerhounds with her for company. I little thought when I gave her permission that the dogs might be the means of a terrible catastrophe. In returning, when within sight of the house, the puppies had gone over the low wall into the meadow, and in their fun and play scampered off, the one in chase of the other, across ice and patches of grass. They then took a longer run, and gambolled on to a

large, marshy-looking sheet of ice, close to a turn of the river. There they ran out, slipping and sliding in a comical manner. Suddenly the ice, which seemed to be extraordinarily thin, gave way under one, while the other managed to get off. I myself had been returning with some friends from a walk, when our attention was attracted by exclamations from Barbara, who was running to the rescue. By a shorter cut over the hard ground, we were on the spot almost as soon as she. It was really heart-rending to see the danger into which poor Hector had fallen. As fast as he put up his paws upon the ice it gave way, and though of course he kept swimming, yet it was impossible that he could hit upon the only chance for his life, which was to go on breaking the ice till he got a footing. The cold of the water must soon have paralyzed him. His looks of dumb appeal to us were most piteous. Heedless of danger, Barbara stepped out on the ice, which crackled and hissed, sending up spouts of water through the cracks in the centre. Some men were curling on a pond at the other side of the river, and their excited shouts of "Scoop her in!" joined to some wilder cries in Gaelic, blended strangely with our feelings of distress. But at this moment they seemed to become aware that something was wrong with us, and just when Barbara was about to take another step out, they made our very hearts stand still with horror. "Come back, lass, for your life!"

screamed one man, who actually covered his eyes with his hand, as if he expected the girl would disappear before his timely warning reached her. Another called out: "The Black Hole's there, scores o' feet deep"; and when Barbara drew back and stood safe on the land, we could hear a long gasp of relief from the men.

"O save him! save poor Hector!" cried Barbara; "we canna stand here and see the beast drown." Then, snatching up a long stick that lay close at hand, she cried out, "Tak' a firm grip o' my tail, mem; it's verra firm, and I can loot forward quite safely."

I did as she desired, while one of my friends did the same by me, and the other held her round the waist, thus making as it were a secure chain. A gentleman came down, too, to lend his measure of help. With his assistance the ice was broken, so that the dog swam close to the shore, and was hooked out by the help of the pole and the gentleman's stick. Regardless of the wet and dripping state of Hector's skin, Barbara took him up and hurried away to put him by the warm fire. Now that he was safe, she cried over him as if her very heart would break.

Hugh the gardener told us next day that in that marshy-looking pond lay a hole so deep, that no rope had ever been found long enough to reach the bottom. The river took a sudden bend there, and had washed out a piece of the land, and there

the water lay like a silent pool in summer time. It made my teeth chatter when I thought of the girl's narrow escape, and it was some time before I recovered from the effects of the fright; but Barbara seemed to be intensely delighted to think that she had cheated the Highlanders, and drawn poor Hector out of the wonderful Black Hole itself.

"Ye sud hear the stories Hugh tells about it, mem," she said, with a chuckle; "he likes tae frighten folk; and as for his ghaist stories, it wud make yer hair stand on end if ye believed them; but they're a' lees, every ane o' them; an' he's that wild when I laugh at them. He actually wanted me to believe his ain father saw a ghaist wheeling a barrow up the village at twelve o'clock, wi' another ghaist sitting on't smokin' a pipe. An' he says it's perfect truth, for twa graves were found open the next day in the kirk-yard, an' they were toom. Toots," she continued, with a toss of her head, "they'll believe onything, thae Heel-landers!"

As milk was very scarce in the village when the spring advanced, we bought a goat from a man who was driving a herd to market. It was of course very friendly with Barbara. Every kind of animal knew by instinct how great was her love for them. But Nanny butted at every other member of the family, and waged incessant war with the dogs. She was constantly escaping in the

most ingenious manner. When she had done as much mischief as she could in our garden, she would wander off into those of our neighbors, or into the young plantation, nibbling at the bark of all the tender trees as she went, thus causing us great uneasiness as to making the damage good. One day, in spite of all our efforts to secure her, she got loose, and strayed down into the meadow, now fresh and green. Bran was not long in spying her out, and instantly set off in chase, apparently determined to inflict severe punishment on Miss Nan for the petty insults she had heaped upon him. Away flew Bran, bending his long back, and wishing no doubt it had only been a good roe-deer instead of a goat. Off scampered Nanny, but finding she must be caught in the end, she turned round, and stood bravely at bay. I cannot say who would have come off victorious, for Barbara was down upon the combatants with a short broom, which she used in a most vigorous manner.

She was also assisted by Sandy MacNab, the village baker's message lad. He was half-witted, but had taken a strange liking to Barbara; and the more she tried to keep him at arm's-length, it only made him the more determined to make friends with her. Happening to be passing along the road with his empty bread-basket hung by its handle round his neck, he rushed to help Barbara, hoping no doubt thus to ingratiate himself in her

favor. Bran, hearing his master's whistle, hastened to obey the call, but Nanny was not prompted by such well-bred feelings. No sooner had she got rid of one enemy, than, seeing Sandy MacNab shouting and yelling at her, she naturally fancied he was another. Barbara had succeeded in getting hold of the broken rope fastened to her neck, and was ordering Sandy to let the beast alone, when suddenly Nanny made a desperate charge right against the poor fellow, pitching him almost over her head, when he fell flat on his face into a pool of water. It was a good thing the pool was shallow, for the basket, being still round his neck, began to fill with water, and dragged him down. Added to his discomfort, there stood Barbara, shaking with laughter, never offering to help him. She was actually so cruel as to say that he deserved all he had got, for he had no business interfering with other folks' business. It was hardly to be wondered at that after this Sandy refused to come farther than the gate, and stuck the loaves on the spikes of the railing, leaving them to take care of themselves. As Nanny continued to be very troublesome, we had to part with her, even to Barbara's entire satisfaction.

When the winter and part of the spring had passed away, we had to move again. This time Barbara made no objections to go with us, being satisfied with the idea of seeing her mother in passing to our new home. She was glad to quit the

Highlands for a place where they knew nothing about Gaelic. She was also charmed when told that she could keep poultry, and any kind of animal we had a fancy for. When we were quite settled, and the poultry yard pretty full, Barbara was perfectly satisfied with her new quarters, though her love for the animals was apt to try one's temper at times. At any moment she would leave the most important piece of work at the least extra cackle, peep-peep, or quack from her feathered friends, and rush off to see to their welfare; and though she would look penitent enough when reproved for doing so, she forgot all about her promises to be more careful another time, and was off the same as before.

She was regarded by the inhabitants of our little hamlet as "an auld-fashioned cratur," and was supposed to be so very different from other girls of her age, that some even went so far as to say that "she had a slight want, puir thing." This idea arose from Barbara's dislike to any gossiping questions about the family she served.

"Thae station folk are as bad as the Heelanders yet, if no fully waur," she would say; "they'll be asking me next what we're to hae for our dinner. But I can sort them brawly, for I just aye say, 'Ye sud speer at the mistress; she kens aboot her ain affairs a hantle better than me.'" And then she would add with a laugh, or rather a chuckle of satisfaction, "Nae fear o' them speer-

ing. Sic impidence! can they no mind their ain business?"

I cannot say, therefore, that Barbara was popular, but she was perfectly happy in the notion that she kept the people at the station at their proper distance, and was as determined to "keep herself to herself" as she had been in the Highlands. She would hurry to get her work done to have a quiet hour or two in the evening to "spell out a story," as she called it; for though she was not a very good reader, she was particularly fond of stories, preferring to spell them out by herself rather than to listen to one being read. She was not above asking assistance either, but would have all the hard words marked out for me to explain when next I came in to give any orders. One evening I found her sitting gazing into the fire, the book she had been reading lying open on her lap before her. She had such a puzzled expression on her face, that I knew she was trying to understand what she had been reading. On making inquiries I found I was correct.

"I canna mak' out this story, mem," she said. "Here's a wee lassie tormentin' hersel' to find out what the beasts say, and here's a fairy promising to let her ken a' about it, an' what's mair, the beasts in the story *do* speak tae her. Now sic havers! Did onybody ever hear a beast speak wi' its mouth like folk?"

"But that's a fairy story, Barbara," I replied; "I thought you liked fairy stories."

"Yes, mem, when they tell about princes and princesses setting out to seek their fortunes, like Whittington and his Cat, but no when they begin to tell lees about the puir beasts, an' say they speak wi' their tongues; for they dae nothing o' the sort, though they speak tae ye plain enough in other ways."

"Speak in other ways, Barbara? Why, what do you mean?"

Barbara had a way of looking at you, which made you feel she was saying to herself, "Aweel! Is it possible the mistress can be so ignorant and so stupid!" What she did say was this:—

"Had that wee lassie in the book lived as lang as I did wi' my Aunt Bess's coo Mysie, she wad hae learnt to ken hoo dumb animals speak, fast enough; an' that's with their een, an' their tails, an' what not. Ay, mem, ye may laugh," she continued, "but it's true. I'm sure ye must hae seen hoo wee Abram spoke to Sara when they were here. He'd gie her a bit daub, and keek up at her, and I kent he was saying, 'Ah, but ye're bonny!' and Sara wad answer wi' a wee cheep, 'Hoots, man, nane o' yer capers; pit in yer head like a man, an' gae tae sleep.' An' there was Jock, my! how he did look at thae laddies, when after they had steal't the apples they used to cry till him, out o' spite for him catching them,—

'Bubbly Jock, yer wife's a witch,
An' a' yer bairns are ganders.'

Could he hae spoken, or rather could they hae understood what his een was saying, they wad hae heard something no very bonnie."

"But you haven't told me about Mysie."

"Aweel, I was coming to her, mem," she replied, taking a breath. "If I had been a wee thing late o' going to milk her, she wad look round wi' her big soft lips drawn close together, an' a look in her eye that said as plain as parritch, 'What's kept ye the nicht?' And gin I had offered tae milk her without telling her about it, she wad gie the pitcher a kick, and mak' her tail play slap in my face. But if I said, 'I couldna help it, Mysie, my woman; Aunty Bess was in ane o' her tantrums, and pit off my time,' she wad gie her tongue a twist round the cud she had been holding in her mouth, and say, wi' her een, ye ken, 'Aweel, since it wasna yer *ain* faut, I'll forgie ye this time.' She wad then let me pit the hay afore her nose, and maybe, if she saw I had been greet-in', — for Aunty Bess was whiles awfu' cross, an' no easy to live wi', — she wad gie my face a rub wi' hers, and I kent she meant to say, 'Puir lassie, keep up your heart, ye ken Mysie's yer friend.'"

"You must have been sorry to part with such a nice cow, Barbara?" I said.

"Yes, mem; an' yet I was aye wishing to be hame. I mind ae time, my mither cam to see me, and we slippit into the byre awa' frae Aunty, and then I grat sair to win hame. I wadna listen to

reason, an' my mither was speakin' o' fôlks' duty, and saying we couldna get everything in this world, when I lookit up and caught Mysie's ee fixed on me. 'An' gin ye rin awa', wha's to tak' care o' me, I wonder?' said she, wi' her ee; 'ye ken fine I canna bear onybody tae milk me but yer ainsel.' So I dried my een and went back to the house; but when my mither had driven off in the cart, and was oot o' sight, I creepit in aside Mysie, and grat my een oot on her neck."

It would take a volume itself to relate the history of that wonderful cow, and the parting at the last between the two was almost pathetic. It was, therefore, to be supposed that every animal belonging to us should, under her influence, become exceedingly tame, down to the very pig itself. Indeed, when the time came that it must be killed, the very butcher said he "felt to do it, though he had killed scores in his lifetime, but an ancients never."

We had just got settled down comfortably, when one day, there being a cheap excursion from Barbara's native town, her mother took advantage of it to pay her a visit. The next day Barbara looked dull and out of sorts, but as she continued to say "nothing ailed her," I thought it best to let her alone. She tried bravely to struggle against the feeling of homesickness that was evidently weighing upon her spirits, and to keep up her old interest in the animals as before — but

all would not do ; and I told her, as I could not bear to see her so unhappy, I must send her home, however sorry I was to part with her.

“I canna get my mither’s red shawl oot o’ my head,” she said, the tears filling her eyes. “If she had only written to say she was comin’, an’ no hae ta’en me by surprise, I could hae borne it ; but it was sae sudden, that a’ the time she was here I couldna believe my een. I had sic a lot o’ things to ask her aboot, and there I sat staring at her, no able to speak ; and somehoo I keep fancying she thought I was stiff tae her, and gaed awa’ vexed wi’ me.”

She sat quietly crying for a few minutes, and then looking up, she continued, “I’m drawn baith ways ; I’d like to bide a’ my days wi’ you an’ the maister an’ the beasts, if ye were only nearer my mither.”

We had, therefore, to make our preparations, and allow poor Barbara to return to her own home, as was but natural. Every animal in the place seemed to miss her. They could not understand the scolding voice of her successor, who disliked them all as much as Barbara had loved them ; and old Bran, after trying in vain to make it out, sat down opposite the kitchen window, and howled both loud and long, — a thing he had never been known to do before.

A year or two afterwards, having occasion to go back for a few days to the old town where

Barbara lived, I met her accidentally. I had not lost sight of her altogether, for I knew she had got a situation, and was still with the same family. She was just the same in outward appearance as when she left, her fresh comely face as youthful as ever; and after answering all her eager questions as to the family at home, which included the animals, I asked her if she was still in the same situation.

Instead of answering at once, as I expected, she looked down strangely confused, seemingly at a loss what to say. What could it be? Had our good, honest, upright, little Barbara fallen into any disgrace? "You can surely tell your old mistress, Barbara," I said, trying to help her out of her difficulty. "Are you not in the same family?"

"No, mem," she replied, in a half whisper, "I'm married."

"Married!" And I held up my hands in amazement. "And how long have you been married, pray? And what is your husband?"

"A week, mem," she replied, looking up at me archly. "His name is Mr. Gardner, and he's a mason to his trade." The last words she spoke with no small amount of pride.

"Well, Mrs. Gardner — as I suppose I must call you," I said, smiling, "though I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself, still I hope you will remember what I used to tell you to do to

keep your husband from ever going to a public-house."

"O, yes, mem, — a bright face and a clean fireside. But if you please, mem, ca' me Barbara; you an' the maister maun aye ca' me Barbara, for if ye ca' me by any other name to the poor dogs, hoo'll they ken it's me ye're speaking o'?"

With every good wish for her future happiness, I parted with her; and as I walked along I could not help thinking what a much happier place this world would be, if all servants were as faithful to their mistresses as our Barbara had been to me.

THE TAILOR'S CAT.

PART I.

"COULD you step in just for a moment, mem?"

This was what Mrs. Smith said to me as I was passing her door one day, and I at once turned in at her gate, seeing she was concerned about something, and wondering not a little what I was wanted for. It was well known that Mrs. Smith was considered "close" about her affairs, and prided herself upon "meddling with nobody," so that "nobody meddled with her." Yet the very fact of her having such complete control over that unruly member, her tongue, strange to say, seemed to prevent her from being a favorite in the place.

When the well-polished wooden arm-chair was duly dusted, and lifted a little closer to the blazing fire, and I had seated myself, I soon discovered the nature of Mrs. Smith's trouble. At the end of the room, or kitchen, I saw her son Johnnie, a boy about fourteen, sitting before the "box-bed," with his head stuffed under the bedclothes.

"Is that you, Johnnie?" I asked; and after

waiting for a minute, I received for answer the single word, "Ay"; but so defiantly was it uttered, that Mrs. Smith sprang forward with an angry, "How daur ye answer like that? Sit up this minute, and behave proper."

I began to feel a little awkward, for Mrs. Smith did not seem ready with an explanation. By way of helping her out, I asked if Johnnie was ill, or in any trouble.

"Trouble?" she exclaimed; "it's o' his own making, mem; and what I asked you in for was to help to bring him to listen to reason, afore his father comes in for his supper. Ye tell them at the Sunday school to obey their parents, mem?"

"Yes," I answered; "Johnnie can hardly have forgotten we were talking of that very subject on Sunday last. I hope he has not been disobedient; I never heard such a charge even whispered against him before."

"No, mem," said Mrs. Smith, looking with apparent pride at the boy, whose head was once more hidden out of sight, "that was never one o' *my* bairns' faults; no, for the guidman lets them a' see he must be obeyed, and once they find that out, it comes easy to them. But now, Johnnie here wants to rebel against his father's judgment, and is bent upon having his own notions of being a ploughman carried out, though he kens, as weel as me, he's no fit for't."

It seemed to me indeed unreasonable, almost

laughable, that any boy should wish to follow so monotonous and dull a calling. "What makes you have such a fancy, Johnnie?" I asked. "It seems to be a very unpleasant sort of life."

"I was just telling him afore you came in, mem," said Mrs. Smith, again tugging Johnnie out of his hiding-place, and bidding him, with a hearty shake, to "sit up," — "I was busy telling him how tired I have seen my father and my brothers come home at night, after working all the day in the rain, tramping across and across a weet ploughed field. I'd just like to see *your* feet at the end o' the second day, my man."

"I'm no carin'!" said Johnnie, defiantly. "I'd rather be weet every day o' my life, than I'd be a ——"

So odious did he appear to consider the trade or calling which his father had chosen for him, whatever it was, that he seemed to be unable to finish his sentence.

"I'll jist tell ye, mem," said Mrs. Smith, "the whole story in two or three words, no to keep ye from your walk. Johnnie will never be able to be a ploughman, for he has such queer tender feet that they get skinned and sore if his boots are the least heavy; so as he must learn something, his father has settled to apprentice him to Rob McIntyre, the tailor, in the village upby."

"To McIntyre the tailer!" I replied, unfortunately with a tone of astonishment, which had the

effect of making Johnnie look up at me of his own accord.

"We would have liked to have made him something else," said Mrs. Smith, hurriedly, feeling, poor woman, no doubt, a little sorry she had called me in, "but there's no opening for him. Johnnie inclines to be a carpenter next to the ploughing, but there's the tools to get, and we couldna afford to keep him away from home, for you see in large towns they must find lodging and meat for themselves. Now he gets his bed and a' his diets fra' Rob."

"Well, I should prefer being a tailor to a ploughman, at any rate," I said.

"Yes," said Mrs. Smith, "and I'm sure when he kens what he suffers from thae feet o' his, I wonder he likes to have anything to do with the plough."

Johnnie's patience was exhausted, and, rising suddenly, he ran towards the door, muttering, "It's a' you ken about it, mother."

I therefore rose to go also, feeling that I could not help in the matter, but gladly promising that if I met Johnnie I would do my best to urge him to obey his father. Before saying good-by, however, to the worthy Mrs. Smith, I asked her if she knew what attraction the profession of a ploughman had for a boy like her son, and received for answer, "O, mem, it's the horse" (she meant horses); "it's them that make the laddies mad to

win to the ploughing." This certainly threw a little light on the subject, but did not tend to raise the occupation in my favor one whit, neither could I believe that it wholly explained Johnnie's feelings.

Some days passed, but the opportunity to speak to Johnnie had not been found, for he had carefully kept out of my way. About a fortnight after, however, I was returning from church at the end of the morning service, when I was attracted by seeing the head of a boy appearing above the top of a furze-bush. It made me think of Johnnie Smith, though there was nothing particular about the cap to mark it out as his especial property. On walking over, I discovered that it *was* Johnnie, but so deeply was he engaged with his own thoughts, and, more strange still, so much occupied was Midge, his terrier dog, in watching him, that I was close beside them before they discovered me.

"Have you not been at church, Johnnie?" I asked.

"No, mem, I couldna go," he said, with a half-smothered sob; "father said I might stop out here."

"Have you been feeling ill?"

"No, mem," he replied, "but I couldna have stayed in the kirk; for auld Rob sits in the pew afore us; I'm to go there the morn."

"Come now, Johnnie," I said, "we must have a

quiet talk together about this matter, and see if it can be made easier to bear ; for you seem to think it a greater trouble than perhaps it is. Why do you want to be a ploughman? ”

“ I dinna ken,” said Johnnie, pulling his hair in some perplexity.

“ Is it because you will have horses to drive, and sometimes get a ride on their backs? ”

“ Yes, but for more than the horse.”

When pressed further, however, he seemed unable to explain, and for some minutes I sat looking as fixedly at him as little Midge, who lay watching every turn of his master's face, evidently in distress at the gloomy countenance. It was a bright spring day, one of those days when sounds are heard a long distance off, and the air is full of the sweet scents of earth and grass. A lark rose from the sprouting cornfield close at hand, up and up, with a wild, sweet gush of song. I had often listened to the warblings of a lark before, but there was something in the boy's face that made me feel its beauty in a new way. I felt keenly then, that having been brought up in a city I had not been able hitherto to enter into the boy's feelings. I tried, therefore, to fancy myself in his place. His life, up to this time, had been as free and as joyous as the lark's that fluttered above us. It was pleasant almost to listen to the harsh croak of some crows flapping in the trees of the wood surrounding an old ruin ; for, when he turned his head that

way I knew he was thinking of the days he had spent in climbing those high trees, to take the young birds ; and when a half-smile appeared at the corner of his lips, he was no doubt recalling a time when he had perhaps outstripped all his companions, for he was known to be a fearless climber. A hare darted across the fields, and for a moment both Johnnie and Midge pricked up their ears, but Midge was sent back to his weary watch with a fretful, "Come ahint, Midge ; you must never look at hares."

Yes, had I been Johnnie, I should have felt it hard to give up my hunting, my digging for rabbits, and watching them in their burrows, not to speak of watching the hundreds and thousands of wild sea-fowl that came to the bed of the river at low tide, — the wading for flounders, and the paddling about in the old coble.

Had he become a ploughman he must have given up much of this, to be sure ; but there always would have been the blue sky for a ceiling, and the innumerable sounds and scents of Nature.

At this moment came the chime of the church bell, recalling the people after the short interval. From where we sat, they could be distinctly seen strolling slowly about the old church-yard, looking, perhaps, at the graves of their friends and relatives. At the very end nearest to us was a solitary figure bending over a "head-stone."

I fancied I knew who the man was, but I turned

to Johnnie, and asked him. He agreed with me, "It was old Rob the tailor."

I waited till the last note of the ringing-in had ceased, leaving behind it a strange, solemn calm. It even seemed to have a composing effect upon Johnnie's mind; and when I said, "Did you ever hear about Robert McIntyre before he was a tailor?" Johnnie looked up almost brightly to reply, "No, mem, I thought he never could be onything else."

"O, then, you have a treat before you, so I shan't spoil your pleasure. Why, old Rob, as you call him, has so many stories to relate, — they are his own personal adventures, too, — that you will be done with your apprenticeship before, he has come to the end of them."

I knew Johnnie delighted in listening to a story, and therefore was not surprised when he said, "But will he tell me them? He's awfu' cross."

"That's only when the boys tease him; but once you have heard his strange stories, I am quite sure you will be so proud of being his apprentice, that you will not wish to leave him on any account."

"I dinna ken," he said, as if to himself, fixing his eyes on Midge in a dreamy way. "I sat for a whole hour last night cross-legged on the floor o' my room, when naebody saw me, an' I was that tired when I got up, that I couldna go to sleep for hours after. I think I maun rin away."

I had a suspicion he had been turning this plan

over in his mind when I interrupted him. "Why, Johnnie, I never thought you would become a coward in the end," I said, with an air of great surprise, which had the desired effect of making him blush. "I think you were the boy who said one Sunday that had you been the Spartan boy in the story I was telling, you would have let the fox gnaw your heart rather than tell. And now, when you have got a very little trouble to carry about with you, — you may call it a fox if you like, a tame one, though, — you let everybody know you are not able to hide it. I wonder, had the Spartan boy been apprenticed to Robert McIntyre, if *he* would have run away?"

Johnnie thought for a moment, then answered, reluctantly it must be owned, "No, mem, I'm thinkin' he wad hae stayed." I rose to go, feeling almost satisfied the boy was safe; but my eye fell on the dog still lying at his feet, and I inquired what was to become of Midge. This proved to be the severest part of the trouble. These two were inseparable companions. On Sundays they went to church together, and though Midge was debarred from entering the school, — ever after the memorable attack he had made on the old school-master for administering the punishment to Johnnie which he deserved even on his own showing, — he was devotedly ready to join his master in the long walk home.

"If I'm to be like a Spartan laddie," said John-

nie, trying to keep his lip from quivering, "Midge wunna be like his dog, at any rate. He 'll never be able to bide away frae me; but father says he 'll hae him locked up, for auld Rob has no way for a dog." To have a *way* for any animal means in our part of the world to have accommodation for it. "It's little room that Midge will need," he continued, "an' I ken he 'll break his heart an' dee."

Perhaps Johnnie was glad of this opportunity to give vent to his pent-up feelings on behalf of another, especially when nothing could be said against it, and it did not come in contact with Spartan notions; at any rate, he cried very bitterly, and it only made him worse to have Midge's cold nose poked into his hands, and to feel the dog's tongue on his cheek and hair. He was consoled at last, and comforted with the thought of getting home on the Saturday night, and having the whole Sunday to himself; but more so with the idea that old Rob, being fond of animals, would perhaps make no objection to take Midge for an apprentice also.

"I'll tell you, Johnnie," I said; "we will persuade Robert that his cat will be all the better for some company; so you must set to immediately, and teach Midge to be polite to the cats, else you know Robert will never look with a favorable eye upon him. I hope you feel more cheerful now, my boy."

"I think I might bear it if Midge was settled, if I was only sure the laddies wouldna call me Snip, or auld Jock the Tailor."

"If they do," I said, laughing, as I turned to go, "just you cry back, —

'Sticks and stones may break my bones,
But names will never hurt me.'

Robert McIntyre lived in the village, a few miles from our hamlet. His cottage stood at the farthest end of it, detached from the others, the front half hidden under a covering of roses, honeysuckle, and a green spreading hop, the tailor's particular delight. Being an old bachelor, he lived alone; and he seemed on the whole to like this arrangement, being perfectly contented with his cat and his tame thrush for company. Not that he was by any means a dull or morose man; on the contrary, he was generally of a cheerful, animated turn; but being a great reader, he did not care for any other society than that of his books. He was passionately fond of animals, however, especially of his white cat, which he considered the most sagacious creature the world ever saw.

When Johnnie Smith presented himself on the Monday morning, the tailor was just finishing breakfast, — occupied at the same time in reading from a large folio volume, which was propped up before him on the little table. He looked up only for a moment to bid the boy "Lay his bundle down,

and come in to the fire and dry himself," for the morning was wet. Opposite to the fire was the tailor's bed, — one of the usual box ones, having great folding wooden doors, that could shut the sleeper in as if in a cupboard. On the top of the clothes lay the cat, a large and beautiful white one. She watched the new-comer stealthily from under her blinking eyelids; but not feeling satisfied with this distant view, she at length jumped down, and crept from chair to chair nearer and nearer, rubbing her back up against the legs, and purring in a most vigorous manner. If the tailor was fond of animals, Johnnie was even fonder; and he turned to look at the cat, feeling almost thankful that there was something to make friends with, for he was a little downhearted at the indifferent reception he had got. Fancying his master was engrossed in the study of the large book, Johnnie began to dangle the ribbons of his cap between his knees, which Miss Puss, though a quiet and sedate cat just past her kittenhood, seemed to be unable to withstand. She therefore made a pounce upon it from under the table; but Johnnie was sharper, and drew the ribbons away, leaving Pussy rubbing herself in a coaxing manner against his legs. The soft velvety feeling of his new corduroys and his good-natured-looking face seemed to please her, whereupon she jumped up to his knee.

"That's strange, now," said the tailor, looking

suddenly from his book, "I never saw Snow do that to ane o' the laddies afore; but she's a great studier o' physiognomy, and she's seldom wrong in her likings and dislikings."

All this time the door, which was straight in front of the little wicket gate, opening to the road, was standing open, and before it lay poor Midge.

He evidently concluded that this was another school-house, though on a smaller scale, and he would no doubt have lain all day quietly and patiently in spite of the rain, so long as he knew his master was safe inside. But seeing that his place in his master's affection was likely to be usurped by a stranger, — and a cat, too, — poor Midge, with an angry growl and a sniff, jumped clear over the gate, and rushed into the house, determined in his fit of jealousy to inflict condign punishment upon the usurper. What a commotion ensued! Up sprang the cat to the shelf, knocking down some dishes with a great crash and clatter. This startled the tailor, and he shook the table so violently that his large book fell over on the milk basin, and sent the contents streaming across the table to the floor.

"Heyday, what's this?" he cried, while Johnnie tried in vain to quiet Midge, and drive him out of the house. "Is this your dog? If so, there was no clause in the indenture papers anent him learning the trade."

Johnnie had hardly time to explain that the dog

had run away, and had overtaken him almost close to the village, when the cat slipped her foot and fell off the shelf almost on to Midge's nose, who, in spite of the fuffing, spitting, and scratching, was on the point of worrying her, when Johnnie caught Midge by the tail, swung him up into the air, and carried him out of the house. The door was safely shut upon him, and an additional heavy shower of rain helped to quench his ill-natured feelings.

The day passed slowly and wearily for Johnnie, for old Robert's temper seemed to have been roused by the treatment his cat had received, to say nothing of his valuable crockery-ware. He spoke occasionally to the boy, and by no means in an unkindly manner, as to how his needle should be held, and once, on looking up and seeing Midge lying in the rain, he said, as if to himself, —

“Puir beast, it's a pity it's his natur to flee at cats.”

Johnnie began to feel he would in the end dislike the tailor's cat as much as he did her master's profession. It was so provoking to see her lying so comfortably on the window-seat, looking at her vanquished foe. Every time poor Midge moved on the ground, her back rose, and she grumbled, growled, or fuffed behind the window-pane; but yet the patient bearing of the terrier seemed to have some soothing effect upon her; and when the master suddenly bade his apprentice let the dog

in, saying, "The cratur couldna be allowed to starve, and had had enough o' the rain," Pussy seemed to be half pleased at the invitation.

Midge was first ordered to shake himself well before entering, and was then duly cautioned by his master not to look at the cat. So anxious was he to obey, that when that flighty, capricious animal suddenly took it into her head to have some of the dog's dinner, which the tailor had prepared with his own hand, Midge allowed her to lap out of his plate, paying no attention to her uncourteous fuffs. He behaved so well, that the tailor said he might be allowed to remain till the Saturday, instead of going back with old Andrew Linkater, the carrier, the next day. And before half that time was over, Midge's studied neglect of the enemy had brought Miss Puss to his feet as the most devoted slave that ever lived. He could not go a step without her following close at his heels; she would eat only out of his dish; and when he lay down to sleep in the window-place where the thrush's cage was daily hung, she crept close to him, purring contentedly, and looking as if she were the happiest cat in the whole universe.

The life and behavior of the tailor's cat before the arrival of our hero may be said to have been faultless. She never wandered from home, or came back with her fur torn or her feet bleeding, as her next-door neighbor the shoemaker's cat did. No, she had too great a respect for her master to

behave in such a manner ; for it was well known that Tom, the shoemaker's cat, had led his master into much trouble through his poaching pranks. Miss Snow was quite happy by herself at home. Not only was she young and innocent, but she had plenty of employment chasing the sparrows that ventured to pick at her master's peas, or lying at the mouth of a drain watching for a stray rat, and occasionally having the pleasant excitement of hunting a field-mouse down the garden. But now everything was changed. Robert McIntyre, being a kindly disposed man, and seeing how Johnnie's spirits began to fail, bade him take himself and his dog off for a good scamper along the road. Snow let them go the first day without taking much notice ; but on the second she began to feel quite lonely, and thinking perhaps they were staying away longer than was necessary, she ran to the end of the garden with the intention of jumping up to the top of the wall to look out for them. To her surprise, what should she see looking over the broken part of the wall but a black face, with long whiskers, gleaming eyes, and ears erect, evidently watching her ? Now, this was the shoemaker's cat, — a cat Miss Snow had determined to have nothing to do with, for she had an instinctive feeling he was a very wild character, and would only lead her into trouble. Tom, the shoemaker's cat, was the sworn enemy of all the dogs for miles round, and so Miss Snow did not wish

to show her weakness towards Midge, by being on the lookout for him. She therefore gave a great dart here, and another there, then a skip and a jump, to make Mr. Tom fancy she was hunting something, and by great good-luck two butterflies flew past just at the moment. With another graceful and nimble bound, she caught one between her paws, drew it down behind the rose-tree, and ate it up. Tom, in the height of his admiration of her, could not help admiring her graceful figure and cleverness; he therefore stretched his neck a little farther over the wall, and mewed twice. At this, cunning Snow, though she had seen him all the time, gave a great start, and flew away back to the house, never turning once to look behind her. Poor Tom was so much distressed, that he never noticed the approach of Midge and his master till they had come close up to him; and Midge was waiting to hear if he was to be allowed to have a fight with this enemy, or was to forswear that pleasure now altogether.

"No, Midge, come in ahint," said Johnnie. "You 're no to meddle with ony cat, no even wi' a kittlin', in *this* village. Just you wait till we win hame, my man, an' we 'll make a' the cats at our place flee for 't."

To Tom's surprise, Midge paid no attention to him, but passed in at the wicket gate with his master; and Tom, wishing to have another look at this peculiar dog, jumped upon the wall and there

saw a sight that made his cat-blood curdle. Midge was standing on the door-step, and, could it be possible?— Tom licked his paw and drew it across his face, fancying he must be dreaming — there was the lovely white cat he admired so much actually caressing and purring round their natural enemy. Such a state of things was not only intolerable to Tom's cat-nature, but, being a brave cat as well as a bold one, he determined to put a stop to it, or die in the attempt.

Accordingly, for many hours each day, Tom, the shoemaker's cat, sat on the top of the tailor's garden wall, waiting an opportunity to show his disapprobation of Miss Snow's excessive leniency, and indeed good-will, towards this rough-looking terrier. Twice he jumped down and stood in the path, facing both Midge and Snow as they indulged in a game of hide-and-seek. Midge took no notice of his emphatic "fuffs"; he did not even look at Tom, except perhaps once for a moment, when the terrier-nature seemed to get the better of his obedience; but he was helped to control himself by hearing the accidental sound of his master's voice inside the house. As for Snow, she mewed and spat at Tom very angrily for disturbing their game, and said, in as plain cat-language as she could use, "What are you wanting here? You have n't the honor of my acquaintance, you common fellow."

Much of this was observed, not only by Johnnie, but by the tailor, as they sat at work, and it amused

them so much that Johnnie quite forgot where he was, and sat cross-legged on the board or table by the window as contentedly as if he had chosen the profession for himself.

"Fie, fie, Snow!" said the tailor, shaking his head at her behind the window, though little to her benefit. "O, she's an awfu' cocket; that, as the French folks say, — weel, it's natural, for she's next door to being a French ane." Johnnie looked up from his sewing with inquiring eyes, seeing which, his master continued: "You see I brought her mother home with me from Lisbon; that was the last voyage I ever took. She was the steward's cat, — I'm speaking o' Snow's mother, ye ken, — an' the most beautiful cratur ye ever saw. She was a half Russian, pure white and long silky hair, — a far finer beast than Snow will ever be, outwardly; but what Snow wants in appearance, she makes up in sense and cleverness: she's got the better o' her mother *there*. For a cat, she's a most sagashious animal."

"Were ye a sailor?" asked Johnnie, looking up with deference, though little accustomed to outward expressions of respect.

The tailor appeared to be half annoyed at the question, but seeing how earnestly his apprentice was regarding him, he replied, good-naturedly, "If ye must know, ay, — there's no mony o' the folks ken o't. It's a wonder, though, that the mistress doon by at the cottage hasna been tellin' ye.

She's a most awfu' cratur for getting a story oot o' a body. Eh, Johnnie, my man, this is a strange warld. If ye had tellt me twenty years ago that I'd have been found sitting cross-legget on a tailor's board, losh me, I'd hae felt like tae knock ye doon, that wad I. Ye see we canna get everything in this warld, and when I came hame frae Lisbon, that time I brought Snow's mother hame, expecting to find the auld folks just the same as when I went away a year afore, I cam back to see the grass growin' green on my father's grave, and my mother lying ill with a broken leg. Aweel, it came about that I couldna leave my mother alone; she had been a gude mother to me; so as I had long been sailmaker, and had taken up the ship's tailoring aboard, I took a fancy to try the tailoring ashore, and being sort o' quick at the uptack, and wi' my mother to help me at the cutting oot, I got on no that bad. But we mauna crack about it now, my man," said Rob, hastily; "we've that vest to finish for auld Tam o' the Carse; but gin ye stick weel tae yer wark, I'll no say but I'll maybe spin ye ane or twa o' thae 'yarns,' as they say at sea."

Johnnie was sharp enough to see that the tailor wanted to make light of his staying at home, as if it was a mere nothing, an every-day occurrence, for any one to give up a life of freedom to bind himself hand and foot to a hateful occupation, and to wait patiently by a sick bed. But with

his own feelings fresh upon him, he sat quietly sewing, as well as his still awkward fingers would permit, thinking what a struggle the tailor must have had to give up being a sailor, even for the best mother that ever lived. For a long time they sat in silence, the tailor's needle flying out and in as if his very life depended on it, his face wearing a different expression from what Johnnie had seen before. He began to think to himself that "Auld Rob" must have something of the Spartan spirit too, and he would not be at all surprised to hear that he had performed some wonderful feats as a sailor. These meditations were interrupted by a great screech, a yowl, and a tremendous snarling, and a loud cry from the tailor of "Avast there — save us a'!" showing that his thoughts had been wandering back to the dangers of the sea. "That's your terrier at Snow again."

It turned out, however, to be Tom, the shoemaker's cat, who had been unable to stand Midge's behavior any longer, and had not only boldly faced him, but defied him in such a scornful and insulting manner, that Midge felt bound to vindicate his dignity, or be thenceforth branded as a coward among his peers. The screech certainly came from Snow, but it was a screech of indignation at Tom's insulting war yowl; and she seemed almost inclined to join with Midge against the intruder. Remembering, perhaps, that it would

hardly do to turn against one of her own species, to help the acknowledged enemy of cat-kind, she, being a cat of sensitive feeling, ran into the house, and hid herself in the master's bed, which was really the most prudent thing she could have done.

Meanwhile the fight was going on fast and furious. Midge had driven the foe under some goose-berry-bushes, and regardless of the tailor's shouts of distress lest the "spring flourish" of his choice bushes should suffer, the combatants fuffed and growled and scratched and snapped in a most dreadful manner. Johnnie succeeded at last, with great difficulty, in dragging Midge out with the help of a rake, while the tailor cooled Master Tom's spirit by pitching a good pailful of cold water over him.

Johnnie was so angry with Midge for this act of disobedience (he did not know how sorely Midge had been tried), that, before the tailor had time to complain, he said,—

"Midge, ye must bide at hame; I'll see that ye're fastened up this time so that ye'll no win after me; an' till I gang hame, I'll pit ye in the coal-hole."

Midge was therefore secured in a corner of the small out-house where the coals and wood were kept; and there he lay, with his nose on his paws, apparently quite broken-hearted, for he saw he had offended his beloved master far more than he

had done when he bit the school-master. Snow searched everywhere for her companion, but could not find him; and when night came, and Johnnie had retired to bed in the corner of the garret that served for a ware-room for his master's goods, Snow, instead of going to sleep by the kitchen fire, crept up after him. She must have thought that now Midge would turn up, if he ever did, for he had always slept at the foot of his master's bed; but Johnnie was still too angry with the dog, and was determined to make him suffer severely. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and Johnnie left the window open, for he liked to lie and look out at the moon and the stars, and think of home and all sorts of things. At present he was thinking of the tailor, and wondering how he could get him to tell the stories he had promised to relate; for now he was angry with Midge for spoiling his gooseberries, and would not speak so pleasantly as he had done. At that moment something crept along the top of the house stealthily and cautiously, and paused at the window. Snow heard it also, and fancying, perhaps, that it was Midge, jumped on the window-ledge to welcome him. To her surprise and indignation, who should it be but Tom, the shoemaker's cat, once more? Johnnie saw his black face in the bright moonlight, and he lay as still as a mouse watching them. Snow was by no means a cowardly cat, and now that she *was* up on the ledge, was determined to show the intruder

she was not the least afraid of him. Black Tom was, however, very polite; he sat down on the tiles at a respectful distance, and, in his most persuasive cat-language, evidently told Miss Snow that it was highly improper for her to be on such friendly terms with a dog; and that if it were to reach the ears of the cats in the neighborhood, she would be "fuffed" out of the village altogether. Snow listened with great patience to this long speech, with her face drawn together into a very ugly expression, and her paws planted firmly on the window-sill, ready to give him a good scratch if necessary. Gradually Johnnie observed that the face of Miss Snow began to look less severe, for Tom seemed to be telling her she was too beautiful a cat to make herself so singular; and she would find it hard to bear if the paw of scorn were pointed at her in such a public manner.

This seemed to have some effect upon Miss Snow, — for nobody, not even a cat, likes to be laughed at, — and she opened one eye full for a moment and allowed it to rest on the speaker; but observing that Master Tom put on a very languishing expression, as much as to say, "Now would n't I make a better playfellow than that horrid dog?" she shut it again and fuffed; though, this time, very slightly. How long they would have conversed it is impossible to say, but at that moment they were startled by hearing a loud wow-wow, ending in a melancholy howl. It evidently went to Snow's

heart, for she recognized the voice; and as Tom was the cause of her new companion's punishment, she all at once gave him a sharp scratch on the nose, at the same time scolding him in the crosslest possible way. Tom pretended to treat this as a sort of joke, and seemed to make some humorous retort. Snow, however, soon convinced him that she was in earnest, by a spiteful remark, accompanied by another scratch, that made the blood run down his whiskers. This so startled Tom that he spat outright at her, in the usual caterwauling style; but at that very moment one of his hind feet slipped on the tiles, so that he lost his balance, and went sliding down irresistibly out of sight, followed by a burst of derisive mewing from Miss Snow.

But the wow-wow and the howl had touched another heart besides Snow's. It seemed to say to Johnnie quite plainly, "When did I ever forsake you? Have I not been the most faithful, patient dog a master ever had? Are you a faultless laddie? Have you never been guilty of disobedience?"

After this it was quite impossible to go to sleep leaving the dog shut up among the coals, so Johnnie, after putting on some of his clothes, got out of the window, and, sliding down the roof, made his way to the ground by the help of the rain-water barrel. When he entered the coal-shed Midge howled again, this time for pure joy; but

his master, fearing it might waken the tailor, said, severely,—

“Now, Midge, if ye give only one wee yelp, I’ll tie ye up again as sure’s I’m living.”

If Midge did not just take in the words, he understood quite well that silence was required of him, and he followed his master without a whine. Johnnie discovered it was not so easy to get up as it had been to get down, especially as he had to help Midge up also; but at last, not before he had skinned his feet and knuckles, he reached the floor of his room, where Snow was waiting to receive them. That night Midge lay in his master’s arms instead of in his usual corner, which would have compensated a less forgiving dog than he was for the hard treatment he had received; and Snow thought it was incumbent upon her to sleep close at his back on the top of the coverlet, instead of in her basket by the kitchen fire.

The next day Tom contrived, in taking up his station on the wall, to hide himself very securely; but it was quite evident he was rather pleased to see that Snow remembered the conversation of the previous night. Instead of coaxing Midge to have a game at hide-and-seek, she got on the top of the rain-water barrel, and pretended to be fast asleep. Midge, therefore, having nothing to occupy him, went away on a private hunting expedition, and in about an hour returned with a small rabbit in his mouth, which he had brought for his master’s

benefit. Now if Snow liked one thing more than another, it was something in the shape of game, more particularly when young and tender. So when Midge laid it down on the floor at his master's feet, she jumped off the barrel and ran in after him. Fortunately the tailor was out, for Johnnie knew already he had a decided objection to poaching; and this, added to Midge's other mishaps, would be sure to cause him to be banished forever.

"O, you ne'er-do-weel!" he cried, unwinding his crossed legs and jumping down from the board; "how dare ye gang after rabbits in this pair? Ye're no at home; how dare ye do't, I ask ye?"

Midge crouched to his master's feet, begging to be forgiven; but Snow, having no scruples of conscience like her master, made a dart at the rabbit, and seizing it, dragged it away to the foot of the garden, and there devoured the greater part of it, in spite of the fur, which rather incommoded her. It was, indeed, only the difficulty of getting the fur out of her mouth that prevented her finishing it to the very last bone. Poor Snow, she little thought when she licked her lips over that dead rabbit, that it would open up a road to much trouble,—it might be to life-long regret! But, alas! cats, like many other animals, do not pause to think of the consequences of their rash actions.

Tom had been a witness of the whole scene. He knew, as well as you or I do, that "none but

the brave deserve the fair"; and being a bold cat, as well as an enterprising one, he saw that now was the time to supplant Midge, and ingratiate himself with Miss Snow. Accordingly, the very next afternoon, being Saturday, and Midge and his master having gone home, Tom started for a well-known spot where hares and rabbits abounded. He had not long to wait, for very soon two hares, a young and an old one, passed by. The young one paused to nibble at a tuft of green grass, while the other went hurrying on to a more secure pasturage. Out darted Tom upon the unsuspecting animal, and seizing him by the back of the head, gave him a twist to the right, another to the left, then a tremendous shake, and all was over. He rushed off with his booty, knowing that not a moment was to be lost, for the noise had disturbed some pheasants who were sitting on their eggs at this season, and the gamekeeper could not be far off when such was the case.

Very much surprised indeed was Snow to see a nice little hare hang dangling down over the low wall; more especially, on looking a little higher, to observe the black face of Tom behind it. He gave her to understand by such "yow-wows" as the occupation of his mouth would permit, that the hare was for her; and as a proof of this, dropped it down. Then, sly fellow as he was, instead of dropping after it, he ran away in the direction of his own home. Had Tom waited

another minute, he would have seen that poor Snow did not profit by his good intentions. The tailor, who happened to be looking out of the window at the time, observed all that had passed, and before Snow had made up her mind whether she would begin at the tail and eat upwards, or at the head and eat downwards, her master had saved her any further trouble by seizing the hare and carrying it bodily off.

"He's a thieving, poaching beast o' a cat, that black Tom," said the tailor to Snow, who had followed her hare, feeling she had been cheated out of her just rights, and showing this, too, by trying to drag it away. "Come, keep away; do ye want to be shot deed by the keeper? My lady, let me tell you if 'Gamie' catches sight o' ye eatin' a hare, he'll mak' short wark o' ye. Noo, see what a trouble that Tom has putten me to. I'll hae to set to and skin and clean the beast; ay, and cook it the night for the morn's dinner. It'll no dae to have a hare lying aboot on the Sabbath day, when there's sae mony farm-folks steppin' in to speer if their claes are done, on their way hame frae the kirk."

The hare was cooked, and the next day Snow received her share of it, which she took with a most ungracious air, not liking it nearly so well when stewed with onions as in its own natural state.

On Monday morning Johnnie returned, but

without Midge, who had been securely fastened up before he left; and Snow, being still sulky about the hare, was doubly so at the loss of her companion. Snow had been a model cat for contentedness and love of home. "*She* never troubled her head about catching rabbits, stealing folks' chickens, and gallivanting here, there, and a' gates; na, she kent better," her master said. But now, for the first time in the tailor's experience, and in her own, too, she began to sigh for something more than watching stray rats in an old drain, or scaring field mice and sparrows from the garden. How Tom would despise her for delighting in such sports! — he that could kill such a fine fat hare almost as large as himself, — and what would the other cats say to it if they knew? This must have been the nature of her thoughts, for it soon became evident to both the tailor and his apprentice that Snow was beginning to have a notion to see what the world was like outside the garden walls. Twice Johnnie caught her on the road as far away as the baker's garden. Here there resided a well-known gray cat of the most stern and respectable character, a model for industry in her own sphere, though, at the same time, extremely strict in her notions. This gray cat was not in the habit of even going out-of-doors beyond the bakehouse, but at this moment her eye met Snow's, peering cautiously over the wall; whereupon the demure Tabby made a very dis-

paraging remark, accompanying it with a contraction of visage and an ominous thickening of the tail, which caused Miss Snow to take rapid flight.

PART II.

A FEW days after the poaching adventure, part of a freshly-killed young rabbit was found dropped behind a gooseberry-bush. Johnnie, being skilful in such matters, declared it had been caught by a cat; so it was well seen that Tom had been at his poaching tricks again. Snow had got at it, but it was taken out of her very jaws, and thrown away to prevent her from forming a liking for this kind of wood game. Again and again such things appeared, with the same result; and Snow, being shrewd and quick-witted, made up her mind that this state of affairs was not to be borne. Therefore, the next forenoon, when Black Tom took up his position on the top of the wall, she jumped up also. Lying down a few yards off, she entered into an amicable conversation with him. It was a hot, sunny day, full of the early humming of bees and the twittering of birds, — a sleepy sort of a day Johnnie found it, for he had difficulty in keeping himself awake, and was constantly pricking his fingers with the still hateful needle. Every now and then he heard the faint yow-yow of Tom. Evidently he was telling of his powers in the hunting field, and of

the many wonderful escapes he had made from the ingenious traps set by the gamekeeper. It was impossible for a cat of Snow's gentle disposition to listen unmoved to such thrilling cat adventures; and she showed her approval by sundry graceful waves of her tail, and other coquettish attitudes.

"I'm vexed that Tom, the shoemaker's cat, has seen Snow," said the tailor; "he's a notorious poacher. I'm thinking there's many a man's been blamed for taking the hares through that cat. See how he keeps dropping bits o' them hereabouts; ye would think he was even bringing them to her. I canna understand what for, for my part; but he's deep, and up to some trick, I'll be bound."

That very night at locking-up hour Snow was missed. She had never been absent a night from her master's roof from the time she was born, but had evidently gone out into the world of her own accord, to seek her fortune. The truth was, Tom had spoken so much of the delight of hunting by moonlight, and of the juicy young birds in the covers, that Snow's mouth watered, and she could not resist the temptation of trying to catch one for herself. She therefore hid herself in the garden. She felt tempted to run back when she heard the tailor calling, "Cheetie, cheetie; Snow, my bonny woman, whare are ye?" but she kept to her purpose; for Tom's tail was dangling in her full vision as he lay hidden behind the leaves of an

apple-tree. Her French, Spanish, or Russian blood rose within her, and made her feel equal to the occasion. Away they went together, Tom in front to show Snow the way; but pausing every now and then to listen, with his right paw drawn up and held like a hook. At these times Snow wished herself safely at home, for she had not bargained for such disagreeable and sudden frights; and besides, Tom was not nearly so respectful or so polite out here as he had been on the garden wall. Once in her agitation, when she had given vent to a very gentle mew, he had turned upon her quite fiercely, and asked, with a very stern yow, if she wanted the keeper to find them out. After they had gone a very great distance, as it seemed to inexperienced Snow, Tom informed her she might take a rest while he went a little farther to reconnoitre. He showed her a hole under a bush where she might lie secure and comfortable, and was turning to leave her when his eye fell upon two strange-looking things, hanging from the branches of two fir-trees. If ever a cat laughed, Tom, the shoemaker's cat, laughed then; indeed, so heartily that it was with great difficulty Snow made out what was the cause of his merriment. She discovered, however, that these two objects, like minute gibbets, were the last contrivance of the keeper to catch Tom, or any other unwary cat; and that the bird hanging from it might indeed be a delicious mouthful, but one to

be avoided. A young cat belonging to the village had died the moment after he had devoured a similar morsel. "No," said Tom, with a most emphatic mew, "always take your game *alive*, my dear."

He then left her, and Snow had plenty of time to think of her position and get frightened at it, before he returned. What if he never returned at all? He might at last have fallen into one of the snares, and, if so, how was she ever to retrace her steps homeward? Though she was only a cat, and the cat of a humble tailor, she felt strongly then that "there was no place like home." At last, when her patience was wellnigh exhausted, she heard a rustling, and, stretching out her neck as far as she could, she was delighted to see Tom running along with a bird in his mouth. The partridges he had been on the lookout for had been removed, and therefore he had run on to the farm, where he came upon a chicken roosting on a fence. While they ate it, Tom explained to her that some chickens were so stupid as to prefer this to their house, and so fell an easy victim to polecats and foxes. But it was by no means advisable, he said, to make a practice of taking chickens, and ought never to be done near home. Tom was very entertaining, and gave Snow many useful hunting hints, which helped to pass the time till the moon set, when it became safer for them to proceed homewards.

Snow was compelled, when she got home, to seek shelter in the coal-shed. It had begun to rain very heavily, and her pretty, sleek, white skin was quite wet. This she could not bear, for she disliked even to have her feet wet. She began to be very cross and ill-natured, and to wish she had never been so foolish as to listen to Tom. The coals, too, were a very uncomfortable bed, compared with her nice clean basket by the kitchen fire. She was angry besides, because Tom persisted upon seeking shelter with her, saying he disliked the rain as much as she did. However, there was no escape; and, after a great many fuffs and angry mews, she consented to allow him to remain. When the sun rose the next morning, Snow was so horrified at her own appearance that she scarcely believed she was the tailor's cat, but fancied herself for a moment another cat altogether. Instead of being white, she was almost as black as Tom, who lay looking at her with a very sulky expression of countenance. She was so much concerned as to how she was to get the coal-black washed off, that she never heard the shed door open. It was only when Johnnie Smith touched her in a mistake for a lump of coal, that she came to her senses. "Guidness me, Snowie, this canna be you!" he said, starting back, in the utmost surprise. "Whare hae ye been, ye gypsy? My certie, but ye'll get a raging frae the maister." Then his eye fell upon Tom crouching up in a

corner, hoping that his real blackness would screen him. "O, ye poaching thief, ye," cried Johnnie; "it's *you* that's been leading her aff her feet; be aff with you, or I'll break every bone in yer body."

Tom, at this threat, made a dart for the door, escaping the piece of coal which Johnnie threw after him, as he ran up the wall, and away to his own home. It took Snow almost four days from morning to night to get her coat brought round to its usual whiteness, during which time she never went farther than the door-step, and kept her eyes always on the ground, so that if Tom was gazing at her from any secret corner, she did not look for him.

The very day after she had got herself restored to her usual cleanness, the tailor was favored with a visit from one of the ladies of "The Lodge." She came to ask him to lend them Snow for two or three days, as some rats had been seen in the house, and they were in great distress about it. Snow's mother had once been borrowed in a similar way, and had been most effectual in clearing, not only the house, but cellars and out-houses also. Though Snow's prowess as a rat-catcher had never yet been tried, the tailor was flattered by the honor done him, and Snow was packed up in a basket,—rather against her will, however,—and placed at the bottom of the dog-cart. When she was let into the room where the rat was supposed

to be, everything seemed so strange that she ran away and hid behind the window curtains. Finding herself alone, she began to look about her, and discovered that she was in a large room, full of a great many curious things she had never seen before. Being only a tailor's cat, she had, of course, been brought up in a very plain way. The first thing that attracted her attention was a ball of bright red worsted. Snow, being of an inquiring mind, began to examine the ball, and giving it a gentle tap with her right paw, off it ran under the table. It looked so pretty, and felt so soft, that Snow thought it was the nicest plaything she had ever seen. Accordingly she jumped after it, chasing it in and out and round all the chairs and tables in the room, till the worsted was twisted about everywhere like a bright web. Now, it must be known that the rat had taken shelter in a hole in a cupboard; but, knowing that he was by no means secure in his temporary hiding-place, he was more than anxious to escape to the other side of the room from the hole he had entered by. Seeing Miss Snow so busily engaged, he thought she was only a playful little kitten, and that he had nothing to fear. To make sure, however, he waited till she had got to the other side of the room, after which he began to creep round close to the wall. But Snow had inherited her mother's acute scent for these animals. No sooner did the rat begin to move than Snow's nose made her

aware of its presence. Leaving her plaything abruptly, she rushed at the rat, just as if she had known where it was all the time. After an instant's struggle, the large rat lay lifeless in Snow's grasp. There were other rats at hand, doubtless, but they must have taken immediate flight, as no sign of them could be discovered.

The ladies were very much delighted, and nearly killed Snow with kindness. They gave her so much milk to drink, and so many good things to eat, that one might have thought she would wish to remain there all her life. It is a well-known fact, however, that cats are so much attached to their home, that they cling to it even more than to the best liked inmates. Snow was very fond of the tailor, and showed it by many pretty caressing ways; but it was her basket by the kitchen fire she thought of, and she longed for it most particularly. Perhaps the sufferings she had endured while out hunting with her friend Tom on that memorable night made her all the more anxious to get home again. Seeing a window open, she jumped upon the sill, then let herself gently down to the ground, and stood still on the lawn a little at a loss in what direction to proceed. She had been carried in a basket to The Lodge, so she had to trust to her instinct. Lifting her head she took a good sniff, to scent the direction. She heard a perfect hue and cry behind her: "The tailor's cat has escaped. O what is to be done?"

But she paid no attention, and ran on as hard as her four feet could carry her.

Night set in, however, and she was compelled to lie down and sleep in a cornfield; for she remembered the stories Tom had told her of prowling poachers, and careful gamekeepers, and she thought it safer for such an inexperienced cat as she was to wait for the daylight. When the sun was fairly up, Snow gave herself a shake and set off on her journey. Though she had partaken of such a very good supper the night before, the sharp morning air made her feel hungry, and she hurried on the faster to be in time for her share of the tailor's porridge and milk. Skirting the field she thought she heard a sound, something like a cluck-cluck, as if some strange kind of hen were calling to her brood. Creeping forward in the direction she observed a beautiful partridge walking about, on a clear open space, surrounded by nine plump chicks. They were all paying great attention to their mother, and trying with all their might to imitate her graceful walk. Snow's mouth watered. She thought, "Here is an opportunity for a good breakfast." Seeing that one was either lazy or sickly, and kept behind the others, she caught it by the neck, and killed it without the mother knowing anything about it at the moment. While Snow was busy devouring it, the partridge turned round calling to her chicks, and now seemed to miss the lost one. Indeed, she

appeared to observe that there was something unusual among the reeds, and began to make such a disturbance that Snow crawled along in a ditch, making the best of her way off. She began no doubt to be a little anxious to know if she had taken the right direction, yet she still trusted to her nose. Dinner-time came, and again she began to feel hungry, for she was not accustomed to so much fatigue, and felt that her strength required to be kept up. As she was about to cross a field to get into a wood that looked very like the one she had passed through with her friend Tom, she was startled by hearing the sharp report of a gun, and by seeing a bird fall dead a few yards from where she stood. Without reflecting, she pounced upon it, but, seeing the gamekeeper hurry over to search for it, she nimbly scrambled up a tree, and lay along one of the thick branches with the bird held securely in her mouth. Fortunately the keeper had left his old and well-trained dog behind him, and had brought out a young one for the purpose of training it. Snow was terribly afraid when, in passing, the dog looked at her sternly. He made no sound, for the week before he had been punished for chasing a cat while on duty, and remembered the whipping he had got. So Snow was safe for the time, but she deemed it advisable to eat her dinner in the tree, in case that they should return suddenly upon her and catch her in the act. After searching round about where he





THE TAILOR'S CAT.

thought the dead bird had fallen, he walked off in another direction. Snow proceeded again on her way, rejoicing that she had escaped. At the end of the field she was much surprised to meet her friend Black Tom. Now that she had met such an able guide, she felt quite sure about reaching home, and gladly agreed to assist Tom to catch a rabbit if nothing better could be found. He had been out all night, and had managed to lose both his breakfast and dinner. The keeper was more strict than ever on account of the young partridges he was rearing, and over every corner of the cover a strict watch was kept. They searched through the wood, popping their noses into all the burrows they saw, but every rabbit lay in its hole. Snow even crept into one a little way, but the darkness frightened her and she backed out, and Tom being too large for the entrance they had to give it up. At that moment a young hare rose up near them and ran off. Tom, in his present state of starvation, was determined to get it at any cost, and Snow was almost as eager, for she saw that till his hunger was appeased he would not go home. They were in full cry across a field when the hare doubled, and ran towards the wood again, close to the very place to which Tom took Snow on that eventful night when he had brought her the chicken. Tom gave one terrific mew and doubled also. At that moment a sharp click, a bang, and a whiz sounded in Snow's ears, and transfixed her with terror.

Again Tom mewed, and to Snow's astonishment dropped at her feet, with the blood pouring from his side. Snow would have gladly stayed to render him assistance, but Tom, with a most emphatic mew, bade her hurry away, as his days were numbered. She had no choice; for up came the keeper and his dog, and she was forced to make her escape.

She ran so fast that she was quite out of breath, and was compelled to pause behind a large stack of corn at the farm, a mile from her own house. She knew the place well, and her heart was glad, in spite of her distress for Tom. Then while she rested she had time to reflect upon the troubles of the few past weeks, and to compare them with her innocent life before. She inwardly vowed that, if she were only spared to reach her home in safety, nothing should ever tempt her to leave it again. And that young partridge lay heavy on her mind. While she was thinking how angry her kind master would be if he knew, she fancied she heard a loud and prolonged howl. Unconsciously she mewed very loud also. This brought the dogs upon her from the farm, and she had to run as fast as her stiff and aching paws would allow. It was a terrible race, — a race of life and death. She felt the hot breath of the foremost dog on her back, but just then she reached her own garden fence, managing to spring through, and with difficulty drag herself to a place of safety.

One of the dogs was actually struggling to creep under the fence in his eagerness to get at her. Something rushed past her, now nearly blind with fatigue as she was ; and she heard such a barking, snarling, and yelping the moment after, that one might have supposed all the dogs in the village had met to fight. This, however, turned out to be our old friend Midge, who had again escaped from his own home, and had made his way to the tailor's cottage with a great thick rope fastened to his collar. He quickly drove off the farm dogs, and his barking soon brought his master to his assistance.

How glad poor Snow was when she heard Johnnie calling to his master, "Guidness, if this is no Snow come hame o' her ain accord." The tailor lifted her up and laid her in her own basket, and when she felt the kindly presence of his hand on her head, Snow was more than glad, she was thankful.

"My puir cheetie," said the tailor, "I'm thinking ye have had enough o' the warld. Ye're safer to bide at hame, my woman, though it's maybe hamely in comparison wi' The Lodge. I'm no pleased with you, Snow, for rinnin' awa' when ye were sent to oblige the ladies in the matter o' the rats ; but noo that ye are back, and gin ye promise to behave like a douce cat, we'll say nae mair about it."

It was quite evident, by Snow's pitiful looks

and mews, that she was promising to do all that was required of her. She was so tired that for days she did nothing but lie in her basket by the fire. Midge was so devoted in his attention to her, that the tailor's heart was touched. With a broad grin on his good-natured face, he said that he would have to get the dog's name put into the indenture papers after all.

Johnnie was so well satisfied with this appreciation of his dog, that when asked on the Sunday how he got on with his master, he changed his usual reply from "some better" to a hearty "fine," — a word that expresses much in our undemonstrative part of the country.

Weeks passed, and still Johnnie was getting on well, and giving satisfaction at the tailor's. An incident soon took place which went far to strengthen the bond of harmony between Robert McIntyre and his apprentice. Snow became the mother of five beautiful kittens. "It's grand to see them, mem," said Johnnie, after telling me of this when I met him one day in the village. "If ye would please to come and see them, I'm sure the maister would be proud, and sae would Snow." When I asked if the tailor meant to drown any, he looked almost horrified. "Nae, they're to be keepit, every one o' them. The ladies at The Lodge have trysted one, and the minister he's for anither."

Some time after, I accepted Johnnie's invitation

to see Snow and her five kittens. When I arrived at the little wicket gate, there lay Snow on the door-step, surrounded by her whole family, and a pretty sight it was. Her face was now quiet and peaceful, and she looked with a thoughtful brow on the gambols of her kittens. She flicked her right ear a little restlessly as if she were thinking of the future, when their high spirits might lead them into danger. At my approach they all fled, but Snow welcomed me with quiet dignity, as if wishing to apologize for their rude behavior. Midge, too, was there, quite at home apparently; and when I stooped to pat him, and to ask how he was getting along, old Robert said with a quiet chuckle, "Thank you, mem, we're just a' as happy as there's ony need for, seeing we canna get everything just our own way in this world. I firmly believe, however, that my Snow would break her heart if we marked Midge's name out o' his master's papers, for he's a great assistance to her in the bringing up o' that camsteary family o' hers. What do you think o' them yoursel', mem?"

They were really very fine kittens, and I praised them heartily, which gratified the worthy tailor so much that he begged me to take my pick and choice.

I selected Spotty, to the evident approval of Johnnie, who was to bring her down when Snow was ready to part with her. Accordingly, about

a fortnight after, he arrived one Saturday evening with her. It was pleasant to see that Johnnie's mental capacity seemed to have improved wonderfully, — far more than it would ever have done had he been able to carry out his own notion of being a ploughman. His master's love of reading, and the stories which he told, had made Johnnie anxious to know more about the countries old Robert spoke of; and they got on so well together that it was Mrs. Smith's strong conviction that "the laddie would be vexed when his time was up. But, mem," said Mrs. Smith, "though the tailor's a fine man, and has a kindly way with the laddies, we would have had sair wark to make my Johnnie bide, if Midgie hadna been allowed to stay with him."

"Well, Mrs. Smith," I replied, laughing, "you have n't the tailor to thank so much for that as his cat Snow."

"'Deed, mem, that may be true," she answered, "for if she hadna taken a liking to Midge, Johnnie and him mightna ha' been there this day."

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OUR ORRA CARRIER, AND HIS MARE BEAUTY.

OLD Andrew Linklater is what is called in our neighborhood "the orra," or extra carrier; sometimes, in a less respectful way, "the saut-man," as he supplies housewives with that important article, salt. The two regular carriers pass through our hamlet at a very early hour, picking up such parcels and orders as have been deposited at the toll-house on the previous night. But to those thoughtless house-keepers who are not gifted with good memories, and have not the faculty of doing things at the proper time, Andrew is a real help. He is a perfect treasure of a carrier in the way of small commissions; such as procuring books from the circulating library, and calling for letters at the post-office. As for matching worsteds or ribbons, — "women's clamjamfray," as he calls them, — Andrew has not his equal.

"Every dog maun hae his day, mem," he sometimes says. "I've had mine, and sae I can

afford to laugh in my sleeve at Tam Morris and John Bell. They're carriers by name, nae doot, but wad folks trust them wi' onything mair valuable than dry fish, cannles (candles), or tobacco pipes? I've seen the day — afore the opening o' the railways spoilt the carrying trade a'thegether — that I've carried five hunner pounds in split-new bank-notes, an' whiles gold foreby (besides). Ay, the carrier's business was second to nane in the country *then*."

He was so contented with his position, and looked so happy, that it was very pleasing to see him sitting on the top of his two large salt-bags. These, along with some coarse earthenware dishes, composed a stock in trade which eked out the rather precarious business of "orra carrier." It was understood that these articles were carried merely to oblige people; for nothing vexed Andrew so much as to be called "a cadger," or a huckster.

"Dae ye ever see me tak' auld rags, bones, or broken metal for *my* wares?" he would say. "Nae, nae, I carry the goods as I wad dae ony ither, for folks are ay needing saut an' dishes, an' it's whiles handy to hae a choice brought to the door. As for being a cadger, did ye ever see me an' my mare racing down the road as if half a hundred evil speerits were at our tails?"

He was always cheerful, too, no matter what kind of weather it was, and had generally an answer ready, as he pulled up his old mare,

such as, "Dinna complain, mem; it's grand weather for the crops, though it's maybe na sae pleasant to us. O, we're ungrateful beings, mem, and never ken when we're weel aff."

One forenoon I had gone out to ask him to get some small things for me at the market town. Leaving his old mare Beauty to crop the grass by the roadside at her leisure, he came up the little avenue to meet me. While he was trying to fix in his mind that it was sea-green, not pea-green, worsted he was to get, we were interrupted by a peculiar noise. At first I thought it was some wounded sea-bird, but on listening for a moment, I distinctly heard a cry of "Yoicks, yoicks, yoicks! hoy, hoy, hoy!" followed by the tramping of horses' hoofs and a sound of panting and breathing. To my astonishment Andrew flung up his arms, and, in evident distress, cried out, "O, peëtie me, it's the fox-hounds that's oot! I maun see to Beauty." And away he went down the avenue as fast as his old feet could carry him.

As this was the first time I had seen a pack of fox-hounds out, I am not ashamed to say that I became almost as excited as Andrew, and followed close after him in the same undignified manner. The whole pack of hounds belonging to the county were passing along the road on their way to the meet. They were followed by a good many riders, who made the rather dull highway

look bright with their gay scarlet coats. It was most amusing to see old Andrew trying to cover Beauty's face with a torn pocket-handkerchief, while he coaxed her by every endearing term ever used to a horse, to stand still. Yet all this attention seemed to have little effect upon Beauty. She who was the most obedient of animals, plunged and kicked, and tugged the cart here, there, and everywhere, neighing in a most emphatic manner, while she looked with her right eye through a large rent in the handkerchief.

When the greater part of the riders had passed, one or two stragglers, who seemed to be acquainted, not only with old Andrew, but with his mare, began to cry, "Yoicks, Beauty, yoicks, my lass! Tally ho, old girl!"

"O, dinna, dinna, sirs!" cried poor Andrew, in a most beseeching tone of voice. "Ye will rouse her to sic a pitch that she'll run aff wi' the saut, and the bits o' crocks, an' the carrier's goods foreby."

When the last rider came up, a good way in the rear of the others, he too began to shout to Beauty; but Andrew, who had hitherto shown no temper, looked as if he was about to do so now. He stamped his foot, calling out in some wrath, "Haud your tongue, Orphoot o' Luppla! I ken ye weel, ye wild young birkie! It's a queer sight to see *you* at the tail o' the hunt," continued Andrew, again becoming humorous; "haste ye

on, or gin I gie Beauty her head, she 'll maybe be in at the death afore ye, crocks an' saut an' a'!"

Beauty had always been a great friend of mine. I had never, however, heard that she had had any previous history, having taken it for granted that she had been in the "carrying line" all her days, like her worthy master. She had been a dapple gray, but was now becoming a snowier white every year. Notwithstanding her age and her shabby appearance, her eye was bright and intelligent, and she had, as Andrew expressed it, such "fraiky" or coaxing ways, that it was impossible to pass her without notice. On this occasion, I pulled out of my pocket the piece of bread I generally had ready, and when the fox-hunters were out of sight, I went over and gave it to her.

Andrew leant against Beauty, with his face hidden in her neck, appearing to be a little overcome with the excitement; and I began to think it had been too much for him, for he was a very old man. I drew the handkerchief from Beauty's face, but she did not seem to notice it; and when I held out the bread to her, saying, "Come, old lady, what has made you so wild and unmanageable to-day?" she turned away from it, looking most pathetically out of her great glistening eyes. If an animal can weep, I feel sure that the old mare shed tears that forenoon.

"Why, what ails you, Beauty?" I said. "You never refused to eat your bread before."

Andrew lifted up his face at this, and drawing the sleeve of his coat across his eyes, replied, "Nae wonder, her heart is in her mouth, puir woman, — she has a most awfu' memory, the cratur; an' I'd lay a wager she's thinking o' the days she gaed across the country fleeing like a crow or a swallow ahint the pack, an' keepin' up wi' the best o' them. O! it's a hard thing for a horse, as weel as for a man, to feel themselves getting auld and useless. Puir Beauty, I'm wae for ye, my leddy."

"This is a sad state of affairs, Andrew," I said; "come away up to the house and rest. Beauty can get a good lunch off the bank in the avenue, and be quite safe."

"Thank you kindly," replied Andrew; "but I'm late already, and must push on, though I'll no deny I've gotten a turn, an' I'm a wee thing sick. I'll just trouble ye to send the lass for a drink o' water, an' then me an' Beauty will be going."

"No, you must rest," I said; "the hunters are still too near you, and you can tell me how you and Beauty went to the fox-hunting."

"Me a fox-hunter!" said Andrew, beginning to laugh. "But I crave your pardon, mem; it's natural, you being town-bred, shouldna ken about thae things. Na, na, mem, it's only for the lords o' the soil to hunt the foxes, no for the likes o' me. But Beauty was a braw cratur then, — the

best in the county, to my thinking. At ony rate, ye couldna have seen a bonnier mare onywhere, I'll take my affidavit on't, as the minister wad say."

All this time Beauty had been standing with her head and her scrubby tail hanging down in a most listless manner. Now and again her whole frame trembled, and she breathed hard, as if in pain. Andrew stroked her gently, and in a half whisper said, "It's the nerves. The gudwife at hame is a perfect martyr to them. But I canna say Beauty is fashed wi' them very often. Haud up your head, my leddy," he continued, giving the mare an encouraging tug. "Ay, mem, ye didna ken that Beauty belonged to Bonny Miss Euphie Lockhart. Ye were a gay lass then, Beauty, so ye needna be ashamed if ye *are* a wee thing broken down now. Come, my wife, dinna look sae dowie and sae heart-broken, else ye'll make me think ye're vexed ye belong to me after a'. We're auld freens now, Beauty. We're like the auld man an' his wife in the sang, mem," said Andrew to me, beginning to hum in a very shaky voice a line or two of "John Anderson, my jo."

Whether Beauty understood what her master was saying may be doubted; but the caressing hand on her neck, if not the tune, seemed to awaken some pleasant memory, for she looked round and apparently listened to the strain. When it ceased, she neighed and poked her nose under

her master's arm. "Very well," said Andrew, who seemed to be quite satisfied with this mark of affection, "we'll just say nae mair about it, Beauty; so eat your bit piece like a leddy, an' we'll be stepping."

As he seemed to be anxious to push on to the market town, I was reluctantly obliged to bid him good-day, without hearing more about Beauty then. Some days after I had occasion to go into the seaport town where Andrew lived. Not being able to get what I wanted, I went to ask him to get it for me next day. When I reached his house, he was out; but on explaining who I was, and the nature of my errand, his wife gave me a most kindly welcome. "Come your ways in," she said, with a smile; "the gudeman speaks about you whiles, mem; he's jest gone out for a wee minute about some parcel, but I expect him in the noo."

She was trying all this time to open the door of her best room, but the key was stiff and would not turn. It seemed to please her that I insisted upon going into the kitchen, which was beautifully clean. An old easy-chair, covered with bright chintz, stood at one side of the fire, and a large sofa filled up the end of the room under the window. The usual "box beds," or inclosed sleeping places with sliding shutters, occupied the side opposite the fire. At the end opposite the sofa was a rack full of earthenware dishes, polished to perfection.

Over the fireplace was a portrait gallery of small black miniatures in profile, some of them touched up with bronze or gold, and all looking as if they were intended to represent the same person. They were surrounded by some peacock's feathers, a large and formidable horse pistol, and two old guns, while at the top were various whips, some mounted in silver, others plain and serviceable, which I presumed had belonged to Andrew's carrier ancestors.

"You have a number of portraits, Mrs. Linklater," I said.

"Yes, mem, we have a few," she replied, looking up at the black cuts with apparent satisfaction and pride. "That's Andrew in the middle, but I'm sure I needna have told you that, mem, for it's his very picter, it's as like as life,—that 's to say, when it was taken."

I was very glad of the information, for I did not think that worthy Andrew could have at any period of his existence looked so like the shadow of a Roman senator, or a stern old Puritan.

"It must have been taken when he was much younger, before he lost his hair," I ventured to remark. "But don't you think they have made his nose a little too long?" I added, putting on an air of interest, with a compliment in view.

"That's just what Andrew said to the man," said Mrs. Linklater, evidently flattered by my question. "I'm thinking his scissors were no

very sharp, and, maybe, he wasna over particular about the noses, for I mind oor minister was awfu' angry when his was sent hame, and no wonder, for he had such a big nose o' his ain, a *partic'lar* big nose, and there was his picter wi' a wee bit of a thing, you could hardly tell it was a nose at a'."

"And are these intended for Andrew also?" I inquired.

"O, peetie me! no, no, mem," said Mrs. Linklater. "That's the gudeman's grandfather at the top. They did the picters better in his days, honest man. Ye see they have drawn his gold pin in his white neck-cloth, and gi'en him a gold watch-chain round his neck. Andrew says he hadna ane to wear, but aye had his auld watch tied to a bit black ribbon that hung wi' a great big seal to it outside his fob. That ane to the left is Andrew's father, he was the head Stirling carrier, and the others are his uncles, and some freens o' my ain."

At this moment Andrew was heard wiping his feet on the mat outside, and his wife hastened to inform him of my arrival. After explaining why I had called, and talking about the crops and the weather, I asked him if he had met the fox-hounds again that day.

"Ou no, mem," he replied, laughing. "Beauty an' me got on without further trouble. I'm laughing noo, mem, but it was nae laughing matter then, as ye'll be able to certify."

"I wish you would tell me something of Beauty's

previous history," I said. "You have excited my curiosity not a little."

"O, I dinna ken," said Andrew, tapping his snuff-mull, and taking a hearty pinch with the help of a little bone spoon, "I'm maybe a wee thing over partial to the puir thing, but she *was* a grand mare i' her day."

"Eh me," said Mrs. Linklater, taking up her stocking, which she had politely laid aside during her husband's absence; "I often think if Miss Euphie were to rise out o' her grave and see Beauty now, her heart wad be like to break. Ay, the very first look at her mane would be enough for her; for O but Beauty had a splendid mane, and her tail *was* pretty."

"Ye may well make a moan, gudewife," said Andrew, "seeing that the puir beast hasna a hair in her tail now, and as for her mane, it's lost lang syne. But she was a braw cratur," continued Andrew hastily, as if glad to get back to pleasant recollections of his favorite. "I mind weel the morning she arrived at the castle. It was me the Colonel got to fetch the mare home frae Glasgow. The night before I set off, Miss Euphie came running down to the lodge gate, and says she to me, 'Now, Andrew, be careful of my horse; don't ride her fast,' says she, 'and be sure to feed her well at all the resting-places.'

"Miss Euphie was the only daughter of Colonel Lockhart, of Haughden; that's awa' in Lanark-

shire, where I happened to be assistant carrier to my Uncle Peter, and I used to do a hantle o' business for the Colonel. He was a man I had a great respect for, and he was liked by everybody. He had a son five years younger than Miss Euphie, — Master Norman he was called. But it would have been better for the puir Colonel if his son had never been born, though he was that vexed when Miss Euphie was born, for he was awfu' anxious to have a son to inherit the property. But that has nothing to do in the meantime with Beauty. Well, as I was saying, away I went to Glasgow to fetch the young mare. It had been a wet, miserable day; but when me an' Beauty got about half-way on our journey back, it began to clear up, and turned out a fine night, wi' the moon glinting slyly oot amang the clouds. We had been going at a slow enough pace, according to Miss Euphie's orders, and I had given the mare her head, letting her take her own time. Suddenly she stopped stock-still, snorting and pawing the ground. I think I must have been sleeping, or dovering like. Indeed, there was no the least doubt about it; for, you see, I was sort of tired-ish; but I cries, 'Gently, my leddy,' giving her at the same time a squeeze with both my heels, to urge her forrit, when she sort o' reared and twisted herself half round. At that moment the moon shone full out, and, to my astonishment, what should I see but a great yawning space o' a





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precipice right at our feet jutting down upon the Clyde, which was swirling away in the moonlight. I dinna think I ever had a greater turn, I may say a downright fright, all my life as I had then. You see, mem, I had nae doot pulled the bridle at the cross road when I had gotten drowsy, and the mare had taken the wrong turning, no being acquainted with the road. I can tell you, mem, I didna dover any more that night, for it was a narrow escape, and at sic times a man is drawn to think o' his past life, an' his future in the bargain.

"Well, it was morning when I reached the castle, but though the hour was early, there was Miss Euphie waiting for us. Puir young thing, how proud she was, and how she kept thanking me every nows and thens, as if it had been me that had given her the horse! Master Norman soon came out to see the mare, too. He was a laddie about thirteen then, but I never had much liking for the young gentleman; and, strange to say, the mare, from the first moment of clapping her eyes on him, clearly couldna draw to him either. She was aye an auld kenspeckle beast, particularly in the way o' seeeing through folk.

"'Now, Andrew,' says Miss Euphie to me, 'what do you think I ought to call her? She must have a very nice name.'

"'I'd call her Tib, or Bet, or Nell, or after some animal,' said Master Norman. 'I hate fine names for a horse; it's awfully stupid.'

“‘O, I could n’t have her called after an animal,’ said Miss Euphie. ‘I have thought of two, and it must be one or the other. You *must* help me to decide, Andrew,’ said she, kindly. ‘Now which shall it be, Fairy or Beauty?’

“‘Well, miss,’ says I, ‘when you are so kind as to ask my advice, I’d say Beauty; for there’s no mistake about her being *that*, miss.’

“‘Yes, I think you are right, Andrew,’ says she. ‘Fairy would be better for a pony. Yes, we shall call her Beauty; and I hope she will like her name.’

“‘If she is a mare with any spirit, she won’t,’ said Master Norman. ‘Come, let’s try her paces!’ he cried; and with that he made a run to fling himself on Beauty’s back. Whether she did it by accident or intentionally I can’t say; but at the moment he was about to jump on, she swerved aside, and landed Master Norman on his face on the gravel. There was no mistake afterwards, Beauty kept up her dislike to him, for every time he rode her she tried to throw him; so that the two grew up with little love between them; which was likely to prove the worse for poor Beauty in the end.”

“Did she show much affection, then, towards her mistress?” I inquired, while Andrew paused to take another pinch from his mull.

“Affection, mem,” said Andrew; “that’s hardly the word. She was jest overly and par-

ticularly attached to Miss Euphie. The first time she went to the hunting-meet I happened to be on the road that day, and there I saw Beauty, with Miss Euphie on her back, fleeing ahint the pack for a' the wörld like twa birds. They looked liked nothing earthly, but two elfin cratur. The next time I gaed up to the castle I had to go in and see the fox's tail, for Beauty had carried Miss Euphie in first at the death, and she won the brush. There were two ladies at the hunt that day foreby, and they were cantankerous enough to hint that some of the gentlemen had favored Miss Euphie, especially the young officer frae India. At ony rate, be that as it may, Miss Euphie carried off the brush; and she was so proud about it, poor thing, that none of them, no even the twa ladies, had the heart to spoil her pleasure by saying a word afore her."

"Eh me!" said Mrs. Linklater, as she knitted by the window, "I mind it was said that was the first time Miss Euphie saw the officer frae the Indies. It wad hae been weel for her, puir thing, if she had bidden at hame, an' no fashed wi' him and the wild foxes. Nae doot they are nasty beasts enough, stealing folks' chickens, and whiles a gude fat hen or a lamb; but I canna see what for folk are sae prood o' getting their tails. They canna use them, sac far as I can see, though they ca' them brushes."

"Hoots, gudewife, it's a grand sport fox-

hunting," said Andrew. "It does the country a heap o' good. I like nothing better than to see the pack in full cry after ane. I'm nigh-hand as bad as Beauty, an' feel fidgin' fain to dash after them mysel' like a demented body."

"But why do you always speak of Miss Euphie as poor thing?" I asked.

"Eh, wae's me, but it's a sad story," said Mrs. Linklater. "Ye see, mem, I was living in the castle at the time, being a sort of extra hand to help at the spring cleaning; but the gudeman will tell ye himsel'," she said, seeing that Andrew was a little fidgety; for I observed he liked to talk, and was pleased if he had a good listener.

"It's a' ane to me wha tells the story, gudewife," said Andrew; "though, for that matter, I'm thinking I kent mair about how matters were turning out than maist folk. Ye see, mem, after that day when Miss Euphie and Beauty got the brush, that officer chiel and the young leddy were aye slipping awa' thegether whenever they got a chance. He was stopping with Mr. Burton o' the Holmfoot, and his land just joined on to the castle grounds, and Miss Euphie she was awfu' fond o' riding Beauty over to see old Mrs. Burton; for Miss Euphie's mother and Mrs. Burton had been great friends. Did I tell you Miss Euphie's mother was dead?" said Andrew. "No? Weel, she was. Mrs. Lockhart died when Master Norman was two years old. As I was saying, Miss

Euphie got into the habit of riding over to Mrs. Burton's oftener than there was ony need for. No that the auld leddy wasna very glad to see her. But you see she whiles never went further than the stile that was at the home park; and as sure as Beauty's nose showed itsel' over the wall, as sure would you have seen the young officer's head raise itsel' out o' the long grass no very far off. I've come upon them mony's the time, sitting by the Clyde's side, wi' Beauty quietly nibbling at the grass no very far off, as if she was quite accustomed to take care o' hersel'. Ye ken fine how it would end, mem. Of course the Colonel was spoken to, and after a time he gave his consent, but only upon the condition that the marriage wadna come off for two years. The pair young things — for they were baith young enough to take upon themsel's the cares o' this world — were a wee thing vexed at the delay; but as the Colonel was firm, Mr. Maitland — he was jist a lewtenant then — went back to India.

“After awhile letters began to come frae him, and it was me Miss Euphie got to fetch the letters frae the post-office; for she couldna wait for the coming o' the castle bag, she was that impatient. And there, under the crooked haw-bush, rain or fair, she and Beauty was sure to be waiting an hour before my time o' passing. I used to be nigh-hand as sorry as she was hersel' when there was no letter; and as for that mare, Beauty I

canna but think she kent as well as I did all about them. If there happened to be none, Miss Euphie would scarcely speak a word, and would slip awa' as soon as she could, to greet, I've no a doubt, though she held hersel' proudly afore me. Beauty's head would be hanging, too, and she would step along as if she were half asleep. But you should have seen Beauty when I held up the letter as I turned the corner of the road. She would flee to me at a bound, and a' the time her mistress was chatting to me—for once the letter was safely in her hand she was never in a hurry to be off to read it—the mare would be prancing and capering, and tossing up her head and playing all sorts of pranks, as if she were a wee thing touched in the head, or kittled wi' a fly. That was just my ain consideration o' the matter. I'm no saying the beast exactly kent about the letter, though I *will* sae she acted very like as if she did.

"Aweel, to make a long story short, back came Mr. Maitland a captain, and then the twa were neither to haud nor to bind; so Miss Euphie was marriest, and a grand wedding it was, I can tell you, mem; but, for all the rejoicing, there were some hearts sad enough. It was easily seen, though the Colonel was trying to look happy, that he was thinking all the time his bonny Miss Euphie was going far over the sea to India, and it would be long before he would see her again.

There was some talk of taking Beauty out to the Indies with them; but what wi' the expense and the risk, that fell through. After the young couple were gone, Beauty was turned into the park; but it was a waesome sight to see how she watched for her mistress's coming, and for a time she was real unwell, puir beast. Master Norman would have made friends with her, for he missed his sister almost as much as the mare did; but Beauty seemed to dislike him more than ever. I was always a sort of a favorite with her mysel'; and I mind, one afternoon, when I was passing that part o' the park that stretches down to the road, Beauty was standing under a tree no very far off. When I cried to her she came running forward *that* pleased to see me, just as if she expected I had Miss Euphie in my cart wi' my goods. When I was stroking away at Beauty's sleek skin, and cracking to her about her mistress, who should come up but Colonel Lockhart himsel'. I hadna seen him for some months, and I was vexed to notice he had got thin and worn-like. I had been told it was not so much about Miss Euphie that he was fretting, as about Master Norman; for he was getting to be wild and unmanageable. The Colonel seemed pleased to see me, and we chatted awhile about the mare and her mistress, and I ventured to say Beauty should be kept in training, to be ready for Miss Euphie when she came back.

“O,’ says the Colonel, wi’ a weary sort o’ a laugh, ‘Beauty will always be in training. She will return to her docile habits the moment she hears her mistress’s voice; though, by the last accounts,’ says he with a sigh, ‘there is no likelihood o’ that day coming soon.’

“No, no — he was right there.” Here Andrew became strangely agitated, while his wife rubbed her eyes with the stocking she was knitting, and sniffed audibly. “Puir Beauty! she never heard that voice more,” continued Andrew. “The Captain was killed in one o’ thae battles against thae wild heathens the Sikhs, and the stroke was too much for Miss Euphie, for she died. The sad news was the means of hastening the Colonel’s end, too; he had been ailing for some time, but he gradually got worse and worse, till he slippit awa’ ae night when a’ body was sleepin’. The doctors said it was an affection of the heart, and I didna misdoot them, for there was no denying he was over-fond of Miss Euphie, and his heart was bound up in Master Norman.

“Then, when Master Norman got the property into his own hands, my word but he made the money flee! — betting and horse-racing and what not. You may guess the state of my mind, mem, when the news spread that Beauty had been sold to some upstart brewer in the county town to draw his wife’s bit basket-carriage. Puir Beauty! Folk couldna keep frae saying Mr. Norman might

hae keepit the mare for his sister's sake. Some said the beast had passed out of his hands in some drunken freak, when Beauty had been tossed in as part of the bet, because the gentleman, as they ca'd him, had taken a fancy to her. Be that as it may, there wasna the slightest doubt he bore the beast a grudge; there never was much love lost between them, as the saying is."

"But how did you manage to get her into your possession?" I asked.

"I'm coming to that, mem," continued Andrew, with a low laugh, or rather a chuckle, of intense satisfaction. "Beauty, she's an awfu' knowing cratur; she's jest as deep as a draw-well. I canna exactly tell ye what the beast meant by 't, but from being a most douce and well-behaved mare, wi' no a bad fault about her, so long as she was at the castle, she became the most camstearly animal ye ever heard o'. In the first place, she never had been used wi' harness or draught before; and so the first day she was yoked to the wee carriage, the man left her standing at the door, jest for a minute like, to get the rugs and what not from the servant. The brewer's lady — a big, stout woman she was, wi' a terrible red face that was by no means pleasant looking — was standing on the door-step. It's very likely Beauty didna like her look. At ony rate, off the mare flew helter-skelter down the lane. It was a steep lane, and no very smooth; the basket-carriage had been built more for show

than for wear, so that it was made useless by Beauty's kicking and flinging. The lady was that mad, nothing would please her but she would have the mare sold.

"And sold Beauty was, at a loss, too, to a doctor. He was a pompous man to see, and looked bold and bluff; but, for all that, he was a wee thing nervous in his disposition, and, what was worse, he hadna the command of his ain temper; and Beauty found that out in a crack. It would have made you laugh, mem, to hear what a dance she led her new master. Some days she would carry him fine, as steadily and as cannily as a body could desire; the next, she would shy at everything, — at a whin-bush, at a cow looking over a wall, at a laddie coming frae the school, at onything. One time she would take it into her head to get the bit between her teeth, and run away with him altogether; the next she would stand stock-still; some days she would rear every nows and thens on her hind legs, as if she meant to turn herself into a twa-footed animal. She ended her pranks by pitching the doctor right over her head into a pond, and trotted quietly home, leaving him sticking in the mud, peching [panting] like a porpoise, and in a sad condition o' baith mind and body. Be that as it may, she passed out of his hands, and for some time went from one to another; but, I warrant ye, I didna loose sight o' her.

"At long and last she was in the possession o' a coach-hirer in Glasgow. But, my certie, she wasna long in his service. She ran headlong into shop doors; she drew the cab to the wrong side of the street, and got the wheels locked wi' omnibuses, carts, and cabs, and though whiles something was hurt, she came off scatheless. She was a perfect deil's-buckie o' a mare. Every driver the coach-hirer had tried for her, she got worse and worse, till one very rainy night she was taking a bailie and his good lady to a grand ball, and as the lady was getting out o' the cab, Miss Beauty gave a great start, and Mrs. Bailie fell forward. She was caught by the cabman and her husband; and though she wasna hurt in the least, her fine long-skirted silk gown, a' tucked up wi' bunches o' flowers, slippit frae her hands, and was dragged through the mud. It was natural the worthy woman should be angry. I was told her dress had come a' the way from Paris, and had cost a great deal o' money; some folk went the length of saying it had been made by the Empress's own dress-maker. I often think Beauty had what they call an instinctiff horror of onything upstart-like. She couldna have known, to be sure, that the bailie's wife was the daughter o' auld Sandy Patterson, ane o' the tobacco manufacturers; but it's likely her vulgar way o' speaking had grated on the mare's ear, she that had been accustomed to the bonny speaking of Miss Euphie and real gentle-

folk. That's jest my own notion. Be that as it may, however, the bailie's wife had to go home, and take off her fine Empress dress, and come back with the one she had worn at some private party the night before. This, I was told, caused a good deal of whispering among the ladies; for it seems a bailie's wife ought never to appear in the same dress twice, especially when her gude-man is to stand for the Provostship at the next election.

"Aweel, the very next week Beauty ran off, and the cabman was taken up before the magistrate for the offence. Wha do you think was present along with the sitting magistrate that day? No less a person than the bailie, whose wife he had lot fa' at the ball. Beauty's bad habits a' came out there an' then. The coach-hirer could say nothing to disprove the charges brought against her, and the magistrate, being a kindly man, wad have nae doot let him off wi' a fine and a reprimand. The bailie, however, spoke up in great wrath, and the upshot of it was that nothing would satisfy him but that Beauty maun be banished frae the town, as a beast dangerous to her Majesty's lieges, no to speak o' the magistrates an' their wives foreby. It's a dangerous matter to meddle wi' a magistrate, an' if aince they suffer frae a nuisance, be it beast or body, or onything wrang about a town, my fegs but it's set to rights in a crack.

"I was then set up for mysel' in the carrying line. Uncle Peter had retired, no being strong, an' I was getting on reasonably well. It so happened that I had occasion to call for a parcel at the coach-hirer's, that week when I was in Glasgow, and what was my surprise to come on the tracks o' Beauty, puir woman! Up to that time I wasna aware she had come into thae folks' hands. It was the very day she had been led hame in disgrace, and I saw her in the stable. You should have seen the cunning cock of her e'e, as she stood listening to the man telling me o' her pranks and tricks. She just looked as if she was having a bit quiet laugh to hersel' at them. I saw that the man was at a loss to know what tae dae wi' her, and, says I, I was needing an extra horse, but she wouldna jest do for me, she's ower light built, — no to speak o' thae bad tricks o' hers.

"It never had crossed his mind to think o' me as a purchaser, but he sort o' jumped at the notion, for the mare was notorious at that time. Although I seemed so careless about it, yet my heart was in my mouth, and I was fain to have her, if I could compass the price.

"'She wad, maybe, do better on a country road,' says the man; 'at ony rate there wad be nae hairm in giving her a trial whether she can stand the work.'

"The long and the short of it is, that I allowed him to persuade me to tak' her, and I got her at

my ain price, and from the moment I laid my hand on her neck and let her ken I was her master, and wouldna put up with her tricks, she never troubled me. A trustabler horse ye couldna have seen. For drawing the loads, her blood made her worth a pair o' common beasts; no that she was free a'thegither frae capering ways, but she never either ran away, reared, kicked, or took a standing turn. From that day to this, I have just to say, 'Beauty, Beauty, none o' that, my leddy,' and she's as still as a mouse in its hole."

"Except when she hears the fox-hounds out," I said, laughing.

"Well, I'll no deny she's a wee thing troublesome then," said Andrew, with a chuckle, "but I'm thinking it brings Miss Euphie mair distinctly to her mind than onything else, and the excitement gets the better of her. There was only one time she ever mastered me, and I had to give in to her. That was on our first journey, when we came to the castle gates. She would be up the cross cut by the avenue, raison or nane. You see the old gentleman that took a lease of the place, after Master Norman went abroad, was awfu' particular about a' the approaches being kept smooth, and had forbidden folk frae going up the cross road. There was a party at the castle that night, and the gates were a' open for the carriage company. Aweel, no content wi' going up the cross road, Miss Beauty turned into ane of the ap-

proaches, and up she went, caft and a'thegither, in spite of my teeth. Out comes the butler an' twa English flunkies, but Beauty never let on she saw them; and the mair I tugged and cried, the further on she went, and in case she wad do mair mischief, I had to let her have her way. The noise brought out the maister. He was in a tremendous passion, and spoke to Beauty in onything but a decent way, and no as a gentleman should speak. He ordered us to be off, as if we had been cadgers, but Beauty stepped quietly forward to the grass edging and looted down to nibble at the grass, as she had done in former days when waiting for Miss Euphie. This made the gentleman sort o' wild, and I dinna ken hoo it would have ended had the doctor no come out, and rememberin' Beauty and kennin' me fine, the whole story cam' out. The old gentleman was an Englishman, and when he kent a', was very kind. We had permission to go and come by the cross road, which cut off a good mile of the journey. He always made the gates be left open on the afternoons we passed, and there were his children sure to be waiting ready to give Beauty an apple or a sugar biscuit. But for what reason I canna say, she never failed to loot down and tak' a nibble at the edge of the grass by the shrubbery before leaving, munching it slowly as we went down the road."

After hearing Andrew's story, it need not be

said that we took a greater interest than ever in the old mare. She still showed traces of her former spirit and good looks, though the glossy dappled gray was now almost lost in uniform white. As for our maid Barbara, after hearing the principal points of the story, she came to the conclusion that Beauty was the most wonderful animal ever heard of, not even excepting her grandmother's cow Mysic. When I gave Barbara an apple, she saved it for Beauty. It was quite evident, too, that the old mare ate the fruit from her hand with greater relish than from mine. I must say, however, that Barbara did not encourage her to slight my attentions, but scolded her soundly. "How daur ye poke wi' your nose at the mistress's apple in that fashion?" she would say; "I'll give ye nane next time, ye cutty." To this Beauty would reply by rubbing her face against Barbara's shoulder, which had the effect of softening the damsel's heart in a moment, and she would say in a whisper to me, "Saw ye ever the like o' that, mem? O Beauty, but you are a douce cratur! an' though I wanted to be angry, yet I canna be. But see an' behave like a leddy next time." She would sometimes add, "else I will be angry in dounricht earnest."

Some months after hearing Beauty's story, I had occasion to go to the market town by train, intending to come back the same way. On arriving at the station, however, I learned to my dis-

dress that the trains had been altered, and that the last one had left five minutes before. It was late in autumn, and it was not pleasant to contemplate having to walk six miles, especially as it was getting dusk already. There was no help for it, however, and I retraced my steps through the town to the main road, which leads past our hamlet. I was walking very fast round the corner of one of the principal streets, when I came against old Andrew Linklater. Discovering who I was, and why I was there at such an hour, he said in his kindly way, "Well, mem, I can help ye in yer dilemmy. If ye would excuse me for proposing it, an' if ye're no' prood, ye're very welcome to a seat in my cart; an' I'll be starting in five minutes."

I thanked him most heartily, and would have gone to the inn stable where he "put up," there and then, but he would not allow it. "No, no!" he said. "You might meet some folks ye ken, and they might think it demeaning to them, if no to yoursel', to see you on the tuft o' a cart, let be an 'orra carrier's,' no to speak o' a 'saut-man's.'" And away he went, laughing quietly to himself.

I was "trysted" to meet him at the "toll-house," at the outskirts of the town; and, accordingly, I wended my way thither. I had not to wait long, when I heard him bidding Beauty "stand," and, with the kindly assistance of the

"toll-wife" and a kitchen chair, I was safely hoisted in.

The worthy Andrew had evidently made some hasty arrangements for my comfort. He had a large bunch of straw placed between his two half-empty salt-bags, and had spread a piece of canvas over it. After my feet had been wrapped up in Beauty's rug, we prepared to start. But Andrew did not seem to think I was "happed" enough for the long ride, and unceremoniously bade the woman lend me a plaid, saying rather loftily, and evidently for the toll-wife's benefit, that I was far from being accustomed to ride in this fashion, and the night being chilly I might catch cold. With the addition of the plaid round my shoulders, Andrew seemed to think all would be well. We started in real earnest, beguiling time by chatting about all sorts of people and places, from the old Covenanters, with John Knox at their head, to the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon; and from the great city of London, down to our own little hamlet. We had been jogging on for about a mile, and were just beginning to wander away to the other side of the world, to compare notes about the people there, when our conversation was interrupted by Beauty coming to a dead stand. "Gee, gee hup, my leddie," cried Andrew, touching her slightly with the whip; but Beauty only tossed her head and stood still.

"Peetie me!" said Andrew, raising himself and

looking round; "the beast has mair sense than her master. That crack we've been having has shortened the road that much that I never thought we were at our laird's lands already. Hoy! hoy!" he shouted, and in a minute after, a cottage door, a little distance from the road, opened, and a woman came running down the path, while Andrew was rummaging for a small parcel in a box he had been sitting upon.

"I'm glad you've come, Andrew!" said the woman. "I was wearying sair for ye."

"An' is he haudin' nae better, puir fallow?" said Andrew.

"O, no; he's a wee thing waur, I'm thinkin'," she said. "See, here's your tippence, Andrew."

"Hoots!" said Andrew, drawing up the reins.

"I'm no goin' to echarge ye for fetching a bottle o' medicine. Haste ye in till him, and mind to shake the stuff weel afore ye pour it oot; that was what the man in the doctor's shop seemed to be maist particular about."

We drove away again, the woman crying after us many thanks, while Andrew whispered to me, "It's her gudeman that's ill; he's been lying for five weeks, an' I'm a wee thing feared for him slippin' awa'; and she has a lot o' young weans, puir thing."

"I cannot understand how Beauty remembered to stop here so opportunely," I said.

"Hoots, mem!" replied Andrew, with a laugh,

"that's because ye dinna ken what a sagashus animal the mare is. I'se warrant she'll stop at ilka door we have a parcel for, as correct as if I had bidden her. O, there's a deal o' sense in dumb animals."

"I had no idea a horse was so intelligent," I observed; "even dogs surely could not be more so."

"Perhaps not, mem," replied Andrew; "then there's other things the dogs hae the better o'. A dog is allowed to be next to a human being; indeed, for that matter, they whiles show more sense than their masters."

At this point Beauty stopped before a wooden gate belonging to a house that stood at the top of a sort of small avenue. "What have we gotten for here, Beauty, my leddy?" said Andrew, searching in his box again. "O, it's a dozen o' rubbarb peels."

The door of the house was open, and by the light inside we could see a woman standing in the doorway. "Just you pay attention to what taks place here, mem," said Andrew, in a half whisper. "Hi, woman!" he shouted, "here's your parcel, an' tippence to pay for't."

The woman started back, which must have implied that Andrew was to bring the parcel up to her. This, however, he stoutly declined to do; and Beauty, who seemed to consider her master was being insulted, tossed up her head, whisked

her tail wrathfully, and began to walk away. "Stand, Beauty!" cried Andrew; "we'll give her just one more chance. Are you wanting your peels or no?" he shouted. "Jist say ye dinna; an' no waste my time, and I'll gang on."

At this threat the woman, whoever she was, came down the walk, muttering to herself all the way. "Now, I'll tell ye what it is, Andrew Linklater," she said, "I'll no come down another time."

"Well, Mrs. Greig, ye can jist bide then," said Andrew; "an' ye needna fash to bid me get ye onything in the by-gaun."

"That's as I please," replied Mrs. Greig. "Ye'll bring yer orders to the door, as ye are bound to do."

"Bound to do!" repeated Andrew. "I'm bound to do jist as I please and think proper in the matter. Where's the tippence, for Beauty's waitin' me? I'm wasting my breath for naething."

"You're no going to charge tippence for a wee box o' peels?" cried the woman, in a shrill voice; "havers, a penny's plenty, sae tak' it."

"Dae ye tak' me for a cadger, that ye daur to beat me down?" said Andrew, straightening his old back in a very lofty manner. "How often am I to tell ye *that's* my lowest charge? I can tak' the article back if ye are no wanting it; an' ye can

gar Tam Morris the carrier ca' for 't, and he'll charge ye fourpence."

The woman here drew the pence from her pocket, and handed them up, receiving the box in sullen silence.

"She's a cantankerous, miserly-inclined body that," said Andrew. "She's as rich as a Jew, folks say; but she makes every penny a prisoner. Her man leads a weary life wi' her, and she has to do a' her ain work, for she canna get a lass to bide wi' her."

"You've a grand opportunity for studying human nature, Andrew," I said, smiling.

"Ou, ay; a carrier's cart is no that ill a place for that, mem; an' maybe it's a' the plainer in being an orra' ane. Folk dinna mind showing themsel's in their true colors, as I may say, to me an' Beauty, jist because we 're auld, an' a wee thing worn out now. But here we 're at Mrs. Mailin's. I maun get down here, mem, for she's a worthy woman, an' a particular friend o' mine; an' I've gotten a letter for her frae her son in Australia, — a laddie I had a great wark wi'."

Everybody seemed to know the sound of the carrier's cart, for the moment it stopped the doors were sure to open. This one opened with a jerk, which proved to have been caused by three or four little children all attempting to open it at once. Out they all rushed with a noisy chorus of "Mither! mither! it's Beauty an' Andrew!"

which was half drowned by a loud screaming and roaring from behind the door, where a little sturdy fellow had been knocked down and half squeezed to death.

"Haud your peace, ye noisy tinklers!" shouted Andrew. "Wha was't that knocked wee Davie down? See, Jeanie, you tak' the kettle I was gettin' mended for your mither. See an' no let it fa', now. I'm coming in to see your father."

"Ye've gotten a letter, — I ken ye've gotten a letter," said the girl, taking the kettle. "Mither, Andrew's gotten a letter frae the post-office."

"I never said sae, ye cutty!" said Andrew, getting down from the cart, and handing the reins to me to hold. "What maks ye think that?"

"Because ye said ye were comin' in, as ye did the last time there was a letter."

"Well, since ye are such a witch o' a guesser, ye can carry it in, too, for you're in the right. There's a letter frae the laddie's sel'."

I was left sitting in the cart for about ten minutes, while Andrew went inside, evidently to see the letter opened and hear its contents. As there were neither blinds nor shutters to the window, I could see in quite plainly; and there stood Andrew, whip in hand, by the door, with one small urchin clinging to his leg, and two others peering into the capacious pockets of his old gray overcoat. An old woman, with a Scotch "mutch" (cap), had risen from her chair in the corner, and was holding

a withered hand to her ear to catch the words of the letter, that was being read by a man who was bending over the table, holding the precious document close to the lamp, while the mother stood moving her fingers restlessly through little Jeanie's hair as she leant against her.

I should have liked very much to have had a closer view, and to have heard the contents of the letter also, but I had quite enough to do to hold Beauty. At first, she stood quite still, as if she were taking forty winks to herself; but after the first five minutes she became restless, pawing the ground and snorting as if she were very much displeased with something. When the ten minutes were about to pass into a quarter of an hour, and just as Andrew had raised to his lips a glass which Mrs. Mailin had presented to him, Beauty would not stand another moment, and deliberately marched off, in spite of my hauling and expostulations. I was afraid to excite her too much, for the thought entered my mind, "What if she is going to try some of her old Glasgow pranks and tricks? What if she runs away, and I am left buried in the ruins of the stock of earthenware, or, perhaps, smothered in the salt?" Fortunately Beauty thought better of it, and after walking for a few steps stood still, until Andrew came out, apologizing for keeping me waiting.

Then, having mounted to his seat on the box, he prepared to go on again. But Beauty refused to

move. She who had serious intentions apparently of running off a minute before, now stood stock-still. Andrew seemed puzzled at her behavior, and the more so when told of her doings when he was in the cottage. "Beauty, my woman!" he said, "there's something the matter with ye; stop till I think." He drew his hand across his eyes, and I began to fear the contents of the glass he had tossed off had been rather too much for his old head. "Toots! I'm a wee thing stupid wi' that — that — ginger cordial — Mrs. Mailin made me tak' jest to drink Jeemie's health, puir man! Beauty, I canna' mak' ye oot; sae go on, like a leddie, else I'll mak' ye."

At this moment out ran one of the little boys, shouting,—

"Beauty hasna had her drink! Tommy's awa' for 't."

"To be sure, it's that that's ailing her," said Andrew, in a sleepy tone. "The letter frae Jeemie put it out o' my mind. Puir beast! But my fegs! Beauty'll no let folk forget her. She's a most 'pointed' animal."

The drink of water having been administered, Beauty trotted off at once without further persuasion. She passed through the village without taking notice of any of the houses till we came to the end, when she turned of her own accord up a lane, and going in at an open iron gate, drew up in front of a substantial stone house. I scarcely

required to be told that "this was the manse," but Andrew knew I had never passed through this village before. "As you are fond of bairns, you will see some nice wee things here, mem; the manse bairns are great friends o' mine an' Beauty's," said Andrew.

The inmates of the manse, at least the younger portion, seemed to divine who had arrived at the door, which was speedily opened by a boy of about ten years, who immediately cried out, —

"Have you got my fishing-rod, Andrew, and the hooks?"

"Ou ay," said Andrew, "I've forgotten nothing; but the leddies maun aye be served first, sir," he said, with a low chuckle, handing out a parcel to a little girl, who received it with a "O, thank you, Andrew! Has it got blue eyes?"

"Yes, Miss Gracie, it's got them as blue as yer ain. It was the bonniest in the toy-shop, an' a sixpence cheaper than we expekit; so you can get a hat for dollie next time wi't."

Beauty had a biscuit and an apple presented to her, which she received even more graciously than I had ever seen her do from her friend Barbara. After Miss Gracie had given the old mare a caress, having insisted upon the nurse holding her up for the purpose, we wished them good-night, and jogged on again. When we were out on the main road once more, I said, —

"You are a person of greater consequence than I supposed, Andrew."

"I like to bring things to the bairns," replied Andrew; "it's grand to see how pleased they are with their bit toys and things."

"Yes, they are often easily pleased; but it must be a pleasant life yours, for you make a number of hearts happy," I replied.

"Ou, I dinna ken," said Andrew, though evidently feeling flattered with the remark. "There's Mrs. Greig, — she'll no have gotten over that tippence I made her pay. I'm sort o' vexed this has been a bad night for seeing my customers, for it so happened I had very few orders this morning."

I had seen enough, however, to convince me that Andrew had a larger heart, and a kindlier nature, than I had fancied he possessed.

I felt sorry when the journey was ended, and I thanked the worthy old man most heartily. "You are very welcome," he replied. "Indeed I ought rather to say thank *you*, mem, for the road has been shortened that much in oor fine crack, that I can hardly believe I'm here. I wouldna wish ye to miss the train again for your ain sake, but, for my part, I dinna mind how often ye do it, if me an' Beauty are in the town to bring ye hame. It's but a humble conveyance, mem, but ye're heartily welcome to a seat in 't at any time."

I stood looking after him till he had disap-

peared through the toll-bar on his further journey of four miles to the seaport town, where he lived. As I walked up to the house I thought to myself, that humble indeed as the conveyance was, one could get a good deal of genuine pleasure, not to speak of subjects for profitable reflection, out of a journey in a carrier's cart.

The winter set in very early that year, and one afternoon Andrew was returning homewards from his usual rounds. He had got safely through the village of Moonsie. About half a mile beyond the manse, he got out of the cart to help Beauty up a slight incline. This he managed to do with great difficulty, and was in the act of getting into the cart again, when Beauty slipped on the frosty road, and her master's foot being on the wheel, he lost his hold and fell. When he tried to rise, he discovered his leg was broken at the ankle, and he had to sink back on the frosty road perfectly helpless. Poor Beauty was in a great state of distress, but when she found that her master could not get up, and that after a time he ceased to be able to speak to her, she did the very best thing she could have done in the circumstances, proving that her amount of sense was indeed, as Andrew expressed it, "by-ordinar."

They had called at the manse that night in passing homewards; and, when the family heard a horse neighing and pawing the gravel outside, the minister went out himself to see what it was.

Great was his surprise to find Beauty back again, and without her master. He at once guessed that something had happened to the worthy old man. Calling the glebe-lad to bring a lantern, they set out at once, Beauty walking as fast as the slippery state of the roads would permit; and before long Andrew was found. With difficulty he was placed on the cart, and driven back to the manse, where his leg was attended to by the village doctor, and a messenger despatched, at Andrew's earnest request, to tell his wife what had happened.

It was more than a fortnight before Andrew was able to be removed; and had it not been that he pined to be at home again, the doctor would not have allowed him to go so soon. He recovered rather slowly, though surely; but he had "got a shake," as his wife said, "and would not get over it easily, as old bones are harder to mend than young ones." Poverty, too, was at their door, for Andrew, though honest and hard-working, had been unfortunate, and had come down in the world. Yet they would not receive assistance from any quarter whatever. "I see no way for it," said Mrs. Linklater to me one day, when I called to inquire for Andrew, "but just to go out with Beauty on the cart mysel'. I have been thinking that if I were to get butter and eggs at the farm-toons in exchange for my wares, I might sell them here at a profit."

This idea was really carried out after a time; Andrew being persuaded, for his wife's sake, to accept of assistance from some friends who were very glad to help the worthy couple. The cart was covered over with a canvas frame, which was quite water-tight, and round the sides were lockers and shelves stocked principally with groceries, but having a choice selection of goods of various kinds besides, such as glass brooches, needles, pins, and general small wares, not forgetting "a wheen penny toys for the bairns."

Andrew was not quite able to walk when the cart was ready, but he was able to sit comfortably inside so that he could drive Beauty, while Mrs. Linklater, to her intense satisfaction, was permitted to become the dispenser of the good things round her. It was a novel change to the good woman; for though Andrew was grieved to think she had to leave her fireside and work in her old age, the worthy woman was charmed with the arrangement. "It's a grand time for me, 'mem," she said one day. "I used to feel that dull at hame whyles, with Andrew sae muckle awa', an' nothing to do but look after mysel' an' the cat; but noo I see him a' the day, and it's a fine life gaun about through the country, and awfu' healthy. If it wasna for the gudeman's leg, I'd be inclined to say, 'It's an ill wind that blows naebody guid.'"

Beauty, too, seemed to improve with the new

occupation. The rest during her master's illness had done much for her, but the patient currying and great care bestowed upon her by the boy who had been hired to look after her had done more, so that her old sides actually looked glossy and sleek, as if she were renewing her youth.

The first time the covered cart passed through our hamlet, I, of course, went down to inspect it, and admire all the internal arrangements as they were pointed out by Mrs. Linklater, while Andrew sat quietly listening.

"It's no that bad," he said, in answer to my question of how he liked it, "but I'm at a loss what to call the concern. Ye see, mem, it's no a caravan exactly, nor yet a wagon such as they have in the picter books, and they tell me are rife about England, — so I'm sair excerceeded what to ca' it."

"How would you like to call it 'a Shandrydan?'" I said, laughing. "I was reading about such a thing the other day."

"An' was it of the nater o' oor concern?" said Andrew; "say 't ower again, mem. I like a guid sounding name for a thing. It's no bad ava, an' if ye're agreeable, guid-wife, we'll jist adopt it without seeking further. Shaunera-dan, — we might gang further and fare waur."

At this moment while I write, the Shaunera-dan is in sight, wending its way slowly down the steep part of the road that leads on to the long,

narrow bridge which our hamlet is so proud of; for it is very ancient indeed, having been built "by the monks of old." I can half make out the ruddy countenance of Mrs. Linklater looking out from between the looped-up curtains of the front part. Andrew is unmistakably there, for I see the long whip swaying gently backwards and forwards from side to side, as he flicks off the flies from Beauty's ears. It strikes me the old mare jogs along more slowly than she used to do, though I would not venture to hint such a thing to her master, for, as Mrs. Linklater says, "They are sae much attached, the tane to the tither, that it's to be hoped naething will befa' Beauty."

"Saut! saut!" Andrew retains the old familiar cry, to inform us of his approach, though he has long ceased to carry it as the staple commodity of the "Shaunera-dan." As the old man would miss me were I not to go out to him, I must hasten. Indeed, as it is, I have lingered too long, for again through the open window I hear him crying close to the gate, in rather a peremptory tone of voice, "Saut — sa-aut! stand, Beauty, my bonnie leddy. Here's the Shaunera-dan."

NETTLE, THE COBBLER'S TERRIER.

EARLY one morning in the beginning of summer, I was awakened by a great noise in our poultry yard. Fearing that the gypsy strollers, then in the neighborhood, were making off with some of my favorites, I jumped out of bed, and ran to the window which overlooked the court. To my indignation I saw a little gray Scotch terrier in the act of destroying one of my plumpest chickens. I hastily dressed myself, and hurried to the rescue. When I entered the yard, the thief was eating the last morsel. Instead of running away, as I expected he would, he gambolled about me, expressing, as clearly as a dog could, his great pleasure at seeing me. Lifting him up, and giving him a hearty shake, to show my displeasure, I carried him into the house. I tied him up to prevent further mischief, and left him till I could find his owner.

After breakfast I sent for some of the village boys to look at the dog. Though he appeared to know them quite well, and they were all sure they had seen him before, yet none of them could tell anything definite about him.

"I tell you what it is, mem," said Robbie Berrie, "somebody's clippit that dog's hair, and has been ill-usin' him badly. If he wasna quite so like a skeleton, I'm sure we would mak' him out, for, ye see, he seems to ken us fine."

"Has no one in the village lost a dog lately?" I inquired.

"No, mem, I dinna think sae," replied Davie Clarke. "If they had, I'm thinkin' some of us would hae been sure to have known about it."

"I declare it's Geordie Wishart's Nettle," cried Robbie, nudging his friend's elbow.

"Hold your tongue, Robbie Berrie," said Davie, in great disdain; "do ye think that Nettle would ever look like *that?* — an ugly mongrel scrag o' a beast?"

"I'm no carin'," said Robbie; "if ye look close ye'll see he has Nettle's twa een, and I'm certain if it's no him, it's his ghost."

"Aweel, if it's Nettle," said Davie, "he canna have forgotten the funny tricks auld Geordie used to teach him."

"Let's try," said Robbie, taking up the dog, and placing him on a chair, while he knelt down in front of it. "If ye be Geordie Wishart's Nettle, ye'll sit up and beg," he said, very solemnly.

There was silence for a minute or two, while the dog sat and looked earnestly into Robbie's face.

In a very peremptory voice, Robbie repeated, "Nettle, beg, I say," and then the dog sat up at once on his hind legs.

"If ye be Geordie Wishart's terrier, ye'll let us see how the minister begins his sermon," said Davie Clarke.

"Wow, wo-w, wowf!" said the little dog, with an intelligent twinkle in his brown eyes.

"Do ye see that?" said Robbie, turning to his friend Davie with some scorn. "Now, Nettle, my man, let's see how John Murdock raises the tune on the Sabbath day."

At this request the terrier gave a long, piercing howl, followed by another in a lower key.

"That's a fine doug," said Robbie. "Now down with the Papists like a man."

In a moment the dog, emaciated and weak as it was, bounded off the chair, and rushed through the house, barking furiously. When Master Nettle was at last persuaded that every Papist was "down," the boys declared, without a doubt, that he was Geordie Wishart's dog. As I had nothing particular to do that day, I tied a string to the terrier's neck, and, glad to secure my chickens from such a dangerous visitor, led him away to restore him to his rightful owner.

George Wishart was a shoemaker in the neighboring village. Though I had often heard about him, I had never spoken to him. He was not a little surprised, therefore, when I presented my-

self at his cottage door, saying I had brought his dog back again.

"Ye dinna mean to say it was you that stole the doug?" was the reply, as he pushed his horn spectacles up on his shining bald head, and stared at me.

"Certainly not," I said, laughing. "If we come to the matter of stealing, I think Nettle here could tell you it is all on his side, for he has destroyed a good fat chicken of mine to-day."

"To think o' ye coming this day of a' the days in the year," said the cobbler, pushing his spectacles still farther back on his head, and laying down an old boot he was mending. "I was thinking o' ye this very moment, doug. Speak o' the deil, an' he'll appear, say some folks, an' I'm bound to say it looks like it in this case. If ye hadna been brought back in such company, and if I hadna been tellt ye were my doug Nettle, I'd scarcely have believed it. I've still my doots about ye being mine."

"Poor Nettle is certainly in a sorry plight," I replied, "but there is no doubt of his being yours; that is to say, if your Nettle had a dislike to 'the Papists.' I thought he would have pulled the house about our ears at the very mention of the word."

At this the cobbler chuckled, evidently highly pleased; then, remembering I had been standing all this time, he cleared off the scraps of leather

from the nearest chair for my accommodation. "It was a scurvy-like trick," he said, "to steal the doug; but to starve him into the bargain was worse. Never you mind, Nettle, my man. I'll wager ye a penny-piece, that 'gin a week is ower yer head ye'll be on the fair road to be as braw a looking doug as ye were afore ye gaed awa'. It's a hail year since then, come next week; for if ye'll mind, Nettle, it was at the St. James's Market ye went amissing. I aye tellt ye, yer stravaguein' tricks wad lead ye into mischief some day; and just see what a scrag o' a doug ye've made o' yer-sel'."

Nettle, thus rebuked, tucked his tail between his legs, and slunk away; while the cobbler, with a knowing wink to me, and a nod towards the bed, under which Nettle had crept, said, "He that wull to Cupar, maun to Cupar! Ye'll maybe no mind me going on wi' my wark, mem," he continued, politely; "it's a job wanted in a hurry. But it's fairly like to get the better o' me; it's been that often patched before, that I canna get a hail bit for my awl to grip."

"It does look rather the worse for wear," I replied, "and not as if it were suited for this part of the country. Our roads are rather rough for such a slim sole."

"Ye're right there, mem," said the cobbler; "this boot, or I'm much mistaken, was made in some foreign country. I've a trick o' fancying I can

read a man's character, and, what's mair, his history, in his boots. And I was just thinking to mysel', before you came in, the owner of this boot, patched and mended though it be, must be a gentleman."

"Do you not know to whom it belongs?" I asked.

"No, mem," replied the cobbler, hammering away at the sole very gently, as if he were afraid his hammer might send the boot into shreds. "All that I know about it, is this. I was sitting at my work after breakfast, when Mrs. White came in, — she keeps a shop at the end o' the village, — and, says she, 'Geordie, my man, I'll tak' it as a favor if ye will mend this boot.' Says I, 'Mend that boot, Mrs. White! do ye tak' me for a warlock that you expect me to mend a thing past mending weeks ago? It canna be done.' With that she almost began to greet, and said, 'I diinna ken how I'm to gang back an' tell this to the lad. He seems sair bent on gettin' forward; and he must travel, for I'm thinkin' he has no money to tak' him by the train.' — 'Weel, gudewife,' says I, 'if that be the state o' matters, I maun just try to make the best o't. I can, maybe, steek the sole to the upper some way.' So that's how I came to be mendin' this."

"I dare say you will have much pleasure in doing it," I replied. "You are not only making it quite water-tight, but, by Mrs. White's account, you are helping a fellow-creature in distress."

"Maybe there *is* a pleasure in that, mem," said the worthy cobbler; "I need not say maybe, for there *is* a great deal; but ye see, mem, all the time I've been mendin' at this bit o' a sair worn boot, I hae been thinkin' o' Nettle, and o' him that gave the doug to me, and of a heap o' things connected with that time, — things baith gladsome and sorrowful. Was n't it strange that ye should come just now?"

"Yes, very strange," I replied. "But what had the boot to do with it? May I ask who gave you the dog?"

"It's weel seen that ye're a stranger to this part, mem," said the cobbler, "else ye wad hae kent about the painting gentleman who came and settled in our village three year syne. He made sic a fine picter o' the village green, an' he got some o' the gudewives to stand round about the pump, a' with their stoups and pitchers; an' he had some o' the young craters in the front, and the bairns rowing and tumbling about the grass. It was a very fine picter, an' the likest of a' the women folks was my ain gudewife, Jean, — she's deed now, mem, a twelvemonth since. O, but mony's the laugh Mr. Hepburn had with my gudewife. He was determined to have her painted in his picter, but she was as determined that she wouldna allow him to do any such a thing. You see, mem, she ay had a contempt for folk that wasted their time havering at the well; and

she made a boast that *she* never was seen at the well's mouth, gossiping!

"The picter took longer to paint than Mr. Hepburn expected," continued the cobbler, "and the weather began to get cold and rainy, an' so he couldna paint out-o'-doors ony langer. One day he comes to me, and says, 'George Wishart, I've been told by the inn folks that you have got an empty garret with a window looking out to the North, and I've come to ask you to let it to me for a painting-room.' He was such a pleasant-spoken gentleman, that I own I was friendly inclined to him, and I did my best to get the gudewife to consent to let him have the garret. Jean was set against his paints; she couldna bear the smell o' turpentine; but he laughed at her so frankly, an' declared that they had no smell; and, to please her, said he'd buy a big bottle of scented water to sprinkle about the house, if she ever did smell anything unpleasant. So Jean consented, and took to him in a very friendly manner.

"When they were putting the garret to rights, Mr. Hepburn discovered we had a bed at the end, and it came out that he would like to stay with us altogether, as he found it rather expensive living at the inn. An' so it came out, that the lad was very poor, and had a mother and a young sister to help.

"This was quite enough for Jean, especially when she found out that he was born in the same month

and year as our wee laddie Geordie, our only bairn. She took the matter in hand hersel', and all that I heard about the arrangement was, 'that the painter callant,' as she named him, was going to fetch his luggage that afternoon, and was to stay in the garret. The gudewife no sooner found out that the lad was troubled with a tickling cough, than she put on a fire, and pasted up every chink in the doors and the windows, till not a breath of wind could get in. And sometimes on wet days, when her work was over, she wad carry up my work, an' we would sit beside the lad, for he said he liked company that weel, an' ay got on better wi' his painting when he had folks to crack to. Jean got so fond o' him that when he wanted to see if he had painted an arm right, she would draw up her sleeve and hold her bare arm in ony shape he liked, for she made a grand model, as he ca'ed it. It ended in her allowing him to paint her in the big pieter, but in the act o' walking down the footpath, between her two wooden stoups, and with her back turned to the women, to show what Mr. Hepburn ca'ed her righteous indignation at their gossiping habits."

At this moment the worthy cobbler was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. White, who came to inquire if the boot was ready, "the stranger lad being impatient to get on his way again."

"Well, yes, it's done," said old George Wishart, pushing up his spectacles and surveying

his work with no little degree of satisfaction. "It has been the toughest job I've come across this mony a day. I dinna want to have another such like in a hurry."

"An' what's to pay, Geordie?" said Mrs. White, after she had praised the workmanship.

"O, weel, it's just one o' thae jobs a body canna put a price on," said the cobbler, rubbing his bald head. "If it had been the laird's boot now, I'd have charged him half a croon without a moment's hesitation. But you see the case is different when we hear that the boot belongs to a stranger, an' by its appearance we canna but see that he is poor. Aweel, as we are exhorted to be kind to the stranger, we'll charge the callant for an ordinary patch, and say tippence."

"Thank you kindly," said Mrs. White, receiving the boot and the change for the sixpence she had given. "I'm thinkin' if ye saw the puir lad, ye wad be glad ye've charged him sae moderately."

"Ah, it's naething but oor duty, gudewife, to be kind to the strangers within oor gates; there's no merit in that, as the minister wad tell ye," replied the cobbler, tumbling up a heap of old boots and shoes.

When Mrs. White was gone, he selected another for his next piece of work, — a child's boot. "There's one o' my ain making," he said, holding it up. "I dinna think I ever get as much pleasure

in making or mending ony boot or shoe as I do for the owner of this."

"And what makes you have such an affection for the wearer of this little boot?" I asked, laughing.

"Ye 'll maybe ken when I say it belongs to Miss Mary Hay, the doctor's niece," said the cobbler, stroking the front of the boot tenderly, as he stretched it on the last.

"And so little Mary is a friend of yours, too?" I replied.

"That's a pair way o' putting it, mem," said the cobbler, looking up abruptly, and stroking the boot caressingly. "Miss Mary is a friend of every man, woman, and bairn in the village, but it's weel kent that if she likes onybody mair than another in the hail village, it's me.

"She was a particular favorite of Mr. Hepburn's," he continued, "and mony's the day she spent up in the garrit above, learning to draw bits o' picters o' flowers, and auld houses, and bridges. I've two of them laid awa' in the tap drawer there that ye wad maybe like to see, for though she laughs at them hersel', and ca's them 'hideous attempts,' I like them brawly.

"Ay me!" he said, sighing heavily as he held the drawings before me, "weel do I mind the day I got them. The drawing o' them had been a sort of a secret, ye see. Miss Mary happened to ask when my birthday was, and to say how nice it was

to get presents on that day. When I told her I never had got a birthday present all my days, she was so surprised, and looked quite sorry, puir thing. Aweel, she spoke to Mr. Hepburn about it, and the twa had laid their heads together, and the upshot of it was the drawing of these two picters. My gudewife was let into the secret on the morning when I was to be presented with them, and she thought it proper to have what Miss Mary ca'ed a tea-party. I couldna understand what all the bustle and dusting and on-goings in the best room were for. When everything was ready, the gudewife tellt me to dress mysel' in my best suit, for we were to have company.

"Miss Mary sat at the head of the table and poured out the tea, with Mr. Hepburn to help her with the kettle. Sich a laughing the twa craters had, for Miss Mary wasna very weel up to the making of the tea, but Mr. Hepburn was grand at it, and between them we got on fine. Indeed, it was such a pleasure to see the wee thing pouring out the tea, that I took cup after cup, and I'm thinking Mr. Hepburn was of the same mind, for we drank every drop that could be squeezed out. All the time we were drinking our tea, there had been a queer noise, like a doug yelping and barking outside, and two or three times I had been on the point of rising to see what it was, but somehow I was put off by some o' them.

"Aweel, after the tea-things had been cleared

away, Miss Mary ran up the trap stair to the garret, and Mr. Hepburn went out at the back door, and in a minute or two they baith returned, Miss Mary carrying these picters, and Mr. Hepburn bringing in a wee hamper basket, an' I was told they were my birthday presents. On opening the basket, what should pop up its nose but a wee Scotch terrier pup,—sich a bonny wee thing, as round as a ball, and as soft as wool,—and that was Nettle. So you can imagine I was sair put about when the beast disappeared, and couldna be found. I'm sure I'm muckle obleeged to ye for the trouble you've taken to bring him hame. Miss Mary will be proud to hear pair Nettle has come back again."

At this mention of his name, Nettle stole from under the bed, and crept to his master's knee and lay down with his nose across his foot. It would have been almost laughable, had it not been pathetic, to see the cobbler, his work lying on his leather apron, and his spectacles pushed up on the top of his shining bald head, looking down with his honest black eyes—a little dim—upon the emaciated form of the little terrier.

"Nettle, my man," said his master, holding up a finger, "ye left me at an ill time, but I'll never believe ye left me of your ain free will. I ken ye better than that, my man. I only had *you* left to cheer me after the gudewife was gane, an' I needed ye sair, Nettle, as ye ken 't weel; but what

surprises me is, that ye did not find your way back sooner. I thought ye had mair gumption in ye than that."

Nettle here lifted up his head, and, looking full in his master's face, replied with a low moan. "That's strange," said the cobbler. "Nettle's but a dumb crater, but I'd wager a penny he means to say that he would have come back if he could have managed it. Ay, it's just in reason to think they took him some far way, across the sea — wha kens? See," he continued, stooping down and examining the dog's neck, "they've had him tied up, for the rope or the strap has worn off all the hair from his neck."

Here I was obliged to interrupt Geordie in his narrative; but I soon found an opportunity of calling on him again to hear the remainder of it. I found him, as usual, busy at work. He was humming to himself some psalm tune in a minor key, while Nettle lay stretched out before the smouldering fire, enjoying the peacefulness and quiet of his old home. As I entered, the dog gave a half-angry growl, but was hushed in a moment by his master's "Down, ye haverel! That's no like a doug o' your discernment, to mistake a freend and a benefactor for a foe. Fie, shame, I say."

After some conversation about Nettle, I said, "What has become of Mr. Hepburn now?"

"Become o' Mr. Hepburn?" he replied, in some

surprise. "O, I'm forgetting how fast the time flies, an' you havena been lang here. Puir lad, he died up in the garret three year ago. You see he had a nasty cough when he came, and though Jean, my wife, did her best to coddle him, as he called it, he wadna take proper care of himself, but sat painting at that picter o' his from early morning till there was scarcely a peep o' light left. If it hadna been for the gudewife he wadna have eaten a thing the hail day; but she would slip up with a boiled egg and a jug of milk, and some of her ain scones that he was so fond of, and as she would take no denial when once she had made up her mind to a thing, he was whiles forced to take the provisions to get rid o' her like.

"The picter was finished, not a moment too soon, mem. For on the last day but one, just as he was putting his finishing touches to it, he dropped down in a dead faint. Puir Miss Mary was aside him, sitting as still as a wee mousie in a corner, for she was almost as anxious about the picter as he was, and every moment she had to spare she spent up in the garret. I whiles used to creep up to the trap stair and pop my head through the hole in the floor just to have a peep at the twa. There she wad be sitting in a corner by the fire sewing at her bit o' fancy work, and making a pretence of rocking her doll to sleep in its cradle, for she was uncommon fond of her dolls, puir thing. It was a picter in itsel' to see

her watching Mr. Hepburn standing so white and thin-like, with his thumb through that thing he called a palette, and his een the size o' saucers, fixed on that weary picter. Whiles when he had to stop to cough, Miss Mary would look up sac vexed-like, and then would slip over to offer him a sugar-bool, which he would tak' with a smile that almost made me greet.

"But I'm slipping away from my story. Whar was I, mem? O, I mind I was telling ye he had fainted. Well, Miss Mary wasna the least feared, and was mair composed than Jean herself. And when I had fetcht her uncle the doctor, and he wanted her to go home, she begged so much to be allowed to stay, that he had to give in at last. Mr. Hepburn had to stop working for that day, but he and Miss Mary had their tea in his room, and a grand time they had o' laughing and chaffing. The next day he was just in his ordinary way, and that day the picter was finished. Very fine it looked, I can tell you, after it was put into its grand frame. He was that kind, puir man, he allowed everybody in the village to come and have a sight of it in the kitchen before it was sent away to the grand exhibition in Edinburgh. For one or two days after it was sent away, he wandered about and looked restless and anxious. And when the gudewife advised him to tak' a day in his bed, he just laughed and said he could not rest till he heard whether his picter was to be taken or sent back.

"The letter arrived at last, a great one, with a fine red seal on the envelope as big as a half crown. It was a' right, he said; they had accepted the picter, as weel they might. It would have been a crying shame if they had done otherwise. Strange to say, that now when we thought his mind would be easy, he got worse and worse. I often thought that the anxiety to get his picter done in time kept him up, but that when he felt his work was over, his strength gave way. We used to think it strange that he never spoke of going home to his own folks, now that there was nothing to keep him in the village. When it came out at last that his mother kept a boarding-school for young ladies, and that on this account he could not go there, he looked up with a half-frightened sort of a look, saying, 'But perhaps I'm intruding upon you; you may not be willing to keep me longer.'

"'Keep your mind easy, my man,' said the gude-wife. 'If ye find yoursel' comfortable here, ye're heartily welcome to stay, and the longer ye stay the happier I'll be for one, sir.'

"And so it was settled, and he stayed on, keeping his bed perhaps for a day or two at a time, and then being real cheery and well for days together, going about with Miss Mary to paint some auld crooked tree, or rather to draw them in his book, for his paints were all laid away now. He used to call these bits o' drawings studies, and naething

would serve the crater but he would make a study of my ain face, with a pair of specks on my head and anither on my nose, for I've a trick of shoving them up whiles, and then forgetting I've done it, and so to save time I take the spare pair I ay keep beside me. It pleased him and Miss Mary, puir things, and though I say it mysel', it was not unlike me. He had Nettle in his book in a great many positions. That was how the dog learnt a lot of his tricks, such as setting the tunes like the precentor, and so on. I canna tell ye how often he painted Miss Mary and her doll, and he was ay bribing some of the school-bairns to sit on that wee stoolie there, till he would make a study of them too. Yet busy though he was, and so cheery and nice to live with, he faded day by day, like the flower of the grass.

"But here comes Miss Mary up the road, and it will not do to let her hear me speaking of Mr. Hepburn; she greets that sair to this day at the very mention o' his name. It was a wee bit shock to her, puir thing, when he slippet away. Ye can see his grave in the westermost corner of the kirk-yard. He asked to be buried there, for it was so sunny, and looked out on the village green, where his picter was painted. Miss Mary keeps the grass bonny on the grave, an' she's planted some flowers about it. Ay, ye maun see the grave, it's a bonny pairt; and my Jean, puir woman, lies no far frae him. Yes, it's a bonny pairt."

"What's a bonny part, Geordie?" interrupted Miss Mary, coming in and saluting me, and apologizing for keeping me waiting.

"The garden, Miss — the manse garden," said the cobbler, with a glance at me to keep the secret, but looking quite as if he had been caught saying the most terrible thing imaginable.

"Now, Geordie Wishart," said Mary, shaking her finger at him, "you were not speaking of the manse garden; but of course I don't want to pry into your secrets. How's Nettle? *you* would n't keep a secret from me, my dear old doggie, for the world?"

"I'm no keeping ony secret from ye, Miss Mary," said the cobbler, in distress. "The mistress there will tell ye I'm no; but I didna want to vex ye, that was a'."

"Well, I'll forgive you," said Mary, laughing, "if you will show me your bantams. Since you are so grumpy, the sooner we leave you the better."

The bantams were now brought in, secured in an old bird-cage, and certainly they were a pair of beauties. To please little Mary, they were taken out of the cage and allowed to stretch themselves, and some grains of corn were sprinkled on the floor. All this time Nettle had been lying on the hearth, quietly surveying them with his nose on his paws. As they began to eat, he suddenly darted forward, and seized the little white hen by

the wing. He was just about to kill it, when the cobbler caught him by the throat and dragged him away, and pitched him to the end of the kitchen to await further punishment. No time was lost, therefore, in putting the bantams in the basket, and we sat down to recover from the fright. Mary and I had to cover our mouths with our handkerchiefs to prevent the worthy cobbler from seeing us smiling. There he sat with a pair of spectacles on the top of his bald head and one on the very tip of his nose, while the culprit, Nettle, was begging for mercy between his master's knees.

"I'll tell you what it is, Nettle, my man, — ye 've learnt some ill tricks during your absence. I'm no saying it's your fault, mind, for if ye were bidden to steal, or had to provide for yoursel', you maybe couldna help it. But what I say is this, ye're at home now, and mark me, such on-goings are not allowed here, else you and I will quarrel. Do you hear me, sir?"

Nettle, who had been hanging his head as if very much ashamed, now looked up, whimpering and moaning. "None of your sulks to me, sir," said the cobbler, angrily. "One would think you wanted folk to believe ye were very ill-used, instead of justly corrected. You used to bark and yatter when you were sorry before, and hold up your head not in that half-frightened manner. Such a hang-doug look I canna abide."

Mary and I interposed on poor Nettle's behalf. At last we got the worthy old man to believe that when the dog was restored to his usual health and strength, he would forget any bad habits he had acquired during his absence from home.

"Don't be very hard on him, Geordie, for a few days," said Mary; "he is so thin yet, poor dog, that no one could have the heart to beat him. I shall call to-morrow and take him for a short walk. I am sure it will do him good, and he won't be so naughty again."

"I hope so, too, Miss Mary," replied the cobbler; "but bad seed is easy to sow and very difficult to uproot from baith beast and body."

We carried the bantams home, Mary entertaining me with all the little scraps of news she had managed to pick up about the mysterious stranger whose boot Mrs. White had brought to Geordie Wishart.

After this I had to leave home for a few weeks, but on my return I did not fail to call at the worthy cobbler's, to inquire after the welfare of his dog. I could scarcely believe my eyes when, instead of seeing a thin emaciated skeleton, they fell upon a plump, sleek animal lying by the fire. Observing my look of astonishment, Geordie hastened to say, —

"Ay, mem, it's just the self-same doug, but I think he's somewhat improved."

"Improved! he's a perfect beauty. Where

did you manage to get such a pretty silky, curly coat, sir? I thought you were a smooth-haired dog."

"Weel, it was natural that you should," said the cobbler, evidently much pleased, "but you see whoever had him in their keeping had clippit his hair to prevent the cratur being known. At any rate, that's my opinion. But though he has got back his auld hairy coat, mem, and looks my Nettle every inch o' him, he's no like the same beast."

"Why, what is the matter with him? He seems to be enjoying good health."

"It's no his health; he's a' right there; it's his heart, mem, that's wrong. He's turned a perfect ne'er-do-well o' a doug. Ay, ye may look!" said Geordie, turning to the dog, who now sat up on the hearth-stone steadily watching his master. "It was only last night that he brought hame a grouse, after I had thrashed him within an inch of his life for bringing a rabbit. I took him into the garden, and I dug a hole, and laid the bird in it. I then thrashed him weel, and showed him the bird again, and then I covered it up. What do you think I saw when I looked oot this morning? — nothing more nor less than my dog Nettle with the earth scraped oot of the hole and busily devouring the grouse. I was that provoked that I felt inclined to kill him there and-then. But just as my hand was raised to throw my hammer

at him, I stopped, for he's a dumb crater, an' he's been learnt thae thievish tricks by the folk who stole him, and he's no responsible for his actions."

"And did you not whip him?" I asked.

"No," said the cobbler, "I thought it useless. I just took him in and spoke to him very seriously, after I had tied up the bird where he might see it. And when he came begging for his drop milk to his breakfast, I just shook my head and pointed to the bird. 'Look for your meat and your drink there, my man,' says I; 'as long as that bird hangs there ye'll get naething from me.'"

"And do you think it had the effect of subduing him?" I said.

"I think he understood I was angry with him at ony rate, for when I laid down the bird before his nose, he wadna look at it."

But after this visit to the cobbler's, several chickens and fat pullets disappeared. Strange rumors got afloat that a young fox had wandered from "the dell" down by the Brockly woods, where the fox-earths were, and had been twice seen slinking along a bean-field not far from the village. Every one declared it must be a fox, for no other animal could carry on his work with so much cunning and so little noise. All the good housewives for a mile round about the village had to be extra careful in fastening up their hen-houses. With all their care, a chicken was frequently amiss-

ing, and that, too, on the very night when the mistress had herself fastened up the door, and was certain the poultry were all secure inside. Of course it puzzled everybody how Mr. Reynard managed to get in, for the hole at the bottom of the door was much too small for a creature of his proportions. But in case he had the power of compressing his body into such a small space, that, too, was shut up. For a week or so this seemed to be effectual, and people were beginning to forget all about Mr. Reynard and his midnight visits, when one day one of my prettiest chickens disappeared in broad daylight. I had been flattering myself that hitherto I had been out of the fox's regular round; but when my little chicken was nowhere to be found, then I was forced to believe the fox had "carried it away to its den." One or two of my worthy neighbors laughed at me for supposing a fox would steal in open daylight, but as I could not account for the disappearance of my chicken in any other way, I determined to adopt the popular idea. What a number of chickens, hens, and even tough old "roosters," that fox devoured! Without a doubt, as Miss Mary said, "he must have had a very large family of little, hungry foxes at home."

There was no poultry yard in the whole district which escaped except Geordie Wishart's. This was a little strange, because Geordie had never shut up his hens. Indeed, he had no house to

keep them in, and they roosted at night in the branches of an old fir-tree at the end of the cottage. Once when I had expressed my surprise that his poultry had escaped when his nearest neighbor's had been taken, he replied, with a satisfied chuckle, —

“There's nae fear o' them, Nettle sleeps in the wood-shed; and if a fox should show its nose within a quarter of a mile, he would smell him oot. That's one of Nettle's new-fangled notions to sleep in the wood-shed. But it's a gude thing he had the fancy, for though I was a wee thing vexed with him for not sleepin' here, I'm glad now.”

Again the robber paid me a visit, and carried off my little bantam cock. I was very much distressed, and sought for it about the fields and lanes. While doing so I came upon two or three of the village children, and to my inquiry about it, one of them suddenly exclaimed, “It was maybe it that yon dog was rinnin' off wi'!”

“Was it a dog you have seen before, Jennie?” I said.

“It was a dark-colored beast, no very big,” said little Jennie, cagerly. “And it had a white thing hanging in its mouth. Did n't I say, Kirsty, that it was stealin'?”

“Ay,” said Kirsty, “I mind ye said that, and it looked sae feared and was rinnin' that fast.”

A day or two after this the children said they

had again seen a dog running away from the manse garden, with a chicken in his mouth. And as it was only too true that one of the birds was amissing, public opinion now became strong that the robber was a dog. Every one stoutly declared that they always thought it was a dog or a cat.

All the children were duly cautioned to keep a bright lookout for the robber dog. "If we do manage to get a grip of him, he should be tied up by the neck and publicly executed." It was the cobbler who spoke; and when a boy, with a very soft heart towards dogs, ventured to say "Puir beast!" by way of protest, Geordie turned almost fiercely upon him with a "What for no, sir? Do you want every chick an' chuck to be cleared oot o' the village? For that's about the way o't, now."

That afternoon in passing the cottage I called to inquire for the worthy cobbler and his terrier. "O, he's getting on fine, mem," said his master. "I'm glad to tell ye that he seems quite cured o' touching the grouse or the leverets. I've just one fault with him yet, — he takes up too much with these bodies that lodge in Widow Thomson's by the wester green. I dinna like to see my doug fleeing at the heels o' thae laddies. They've no a hail rag on their backs, and their ignorance is uncommon. But do as I like, Nettle will go with them. It's my belief he has gotten a liking for a

roving life, and there's ay a sort o' fellow-feelin' between a doug and laddies. But as I never see a feather nor a hair o' a rabbit about, I've come to the conclusion it's maybe best to let Nettle have some liberty, and as lang as he keeps within bounds just to let him be doing. A doug must have some recreation as well as a body."

Again the robber dog was seen hurrying through the stubble-fields with a hen in his mouth. On this occasion he was followed by half a dozen village urchins, who tracked him to the wood by the wester green, where he disappeared. One of them declared he had run into Widow Thomson's back yard, but as this was not confirmed by the others, they did not like to press the matter further. "At ony rate we've marked him," said one of the boys. "I gave him such a cut with a stane on the back, that we'll know him if he comes into the village."

A dog did appear in the village with the mark of a stone on his back. But as this was Nettle, the cobbler's terrier, and a great favorite of all the boys, no one thought of blaming *him*. "Puir beast," said the same boy who had marked the robber dog; "who's been meddling with ye? Hoo were ye hurt, Nettle, my man?" Then, after he had examined the wound very carefully, he continued, "It's been a stane. If I get hold of them that did that to ye, I'll throttle him!"

Next week, however, doleful to relate, Nettle,

the cobbler's terrier, was seen dragging a young hen from a hedge near the post-office. And when the poor victim squeaked, the dog in the most scientific manner fixed its teeth in its neck, and killed it outright. He then made off with it as fast as he could, before the astonished witness could raise a finger. Two boys met him close to the wester green, and saw him go up to Widow Thomson's back door, and deposit his burden at the feet of one of the widow's boy lodgers. Even yet, no one would believe the report, but spoke of there being perhaps another dog like Nettle which these boys might keep for the purpose. As this was a very likely idea, the village constable was ordered to search Widow Thomson's house the next day.

While he was busy doing so, stupid Nettle sealed his fate. Passing up the village, what should his sharp eyes fall upon but Miss Hay's gray and red parrot, hopping about the front plot! Everybody knew that Miss Hay, the doctor's sister, was particularly fond of her parrot, and indeed Poll was as great an institution as the doctor himself. Well, Nettle raised himself on his hind legs, and looked through the railings. As he did so, Poll paused in his promenade round the sweet-pea bed, and with his eye fixed sideways on Nettle's, he said, "You're a rogue. What's your business? I'll tell! I'll tell! O Cafoozalem!"

No doubt this remark struck home to the heart

of Nettle. And perhaps when he heard he was found out, he thought it would be a good thing to silence his accuser, and that he might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb. Whatever he thought no one can exactly say, but he sprang through the railings and tried to catch hold of Poll, intending to kill him outright. Nettle, however, found that Poll was not so easily caught as a stupid chicken or a sleepy-headed "rooster," and was prepared to sell his life, if need be, dearly. He flew at Nettle's head, and inflicted a severe wound in his right eye. Before the dog could recover, the parrot had bitten him on the ear, and in spite of his frantic snaps — for poor Nettle was half mad with the pain — he had pecked out his left eye, and fairly blinded him. Fortunately Miss Hay returned to the parlor and saw the scuffle. And with the assistance of the doctor's boy and the maid, Poll was captured, screaming all the time, "You're a rogue! you're a rogue!"

Nettle was carried home by the doctor's boy, a sorry sight. But, as his master said, it would have been well had Polly been able to lay him dead at her feet. Alas! Nettle only returned to find the policeman waiting to carry him away to an ignominious death.

"You said yoursel', Geordie, that the depre-dator was to be executed when found," said the constable. "Ye constituted yoursel' baith judge

and jury, and I think ye were angry when somebody proposed a more lenient verdict."

"I ken, I ken," was all the poor cobbler could say. "O Nettle, ye stupid, foolish doug, what would Mr. Hepburn have said to ye this day?"

"He would have washed the puir beast's face," said Tommy, the doctor's boy. "Mind ye, Poll's blinded him, it's a chance if he'll ever see again."

"Aweel, he'll no need much seein'; we'll shoot him at once," said the constable, stretching out his hand to take Nettle.

"Would ye have the heart to shoot a blind doug?" said Tommy, stoutly; "that would be like hittin' a man when he's doon. But here's Miss Mary comin'; we'll hear what she's got to say to it." And before any one could speak he had cried out, "Miss Mary, the policeman wants to shoot Nettle! Dinna let him; it's a shame when the doug's blind!"

It was settled as Tommy expected, in a very few minutes. "Shoot the dog! shoot Mr. Hepburn's Nettle! I should just like to see the man who would dare to do it. Poor dog, his eyes must be seen to directly. Give him to me, Tommy, and get some hot water. Run home for my soft sponge, there's a good boy."

Away went Tommy, casting a look of triumph from the corner of his eye, and whispering, "I kent she wadna let ye." When he returned, the policeman was gone. Geordie was on his knees

beside Miss Mary, who had Nettle in her lap, busily engaged cutting the hair away from his eyes. Nettle lost the sight of his left eye completely, and could only see very dimly with his right. But in course of time it is expected he will see a good deal better, though he will never have the full use of it. "Poor old dog," as Miss Mary said, when we went to see Nettle one day, "it must be very sad for you to be so blind."

"Aweel, Miss," replied the cobbler, "it may be sad, but it's better than being hanged or shot for a thief. He has time noo to repent of his wicked, bad habits."

"But you would never have allowed him to be shot, Geordie?" said Mary, in some surprise.

"That would I, Miss, as sure as my name is Wishart. Beyond a doubt he was the thief that stole all the hens. I'm glad he didna do it for his ainsel', but for the sake o' thae folk, and for a puir sickly wee lass that was in a decline. Widow Tamson tellt me Nettle liked her most uncommon. He's a thoughtless beast, but he's kind-hearted. But for a' that, Miss Mary, I'd hae shot him for his misdeeds."

"Then I'm very glad Poll made him blind," said Miss Mary; "but if you had shot him, Geordie, I would never have spoken to you again."

"Well, well, Miss, let's be thankful things have turned out as they have done. If you're pleased,

I'm pleased. And as for Nettle, he'll go no more stravaguein' about after other folks' poultry, but bide at hame like a gude sensible doug."

Nettle may now be seen lying on the mat at the door. No one looking at him there would ever believe he had been such a terror to all the poultry for miles round, but would say, "What a nice, well-behaved dog the cobbler's terrier is!"

THE ROOKERY.

A CROWD at the toll-bar house, another at the smithy door, and one or two boys gathered round an old gate-post, all intently gazing at one particular point, shows that something unusual is afoot. When one lives in the country, such a circumstance becomes an important event, and, of course, one feels bound to join the spectators, or, at least, to send to inquire why they have all turned out, not only to a man, but to a woman, — nay, even to the youngest baby. My maid Phemie, being very different from her predecessor Barbara, and fond of ferreting out all the news of the hamlet, did not require to be told twice to “see what was the matter,” but was gone before the words were half out of my mouth. She was longer away than I thought necessary, but at last returned with the information that it was “a roup,” and “the folk were busy reading the bills o’ t!”

“A roup! And what’s a roup, pray?”

“A roup, mem,” said Phemie, “div ye no ken what a roup is? jist a roup o’ farm things, ye ken.” And Phemie looked a good deal surprised at my

ignorance, but seeing I was no wiser for her information, she continued, "The auction man is coming on Wednesday to sell off the farm things at Edenside, for auld Mr. Beeton has to leave his farm, they 're saying."

"Then a roup is a sale by auction?" I replied. "Mr. Beeton? is that the old farmer who has the very white hair, and who has the large rookery close to his house?"

"The same, mem," said Phemie, "an' that's ane o' the things they 're speaking about, for Mr. Beeton thinks a great heap o' thae craws, and has managed somehow to tame a wheen o' them, so that they 'll hap doon when he cries on them, and when he spreads oot the meat on the grass, they 'll pick at it wi' the doos."

"Why is he leaving?" I asked; "did you hear any reason given?"

"I might hae heard something," said Phemie, slyly, brushing away at the grate, "but that wad hae been prying into my neebors' affairs, an' as I ken that is a thing ye hae an unco horror o', mem, I cam directly to tell ye what the folks were looking at, there being no harm in that as far as I can see."

"You are quite right, Phemie," I said; "I do not like you to pry into people's affairs." Yet I own I felt a little provoked at the girl, and could n't help drawing a comparison between my Barbara and her, a little to the disparagement of the latter.

When I went out to walk in the forenoon, I purposely strolled past the smithy. The worthy smith not being busy just then, he having only a horse to shoe, did not seem, like Phemie, unwilling to satisfy my curiosity.

"Ay, it's a great peetic that things hae come this length wi' Mr. Beeton," said the smith, paring away at the horse's hoof. "He's an honest man, and the farm has been in the possession of his forbears for lang years back. Ye see, mem, he lost siller wi' the doonfa' o' ane o' the banks, and it took him a' he could to keep his head above water, as the saying is. Then cam' the cattle plague, and a' his beasts died, or had to be killed, and so the lang an' the short o't is, he's had to sell his place."

"I heard that was a parcel o' havers," said the man who was holding the horse.

"Ay, an' what's your version o' the story?" said the smith, with a perceptible sneer. "If I'm wrang, I dinna stand alane; it's jest what a' body says, an' I gang wi' the lave."

"I was tellt by Tom M'Gilvray himsel', that there was no need to sell the farm whatever. Now that Mr. John is dead, and the twa young ladies, his sisters, dinna incline to the farming, but would rather hae the siller divided atween them, the maister had considered it best to sell the property."

"It's a' very well for Tom M'Gilvray to say

that, mem," replied the smith, "seeing he's the greeve o' Edenside, but his story is no a very likely ane, — especially as Mr. Beeton is going to live at Monkshome, another farm of his, and no a quarter the size o' the Edenside property."

"And who has bought Edenside?" I inquired.

"O, that's the thing that dings me!" said the smith, somewhat wrathfully, giving the shoe an extra hard tap, which made the horse restive, and caused both the men to cry out, "Stand, haud still there!"

"It's a queer warld, mem," continued the smith, "and for my part I canna understand how things are allowed to happen, unless it be to show us, and the hale warld forbye, the fleetin' nature o' riches. Here's auld Mr. Beeton has been Beeton o' Edenside and Monkshome for generations, and here's a man they ca' Jeffrey, a writer in the market-toon, that began as ane o' the office laddies, withoot æ sixpence to rub against another, and noo he's bought Edenside, an' will be Jeffrey o' Edenside in the room o' ane o' the auldest families in the country. It's waesome to think o't."

"But perhaps Mr. Jeffrey has earned his position by his industry and perseverance," I replied, "and may make as good a landlord as any other stranger."

"O, I'm no saying but what he may," said the smith. "But I've my ain doubts as to his industry and his other qualities being at the bottom o'

it. Leave thae lawyers alane; they ken how to feather their nests, and how to butter their bread on both sides. I ken Mr. Jeffrey fine; they say he's a clever lawyer, but what I dinna like about him is, he's prood and upsettin' to a degree. Now in my opinion, a man wha rises frae the ranks, so to speak, should conduct hinsel' wi' humility, especially in the presence o' the like o' Beeton o' Edenside."

"There's no pride about him," said the man, preparing to take the horse homie.

"No, ye're right there," said the smith heartily; "at ony rate none o' yer stuck up pride; but what would be the use o' 't? A' body kens a Beeton is a Beeton, but the like o' thae Jeffreys hae to stuff their siller in folks' een to mak' them forget what they rose frae. I'm perfectly wild when I think Edenside is to pass into his hands."

A day or two before the sale, having heard there was to be some choice poultry sold privately, I went over to Edenside to see them. On reaching the farm, I found the people at the lodge-gate were also preparing to remove. It was a clear day in the month of November, and though the frost was keen, the sun was strong, and made walking pleasant. I was about to pass on to "the big house," when my attention was drawn towards an old woman, sitting in the sunshine on a rude bench at the end of the house. She was swinging backwards and forwards, talking quietly to her-

self, and looking very disconsolate. "Puir Sam'l," I heard her say, "my Sam'l's floors!" And she sighed heavily.

"You have got a fine day for your removal," I said, walking over beside her.

"O, ay," she responded, "the weather is no that ill, but the day is onything but a fine ane to me."

"You are vexed to leave the old place, I dare-say," I replied, sitting down beside her. "I don't wonder at it, for it is a sweet spot. You must have an abundance of flowers here in summer."

"They're all Sam'l's," said the old woman, with a slight lifting up of her head, and a drawing back of her bent body, as if the thought was a very dear one to her.

"He seems to have them very nicely trimmed, and has managed to keep them blooming for a long time."

"Are you speaking o' Sam'l, mem?" said old Mrs. Gillon, turning and fixing her eyes on me with a dull, heavy look peculiar to old people.

"Yes; did n't you say they were his flowers?" I replied.

"Ay, they *were* a' his," she said, "but they're no his now, for my Sam'l's dead," and she rocked herself slowly backwards and forwards, once more saying to herself in a whisper, "My bonnie laddie, my Sam'l's floors! Did you no ken him, mem?" she asked suddenly. After I had explained that I was a comparative stranger in the neighborhood,

she launched out into such a strain of praise, that I knew Sam'l had been very dear to his grandmother.

"The maister used to tak' that muckle notice o' him, mem," she went on to say, "but, you see, Sam'l was a by ordinar laddie, fond o' his books, and never wasting his time on foolish nonsense and play. The young leddies used whiles to say we let him read ower muckle; that a wee thing o' play was a guid thing for laddies at his age; but Sam'l had plenty o' the fresh air working among his floors, and he keepit them pretty. He was awfu' fond o' spinks and wallflower, and d'ye see that fuchsja, mem? He got a prize at the flower-show for 't, but that wasna the only ane. Ye see, mem, his forbears were a' gardeners, and he had it in him."

"I don't wonder at your being vexed to leave the place," I said. "I suppose the new proprietor is bringing his own people?"

"Ay, but if he hadna, we wadna hae stoppit; na, though John, my son, got a better offer frae the new laird. Says he to Jeanie his wife, 'Na, lass, the maister has need o' me at the new place, an' gin it were double the siller, I'll gang wi' him. Jeanie wasna very pleased, for you see, mem, though she's a guid wife and mither, she's gotten to be a wee thing uppish in her notions, an' is ower fond o' ful de rals and nonsense. Ay, mem, they talk about the improvement o' the age,

a' body's sae clever, ye ken; but div ye no see it's knocking out the word thrift frae the knowledge o' folk a' thegither? In my young days we were made to gang oot and gather the rushes; I needna say *made*, for we liket it fine, and we wad come hame as happy as ye like, and peel them, and break them into lengths for the cruse. That's the auld-fashioned wee oil lampie, ye ken, — ye'll see them on the pictures o' the wise and fuilish virgins. Then we made spunks enough to serve a' the winter; but noo folk will no be content wi' them, but maun hae their boxes o' safety matches. I'm wae for folk whiles, when I see such thriftlessness. And jist look at the claes workin' folk o' the present time maun hae. No content wi' a bit neat plain bonnet and a strip o' ribbon, they maun ape their betters, and stick on feathers and gum-flowers, walk about wi' muffs and veils on their faces, and jest look like a wheen senseless haverels. Will they hae onything laid by, think ye, either for their marriage or for a rainy day? No very likely."

At this moment old Mrs. Gillon was interrupted by a crow suddenly alighting among the flowers, which turned her attention from the thoughtlessness of the age to her master's concerns. "Ay me, but that's ane o' Mr. Beeton's tame crows; puir cratur, ye'll miss a freend afore lang, I'm thinking."

The crow strutted about looking up at Mrs.

Gillon, spreading out its large glossy black wings as if about to fly, and then apparently changing its mind. At the end of her speech, the crow gave an appropriate caw, as if in reply, which drew out from her the further remark, —

“They are strange sort o’ birds, thae craws. Some folk think them real stupid and dull, but my opinion is they’re real wise. I’ve heard they dinna like to be disturbit, and I’m thinking the saying is a true ane, for thae twa three days hae the whole lot o’ them been sitting up in the tap o’ the trees, and I’m much mista’en if there is no some great lot o’ wark afoot. Puir Sam’l used to like to sit here and watch them, particlerly on the Sabbath days when he was past going to the kirk. He wad say the craws were haudin their kirk, and that there was ae big crow, that was the minister, wad sit further up, and utter a ‘caw caw’ by himself, he wad say, and a’ the rest wad sit quite quiet listening. Then they wad a’ join at times in a grand cawing match, and this, he said, was their singing. Well, I’ve been noticing that they’ve been sittin’ unco quiet and douce like this twa three days, jist breaking out into a big caw at times, but there’s ay one cawin’ by himsel’, and whiles there’s a bit answer frae ae bird to the other, jist for a’ the world as if they were haudin’ a grand meetin’, and the business was particlar.”

As I walked slowly up to the house, I looked at the crows, not a little amused at this idea of

Mrs. Gillon's, and wondering if these solemn caws indicated that the birds were really discussing something of importance. But the crows were forgotten in a short time, and might have been lost sight of altogether, had not a circumstance afterwards occurred which brought to mind my conversation with Mrs. Gillon.

The poultry were really beautiful. I bought some, and arranged that I should send for them on the evening before the sale. Accordingly, fearing that my maid Phemie would not carry them carefully enough, I accompanied her. It was a clear frosty night, with just a slight peep of the late moon showing in the east. As we approached the house we observed an old man standing by the open doorway, talking to what we supposed was a dog. On drawing nearer, however, it turned out to be a crow strutting about on the gravel as if it had been broad daylight.

"A most extraordinary thing for you to be out of bed at this time of day, Jackie," we heard old Mr. Beeton saying. "Come, come, sir, you fly away home, or Master Puss may play you a trick, and leave his mark on you as a parting legacy. Ay, Jackie," he continued, with a sigh, "I wonder if you'll miss us when we leave the old place."

Jackie paused in his promenade, looked sideways at his friend, and cawed three times in a most solemn manner. I am certain, from what afterwards happened, he was saying, in his crow

language, "Keep your mind easy, sir; you and I don't lose sight of each other just yet. Leave that to me."

Becoming aware of our presence, Mr. Beeton came forward to meet me, while Jackie the crow flew up with a flip-flap of his heavy black wings and an angry caw, as if resenting the interruption. Phemie having gone round to the back door for the poultry I had purchased, I began to talk to Mr. Beeton about his large rookery.

"You are fond of animals yourself," he said, smiling, apparently glad to meet with an enthusiast like himself. "I think I shall miss the cawing of the rooks more than anything else when I awaken in my new quarters. We have n't got a single nest down at Monkshome."

"They are birds I have never taken much notice of," I replied; "but, I suppose, one can get pleasure from them, when one becomes acquainted with their habits and manners."

"O, yes, they are exceedingly interesting, especially when they are building their nests," said Mr. Beeton. "The bird you saw just now got his leg broken, and I managed, with the aid of one of my daughters, to mend it. We kept him in the house till it was quite well; and he became so very tame, that he followed me like a dog. Even now he comes down occasionally to walk about with me; but I never saw him do so at night before."

"I wonder if he was the same one I saw in Mrs. Gillon's garden the other day ; there was one hopping about as if quite at home among the flowers."

"Amongst 'Sam'l's flowers?'" said Mr. Beeton, smiling. "Yes, it would just be Jackie ; he was very fond of poor Samuel. It was a trying time for the old grandmother to have to say good-bye to the flowers the boy took such delight in tending. She left yesterday," he continued, in answer to my question ; "but, I understand, she was comforted a little by my youngest daughter giving her a large basketful of Sam'l's particular favorites, to plant in their new garden, and, I believe, she said she was quite contented to go, now that she had the flowers with her." The last glimpse I caught of her, the good woman was perched on the top of the cart, with a large fuchsia in her arms.

After the farm implements and stock had been sold off at Edenside, other bills appeared on the gate-posts and about the village, intimating that a portion of the household furniture was likewise to be sold off, on the Wednesday of the following week. This notice caused an extraordinary amount of agitation in our little hamlet, as well as in all the little villages for miles round. The sale of the farm produce was a natural circumstance, but that of the furniture was quite a different thing. None but farmers attended "the roup," where no females were expected to appear ; but "the auction" was for all classes.

For some days a great amount of speculation as to the reason of this new step on the part of the Beeton was indulged in ; and the bills that had been posted up on gate-posts and prominent gable-ends were read, not once, but many times, — a sale being by no means an every-day occurrence in our remote hamlet.

At an early hour on the morning of the sale, I, along with a friend, went to Edenside. Presuming upon our experience of town sales, we thought the company would be rather promiscuous, and dressed ourselves in the plainest way possible. We thought the good wives and lasses of the villages would come attired in their short gowns and petticoats, with strong field-boots and clean sun-bonnets or caps ; but we never were more mistaken. As the hour approached, they came flocking up the avenue by twos and threes, with bonnets of the most fashionable shape, trimmed with ribbons of all the colors of the rainbow, good winter dresses, and handsome plaids or mantles ; while their thick boots had been exchanged for those of a thinner make. Some had veils, and one or two even had muffs, which made me think of old Mrs. Gillon's disparaging remarks about such articles for "country folk." The preparations for the auctioneer had done mournful damage to the well-kept lawn, with its beds of flowers, and some of Mr. Beeton's admirers were saying it was as well that he and Miss Margaret did n't see it.

Tom M'Gilvray, the grieve, was present, officiously assisting. The two respectable-looking maid-servants also remained to aid and take care of the more fragile articles, while the village carpenter took the leading part in the arrangements. Old Sandy Dawson, the carpenter, is a humorist in his way, though he seems to be quite unconscious of the fact. When any one is unable to refrain from laughter at Sandy's old-fashioned, witty remarks, he stares with the most innocent expression of astonishment in his mild blue eyes.

Sandy had taken great pains to arrange the furniture, which was to be sold off on the lawn instead of in the house. He had taken extra care with the erection for the auctioneer. The kitchen dresser had been pulled out to the lawn with no little difficulty, where he had it placed at the foot of the steps, behind which old Sandy intended that the chief functionary should stand. The grounds were quite full of people when the auctioneer made his appearance, apparently quite aware that he was regarded as the great man of the day. Having glanced at the preparations with a critical eye, he briskly and self-complacently took up his position on the *top* of the dresser, to the intense disgust of old Sandy, the expression of whose face was ludicrous in the extreme as he turned to where I was standing in the lobby along with a select few.

"I meant him to stand respectable-like on the

front steps, wi' the porch ower him like a pulpit ; an' here he 's gane an' jerk it up upon the dresser-head like a cheap John at a fair ; it 's awfu' daft-like."

Sandy was somewhat mollified, however, when I whispered in reply "that the auctioneer, being so little, he might fancy he would not be seen unless from an elevation."

"Ye're maybe no far wrang, mem," he chuckled ; "he canna boast o' muckle buik, though he tries to mak' the maist o' himsel', growing that lang ugly red beard."

It was a dull, moist day, though not rainy, but patiently the good folks stood and faced it out. They might have forgotten the ground was damp and the air chilly, if the auctioneer had only been a little more sprightly ; but he had not the slightest degree of humor about him, — no, not even when the opportunity was thrust under his very nose by Sandy Dawson, and again by the rooks overhead. They flew, and fluttered, and cawed, and flapped their wings, as if determined to drown his voice altogether, the caws coming in a most provoking way, as if in reply to his repeated calls of "Going, going, gone!" No, the man was immovable, and rather seemed to frown at any small outbreak of mirth, as if he wished the people to feel miserable. It was pleasant from the doorway, where I was standing, to look out at that mass of homely faces. There stood our village smith, his countenance as bright as soap and water

could make it, grinning amiably all around. There also was the village tailor, with his signet ring on his finger, and the grocer with his apron tucked up out of sight under his surtout.

After one o'clock the real business commenced, for the school-master had granted a half-holiday, no doubt anxious to be present himself; and thus a fresh impetus was given to the scene. Though I was kept in a state of mental terror lest any of the urchins should get a spike run into them as they sat or stood on the top of the iron railings, still they added greatly to the cheerfulness of the company, and the bidding seemed to improve from that very fact. At first it had been attempted to sell the things in some sort of order; but with Sandy Dawson at the head of affairs that was soon found to be impossible, and the auctioneer was compelled to take whatever came to hand most readily. When the carpets were produced, an old woman, the mother of the village chimney-sweeper, who lives in about the meanest house in the village, made herself conspicuous by bidding for the drawing-room one. Regardless of the warning hints from those around her, she bade on as if her very life depended on her securing it, till she had run it up to three shillings and sixpence the square yard. "What in a' the world is Jenny wantin' wi' a Brussels carpet, forty-twa yards a'thegether? The wife's in a creel," we heard a woman saying to her neighbor.

A young man at last arrested the attention of the old woman, and put the question that was in everybody's mouth, while the auctioneer paused to listen to her answer. "Hoots!" we heard her say; "I'll send it in a present to my dochter Annie. I'm no cairin' if it gangs as high as ten shillings; it's a cheap carpet."

The auctioneer's voice sounded sharp and querulously in reply. "Is the woman aware it is three shillings and sixpence the square yard?"

No, of course not! The woman was in the firm belief it was the price for the whole carpet, and she naturally shuddered when it was explained to her, poor woman! and shrunk away with a horror-stricken countenance, as if she had escaped from some fearful injury. She must have asked some of the arithmetical school-boys on the railing what the carpet would have cost had the forty-two yards been knocked down to her at three shillings and sixpence the square yard. We saw a dozen hands hard at work counting fingers, and then came a simultaneous shout of "Seven pounds seven shillings!" It was certainly a narrow escape for old Jenny.

The next article put up, a small chest of drawers, I was anxious myself to buy; and I was beginning to think I was almost sure of it, for my one opponent showed signs of giving up the fight, when I was arrested by the warning voice of Sandy.

"Bid *one* shilling more, but no another penny;

they are auld cratur. Losh keep me! are ye laughing again? Weel, ye may believe me or no, — please yersel'; but they are as auld as the hills, and, what's mair, they are bad wi' the dry-rot."

I allowed the drawers that were "bad wi' the dry-rot" to become the property of the stout-looking farmer near the gate; while Sandy, having turned his back upon the auctioneer and his face to me, opened his mouth and shut it with a snap, which I was to understand was intended as a mark of his approval.

"Ay, the auld fule, he fancies he gotten a bargain. Aweel, he's able to afford the loss, though it's doubtful if he'll ever open his purse-strings to buy new anes, for there's no a harder man in a' the parish than Kelsyth o' Craily."

After this, Sandy gave me his opinion upon every article that was put up, as though he supposed I meant to purchase the whole of the furniture that remained. "Bid for that," he would say, with a knowing twist of his honest gray eye, "it's gude and substantial to a faut; nae dry-rot there, I'se warrant. Catch Sandy Dawson mak' use o' wud that's likely to fashed wi' that trouble. Bid awa', there! it's my ain mak', and I'll answer for't." Or at other times he would screw up his lips and his left eye, and utter those two words in a whisper, "Auld cratur."

When the last article had been sold, the auctioneer retired to the dining-room to receive payment,

and we lingered outside till the crowd had somewhat diminished. While we were talking to one of Mr. Beeton's servants, we noticed an old woman slipping in by the back door, close at hand, — an old woman with a face bearing many traces of care on it. She stole silently up to the maid-servant, — for she did not appear to walk in the ordinary way, — and we heard her say, "Thae's changed times, Janet, for the auld hoose. It's weel that the maister and the misses didna see hoo their things were hauled aboot and keeked at. I could hae ta'en that daft haverel, John Muir, a crack i' the side o' the heed, when I saw him laughin' at the chair the mistress used to sit in, — ay, but thae's changed times."

"Ye may say it, Tibbie," replied the servant; "but the furniture is no o' any service tae the mistress noo. We canna tak' oor bits o' possessions wi' us whar she's ganè tae," said Janet, solemnly, as became a servant of Edenside to speak, though there was a tear in her eye nevertheless.

Tibbie answered, "Ye're right there, Janet, my woman; it's a blessed thing to ken that the mansions aboon are a' furnished ready for the faithfu' to stap in. But, Janet, I've bought something mysel', and ye'll no guess what it is!"

Janet looked, not without astonishment, into the old woman's face, as she replied, "You, Tibbie!" thus proving that Tibbie was a person

whose funds were considered to be at a very low ebb. There was an expression of pleasure for a moment on the old woman's face, as she said, "Ay, me, Janet; I've bought the auld bird-cage; the man knocked it down to me for threepence, though I was ready to pay a hale saxpence for 't."

When Janet had further expressed her surprise at such a purchase, and asked Tibbie what she meant to do with it, she said, "I'm no going to dae onything wi' it; it's no an ordinary bird-cage, woman. Did I no see the auld mistress — that was afore your time, Janet — stanin' afore that very cage, cheepin' to her yellow canary when she was stickin' the bit lumpie o' loaf-sugar in atween the wires? Ay, Janet, woman, it was the last time my eyes ever beheld her; an' she was the kindest freend I had on earth. And when I saw the bit cage put up, says I to mysel', 'I'll hac that if it should cost me my last bawbee, for the sake o' her that's awa'."

At that moment Janet became aware that a dozen village urchins were scampering about the empty rooms overhead, and she hurried away, glad, I thought, to hide the tears that were glistening in her eyes. We got another glimpse of Tibbie and her precious purchase, standing beside our friend Sandy Dawson, who was examining it with a critical but kindly eye. "Just you bring it yont to the shop, Tibbie," he said, in what he intended to be a whisper. "I'll mend the wires

for ye; an' we'll maybe manage to get a canary-bird or a bit lintie tae put in't; for it's rather daft-like to see a cage without a bird in't."

It was refreshing in the midst of the confusion to witness that little bit of kindly feeling on the part of the worthy carpenter. I can only wish that all sales brought up as little of the sordid and the vulgar as did the sale at Edenside.

"Tibbie's a woman that can boast o' having a history," said Sandy Dawson to me, as he passed into the house. "Ye're fond o' a story, mem, and I'd advise ye whiles to mak' a ca' at her cottage down by the Moutry burn; ye'll be greatly edified." In reply to my statement that I would do so the first time I was in that neighborhood, he went away, saying, with a laugh, "I thought as much."

The excitement of the sale was soon over. The new proprietor, Mr. Jeffrey, had taken possession of Edenside, though he and his family were not to reside in it for a week or so. Mr. Beeton was at Monkshome, and people had ceased to talk about him and his affairs. Berry, the smith, however, kept up his animosity, and was fond of relating little stories about the "lawyer body," as he called Mr. Jeffrey. He almost quarrelled with me outright for saying one day Jeffrey of Edenside, and corrected me by replying, "It's Beeton o' Edenside, mem, as long as the auld man lives; ye may say Jeffrey wha bides there, if you like."

One day as I was going down the road, Mr. Jeffrey passed the smithy on horseback, without taking the slightest notice of the worthy smith by word, look, or act. "See to that, mem," he said, when I came up to where he was standing. "There 's a man wha fancies he 's a gentleman, an' he doesna ken hoo to be ceevil to folk. When wad Beeton o' Edenside have passed by without a kindly 'gude day to ye'?' It's nae wonder that the very craws hae ta'en a thrawn fit at him."

"What 's the matter with the crows now?" I asked, trying to prevent a smile.

"Is 't possible ye havena heard the news? O, I forgot, ye 've been frae hame a week. Weel, mem," he continued, "I 'se tell ye the story as I got it. The first night that Mr. Jeffrey had full occupation o' the place, he was walking aboot in the moonlight, looking over everything — taking, so to speak, what he wad ca' an invent-ry o' the place, doon to the very grass and stanes; and says he to himsel' loud out in the hearing o' Jock Tamson, turning round, in the fulness o' his heart, 'This house is my house,' and he gaed a wave wi' his right han'. 'This lawn is my lawn,' says he. 'These trees are my trees,' pointing up to the fine auld timber that had grown up wi' the Beetons frae auld days lang syne; and he struts about like a peacock, jesting away. At that moment some o' the craws began to caw, caw, an' says the stupid cratur o' a lawyer body, 'These crows are

my crows.' It was sinfu', to say the least o't, as if the birds o' the air belanged to onybody but their Maker, and could be bought and sold wi' the lave. Aweel, mem, ye see the craws have been awfu' put about wi' the noise and confusion, a thing they canna thole; and ye ken there's been a flittin' again at Edenside just after they had a sort o' settled. So the very next morning after this presumptuous speech, there wasna a neb or a feather o' them to be seen about Edenside, believe me or no, as ye like."

"Why, what has become of them?" I inquired, with astonishment.

"Weel, mem," said the smith, with a chuckle of delight, "the nighest wood to this is the wood about Monkshome; and what did the wise cratures do but flew away there, and though it's no jist biggin time yet, they maun hae made up their minds to settle there, for feint a ane o' them has lookit near Edenside a' this week. I'm thinking Mr. Jeffrey, wha bides at Edenside, will find out that though his siller bought the house and trees, the Rookery wasna included in the bargain."

It was only too true, for, to Mr. Jeffrey's discomfiture, Edenside rookery became a thing of the past. The old nests may still be seen in the topmost branches of the trees, but the slumbers of the inmates of the big house are never disturbed by a single caw.

Last spring the woods about Monkshome were

alive with the bustle of building a new settlement, and even the three trees close to the house had been chosen by a select few. I have not discovered yet whether Jackie is amongst the number; but as our worthy smith says, it is a good thing for Mr. Beeton that the birds were so wise, for the sound of their cheery cawing makes the old man feel quite at home in his new quarters.

I was down in that direction one fine spring day, when the crows were hard at work building, and amongst other things I rejoiced to see that "Sam'l's floors" were blooming even more luxuriantly than they did at Edenside, to the intense delight of his worthy grandmother.

THE POACHER'S FERRET.

"ANY rabbit or hare skins, mum?"

A I was walking in the avenue, and had turned round to see who asked the question, when I saw a man with a fur cap, a worn velveteen shooting-coat, and an old sack over his shoulder. A very pleasant and cheerful-looking face, with the merriest twinkling black eyes, met mine from under the peak of the fur cap, and I almost felt sorry I had no hare skins to dispose of.

"Fine tARRIER of yours, missus," he next said, pointing to my little terrier Missy, who, instead of barking, as was her custom with such intruders, kept sniffing suspiciously at him and his bag. "I should say now, mum, she will be first-rate for vermin, — that is to say, mum," he explained, seeing my slight start, "for rats and such like."

"Well, I am happy to say, her powers in that way have never been put to the test," I replied, smiling.

"You've no rats about, then, mum?" he said. "That's a pity, now, for I'm a rat-catcher to my trade; likewise moles, — in course, at the season,

— and I have as fine a ferret in my pocket for the purpose as ever a man had. I'd like to have had a trial with your tarrier."

I was almost horrified at the idea of being so close to such a dangerous animal as a ferret, — feeling a kind of fascination of the eye towards an evident bulge in the breast of the man's coat, where there was a pocket-hole, — happily secured by a button. Seeing I was really alarmed, he very politely wished me good-day, and took himself off in the direction of the smithy, whistling cheerily, and, in spite of all that I could do, followed by Missy, still keeping up a vigorous sniffing and snuffing round about him.

As Missy was in the habit of roaming about the country at her own sweet will, I was not in the least distressed when she did not appear till late that afternoon. I was a little surprised, however, to see her return in a most dishevelled condition, wet and ruffled, besmeared with mud and sand, and apparently quite worn out. Scarcely had she flung herself down on the hearth-rug at my feet, when Phemie, my maid, came in to say that there was a terrible commotion in the village. A poacher had been caught by the gamekeeper down in the Den, "red-handed in the act," as she said, and they were going to take him away by the next train to the police-station. "It's my belief, mem," said Phemie, "it's the same man that was round in the morning speerin' for rabbit skins."

I was preparing to go by train to the next village at any rate, and I hastened down a little anxious to discover if it really was the rat-catcher; for I knew well the gamekeeper was exceedingly strict about his game, and seldom allowed a trespasser to get off. I went into the office and got my ticket, taking no notice at first of the group outside; but when I turned I saw it was too true, — the man in custody was my friend of the morning.

"Now, what I say, Bryce, is this," I heard Hugh Roy say, addressing Alec Bryce, the gamekeeper. "I never saw a poacher without a dog or a gun, and this man has neither the one nor the other."

The gamekeeper, being a single man, lodged with Hugh Roy, and as they were boon companions, this remark seemed to have some weight, and Alec released his hold of the man's arm.

"I don't want to be hard on him," said Bryce; "but what I say is this: He was down in the Den, a place where he had no business to be, and I could have sworn I saw a dog creeping under the bushes; at any rate, he has a ferret in his pocket, and a newly-caught rabbit in his bag."

"I'll not deny that I have a ferret," said the man, showing a portion of the animal from his pocket, "but I deny that I have a dog. As for being in the Den, as you call it, I got off the right footpath, and wandered on, thinking I could get up to the farm on the other side by a nearer cut;

and as for the rabbit, I knocked it down with my stick a mile away from the Den, as it ran across the high-road. I've a sick wife at home, and I thought she'd be much the better of it, and the laird would be little the worse."

"A very likely story," said Berry, the smith, who had a horror at poachers.

"Tuts, what a fuss to make about a rabbit!" said Hugh Roy. "Let the man off this time, and I'll be bound he'll never trouble you or the Den either."

"He's gotten a sick wife, too, — mind that, Gamie," said another man on the outside of the group. "You'll be having that yoursel' some o' these days, so dinna be hard on him."

This reference to the gamekeeper's bachelor state made everybody laugh, and take a kindlier view of the matter; seeing which, Hugh Roy drew Alec aside, and said a few words to him. What influence he brought to bear upon his lodger I cannot say, but the man was told he would be set at liberty this time, on condition that he never showed himself in the neighborhood again. Wishing to show his gratitude, no doubt, the rat-catcher insisted upon presenting Bryce with his ferret, which at last, after some persuasion, was accepted.

"You'll be kind to him," said the rat-catcher, stroking the animal tenderly, as it lay scared, and blinking its pink eyes at the light, in its new master's hands. "You'll find it hasna its equal for

rats." Then, with a "Thank you for your sarvice" to Hugh Roy, he jumped into the train, which had now come up. When I got out at the junction, and was walking along the platform, the rat-catcher was standing beside his bag, which seemed to be rather empty. Observing that I recognized him, he touched his fur cap politely, and said, "A pleasant afternoon, mum." I made a few inquiries about his wife, and saw by the man's face he must have been speaking the truth.

"It's a lucky thing for me I got off, mum," he said. "I do believe if the missus had heard I was put up for trespassing, it would have been the death of her. It was rather a stupid thing of me to do, mum, but you see your tARRIER followed me, and I could n't get above the temptation of trying her mettle."

My horror and distress can easier be understood than described, to find that my own little dog, Missy, was in reality the poacher. When I returned home, in spite of her squeaking and whimpering, I caused Phemie to give Missy such a scrubbing as she will not forget in a hurry.

But this was by no means the end of the poacher's ferret, as you shall hear. A few days after this, Phemie was sent to the dairy for milk, but she stayed so long that I was beginning to think something had happened, and was preparing to go in search of her, when she appeared.

"O, mem! dinna flyte (scold) on me," she ex-

claimed, in answer to my indignant remark about her absence. "As I was passing the Roys' house, out cam' Mrs. Roy, greetin' and going on like a demented body for a' the world."

"Why, what was wrong with her?" I asked, becoming interested in spite of myself.

"That's just the very words I made use o', mem," replied the incorrigible Phemie, glad apparently to see I was softening a little. "Says I, 'Mrs. Roy, what's wrong? Is Hugh or any o' the bairns deed?'"

"'Haud your tongue, Phemie lass,' says she; 'you've gien me a grue. There's nothing the matter wi' the bairns; and as for Hugh, though he's awa' frae hame the noo, it's to be hopit he's safe enough.'

"'Then what's wrong?' says I again," continued Phemie, who was delighted to tell a story, which lost nothing in her hands.

"'It's auld Pincher; he's gane, puir beast,' says she; an wi' that she began to greet again as if Pincher had been a bairn, mem. 'But it's no that, only ye ken — it's what's behind!' says she."

Then I learnt that Hugh was away from home, and that Pincher had gone with him; but after they had all gone to bed the night before, hearing a whimpering at the door, Mrs. Roy had risen and let the dog in, and as it was dark she did not observe anything further than that he had crept

under the bed. She thought perhaps his master had given him a thrashing as he had done before, and the dog had run home. But in the morning she wondered to see marks of blood on the floor, "and," said Phemie, "she cried on Pincher to come oot frae alow the bed, but he gave no heed. Then she made one o' the laddies pull him oot, when they saw that puir Pincher was just about to dee. He had been shot, puir beast, for there was a shot-hole in his side, and his left leg was broken so that he must have happit hame on the three legs."

"Has Hugh not come back yet?" I inquired. "I hope he is safe. It is a strange thing that the dog should have come home in such a state alone."

"I think, mem, Mrs. Roy is a wee thing feared about Hugh hersel', though she'll no own to it. But you ken what a close body she is. I was that wae for her though, that when she asked me to help her to houk a hole to bury the beast in afore Hugh came back, — for she was sure the sight o't wad nigh-hand break her man's heart, — I thought ye maybe wadna mind, mem, if I stopped a wee minute to do a good turn to my neebor."

"Then did you get the dog buried at last?" I inquired.

"O, yes, mem, we happit him up gey an snod under the grass, no without some trouble though, for the bairns were that sweer (loth) to let him be put away oot o' sight."

So the matter remained for the present.

The only attempt at anything at all like a shop in the neighborhood is kept by Mrs. Roy; her effort taking the form of a few articles in an ordinary cottage window, such as matches and pins, candles and red herrings, a few reels of cotton, and a bottle or two of confectionery.

Mrs. Roy, though by no means the most amiable woman in the world, is a hard-working one, keeping herself, her husband, her children, and her lodger, as clean and tidy as possible. That they can live off the profits of the little shop is impossible; but how they do manage to get ends to meet is a mystery to more than myself. Hugh Roy is one of those men occasionally to be found who have a strong objection to any regular work, though he is most obliging at odd jobs, such as sweeping a chimney, trimming a hedge, or taking a day or two's work in a garden. When a sloop comes in to the little wharf for potatoes or stones, or to unload her cargo of English coal or guano, Hugh is first and foremost at the work. It suits him to haul at the chain of the crane, shout to the horses, order about the men, and act altogether as if he were the ruling spirit of it all. Indeed, it suggests the idea that Hugh in happier circumstances might possibly have risen to some command which would have done something to justify his boast of grand old Highland blood. As Hugh is celebrated for his strength, and has a fierce

temper when roused, his fellow-workers are well content to let him keep this post of honor, especially as he does the largest share of the work. At other times Hugh will disappear from the village, being absent for days, and all the answer to any questions about him Mrs. Roy will give on these occasions is, "Hugh is awa' seein' his freends"; but who these friends are, or where they live, is a mystery. As Hugh is a Highlander, perhaps he takes a longing to tread his native heather; but certain it is, he generally returns a happier and a richer man.

It was always a great relief to me to be told that Hugh had gone away on one of those dutiful missions, for he took his dog Pincher with him; and this unfortunate animal, I am sorry to say, was a perfect bugbear of mine. Pincher was of the bull-dog or bull-terrier order, such as one may see under tinkers' or muggers' carts, — white, with snail-like markings towards the head, and with that awful division of the snubby muzzle that makes one shudder to behold it. He was so surly tempered that I was in dread whenever I passed the door lest he should fly out and bite me. He seemed somehow to have taken a great dislike to me personally, perhaps because our deer-hound Bran had one day nearly killed him; and knowing that he dare not attempt to show as much as a tooth in the presence of my faithful guardian, he appeared determined to do me some

deadly hurt if he caught me alone. Upon the whole, it was rather a relief to know that Pincher was now "happit up gey an' snod under the grass," to use the words of our Phemie, and that I was free to go and come without fear of being worried.

It was not till a day or two after Pincher was buried that Hugh returned. His wife said he was much cut up on hearing of the death of his old companion. He seemed to have quite got over it, however, one day when I happened to meet him. I came upon him trimming a hedge for one of the farmers, a good mile from the village, and amongst other things I spoke about Pincher and his untimely end.

"Yes," said his master, "he is gone, poor fellow; he was a good faithful animal, and very wise!"

This remark surprised me not a little, for I had overheard Hugh more than once declare that the dog was the most stupid beast possible to conceive, and never had been of the slightest use to him. Once, indeed, he was really angry with Bryce, the gamekeeper, for insisting upon trying the dog's "sporting powers."

"When I was under-keeper in the Highlands, mem," said Hugh, "there was n't a dog could come up to him. He would find the track of a wounded stag with the best bloodhound, and as for facing them—" But here Hugh stopped sud-

denly, and seemed annoyed he had said so much. "That was when he was young, you know, mem," he added, twicking off a shoot from the hedge with his knife. "Pincher has been long useless and toothless, fit for nothing, except perhaps a rat at times."

When I was about to pass on, Hugh said a little awkwardly, "I was making up my mind to ask a favor, mem. If you're not going to keep all Missy's puppies, I'd be obliged to you for one. That short-leggit one would be my choice, if you could spare him."

As I had just been wondering what I should do with this "short-leggit puppy," I told Hugh he was welcome to him, and that one of the boys could get him away at once.

Hugh thanked me, saying more than I considered necessary; but explained that Bryce, "the keeper," was strong against stray dogs about the place, but thought he might not be so hard upon a bit pup from the Cottage. As I returned home I could not help being sorry that the "short-leggit puppy" was not going to a more aristocratic home. He looked so snug and comfortable, poor little thing! peering at me from the door of the little barrel house, where Missy and her three puppies lived. Certainly he was very different in appearance from his brother and sister, who were rough and hairy and light-colored, whereas he had short, black, stubbly hair; but he was a playful puppy,

and did many clever things that the other two would never have thought of doing. Even Missy, who was as brave and fearless a terrier as need be, would pause breathless sometimes when contemplating his various exploits. However, as I had passed my word, Hugh's little boy carried him off in triumph that afternoon.

They called him Jockey, poor dog, and strange to say, by the time he had learnt to know his name, he had lost all refinement he ever had, and had become the most vulgar-looking little cur I ever saw. I feel sure the name was the cause of it. How was it possible for him to be otherwise than vulgar with such a name? I was not alone in the idea that Jockey was by no means improved. One day the poor animal, having escaped from the arms of Hugh's children, made his way back to his old home. As he was coming up the path he espied his mother, with his brother Midge and his sister Madge, in the distance, and he paused, with an expression of delight in his eyes, and a look as much as to say, "Won't they be pleased to see me again!"

But no, all his pretty coaxing airs and graces were lost upon them now. They saw nothing but a vulgar dog, with his ears cut and his tail nipped off; and was it to be supposed that Missy could believe that one of *her* puppies should ever have been treated so?

For a moment he stood up, facing them boldly

on three feet, his right leg raised, and the paw hooked inquiringly. Then he took a long look at his mother and his old home, gave a most pathetic whimper, almost approaching to a moan, and turned and fled.

But there came a time when Mother Missy was forced to acknowledge that Jockey, in spite of his cropped appearance, was worthy to be recognized as her son.

But my readers are no doubt thinking, "What has become of the ferret?"

As Hugh Roy was very fond of animals, and kept a sort of happy family of various birds, — pouter pigeons, and funny feathery-legged fowls and bantams, — Bryce, the gamekeeper, made him a present of the ferret, which Hugh, to the very natural horror and indignation of his wife, insisted upon keeping.

"I wish you would speak to Hugh, mem," said the poor woman to me one day. "I'm that feared the nasty beast will escape, and kill some o' the bairns. I've heard such dreadful stories about them; and Hugh may say what he likes, but you never can trust to them being tamed."

However, Hugh refused to dismiss the ferret, only saying very doggedly he would see that it was kept safe, and would harm nobody. Fortunately for Mrs. Roy's peace of mind, whenever he went to see his friends, he took the ferret with him, and Jockey trotted at his heel, as old Pincher

had done before him. Jockey, having naturally strong affections, and being driven from his relations, seemed to make up his mind to lavish them all on those he lived with. He was devotedly fond of the children, and though he rather feared his master, still he watched his every look and movement, and was at his call at a moment's notice. But the most wonderful thing was his affection for the ferret, which was returned by that animal with interest. They slept sometimes for hours in the same cage, and the ferret would nestle close to the dog, as if enjoying the warmth. When Hugh took Jockey out, the ferret would run about, blinking its pink eyes in the light, squeaking for its companion; and if Jockey were put in again, it would lie down quite satisfied in a moment.

Just at this time a great many young ducklings began to disappear; and as everybody kept ducks, all were anxious to find out the cause of the destruction. Could it be any of the cats or the dogs? No; for it was noticed that the ducklings sailed away on their little experimental voyages well and happy. It was certainly proved that they disappeared when out on the water; therefore it was declared by those skilled in the matter it must be water-rats. A careful search was made, when the quick eyes of Robbie Berry discovered a nest with a huge water-rat in it under the middle arch of the railway bridge that spans the river.

Though the river is shallow enough when the tide is out, there are some deep pools under the arches ; and so cunningly had the rat chosen its place that the cleverest boy could not dislodge it.

In this dilemma Hugh Roy, who had been away on one of his periodical visits, returned, and hearing the state of affairs, signified his intention to kill the rat that night with the help of the ferret and his terrier, Jockey. As the general public were much interested in the destruction of this unwelcome intruder, the whole population turned out to see the deed done. Standing on the stone bridge built by the monks of old, one could see the great, gaunt, ugly, wooden railway bridge, under one of the arches of which the rat had taken up its abode. Missy's two puppies had come down, apparently very anxious to lend any assistance in their power so far as barking went ; and Missy, seeing some business was on foot, kept peering and snuffing about, giving an occasional angry snap at Midge, as if to bid him hold his tongue. But Jockey sat demurely at his master's feet, or followed him like a shadow, taking no interest in the matter whatever.

When the ferret had been brought out, Hugh Roy waded into the water as far as he dared, and managed to pitch the animal over to the bank of stones where the rat was supposed to be. It was an anxious moment to many, for they had as great a dread of the ferret as of the rat. After running

about in a bewildered state for a few minutes, it found the track; but the rat becoming aware of the presence of such a deadly enemy of the race, came out of its hole, and, to the astonishment of everybody, boldly attacked the ferret. So fiercely did it fight to protect its young that the ferret got frightened, and was about to retreat. Seeing this, the rat made a desperate rush, and drove his antagonist nearly into the water. Missy all this time had been putting her toes into the mud, pretending she was going to do something daring, while her two puppies barked more furiously than ever, as if prepared to worry any number of rats; but they took good care to keep at a respectful distance from the scuffle, and were at last ignominiously driven home by Hugh's orders. The hitherto undistinguished Jockey still sat silent at his master's feet; but when Hugh observed that the ferret was getting the worst of it, he looked down into the dog's eager, upturned face, and gave a single nod. This look was enough, for the next moment Jockey had swum across the pool, and while the ferret and the rat by turns retreated from each other, and were in the act of renewing the combat, Jockey gave one spring and a snap, which was followed by a squeak that made you shiver, and the rat lay dead upon the stones. At Hugh's peremptory order "Fetch it!" Jockey caught up the rat just as the ferret had seized hold of it, and somehow he brought them both

safely over to his master's feet. But the oddest thing was to see how Jockey's parent, our Missy, not only imitated him in not touching the ferret, but, by her hearty welcome, seemed anxious to let all know that this redoubtable rat-killer was, in spite of his scrubby appearance, one of her offspring. Even in the moment of triumph Jockey did not forget his mother's recent treatment, and drove her from him with a snarl and a snap, which one could not help thinking served her right.

The death of the mother-rat had effectually settled the whole business, as nothing was seen of the young, which evidently died off. The remaining ducklings grew up in peace henceforth, and Jockey was consequently regarded as a public benefactor, and treated with much respect, not only by the boys, but by all the good housewives in the village.

When somebody expressed astonishment that the ferret did not kill the rat, the gamekeeper said, with a laugh, "The beast has never been accustomed to such work. You may say what you like, Hugh, but that ferret has been trained for rabbits." Whereupon Hugh stoutly declared that the ferret had n't had space to fight in its accustomed way; but "let them try him in a stack yard, they would see he was well up to the work."

For some weeks the village was in a state of repose. It was harvest, and all the people, even children and babies, were in the fields. If anything

was required at the shop, it could not be got till after the band of workers had returned; for Mrs. Roy was, of course, among the harvest laborers, and Hugh was happy as the driver of the reaping-machine. One close, sultry afternoon I strolled into the wood at the back of the house, and looked out upon the reapers in the distance. It was pleasant to hear the sharp rattle and busy click of the machine and the peremptory shout of Hugh calling to the horses, or the burst of merry laughter from the children, who were playing at keeping house in a corner. I often think of that afternoon, and I can remember even now how very calm and peaceful it was. Scarcely had the workers returned from the fields, when the news spread like wildfire that the ferret had made its escape. The houses, the gardens, and the out-houses were searched, but it could not be seen, and others besides Mrs. Roy were afraid to sleep that night, and when sleep did come it was only to be filled with dreams of ferrets of all sizes and colors. For many days everybody was kept in a state of anxiety and terror. Nor was this fully relieved until at length one day the gamekeeper returned with a dead rabbit in his hand, having the top of its head eaten away, — a sign, he said, that the ferret, which always eats the brains of its victims first, had found its way to the warren. It was a relief to hear that the warren was well stocked with rabbits; and though no doubt it was distressing

enough to the gamekeeper, it was a comfort to think that so long as the ferret could get rabbits, it would not attack babies.

Of course a strict watch was still kept by Bryce and Hugh Roy, but the autumn passed away, and no further trace of the ferret could be found.

These little incidents were almost forgotten, however, by the time autumn had given place to winter. The winter came early. First the wild winds stripped the last leaves from the wood behind us; next came dreary days of sloppy rain; then the frost, joined at length with snow, that came hovering and falling, ceasing and beginning again, with all the signs of that long continuance which in our quarter is called a "feeding storm." When it floated like the feathers of Christmas geese, which were being plucked above, there was a cheerful association about it; at other times it was dreary enough, as if all the birds and fowls of the air had been stripped, and their down swept away with the very dust from the halls of the North. Between times the aurora was playing fitfully, bringing eerie thoughts with it. It was difficult to get to the out-houses, and attend to the shivering, frozen-out poultry; the fox from the plantation found his way to them, however, and robbed us more than once; as for the ducks, they fared ill by the frozen sides of the river, and there were various rumors of rats and other such depre-dators around. But when the snow-storm had

vented its fury, it was really a pleasure to look around.

Our ugly hamlet was transformed at every point; the very sheds now looked beautiful under their soft mantles and hoods of snow. The sloop that had come from some distant parts of England to get a cargo of potatoes at our rustic wharf, and been caught in the ice, was like a vessel laid up in the Arctic regions, as seen past the end of our little post-office, where the blocks of snow that had been dug out to make a road, lay about like marble ruins. Before our door, we had the weeping elms and ashes changed into grottos of white coral, with shapes of shrubs in fairy disguise; and delicate sprays of frost hanging around, with tender blue shadows; and little robin redbreast hopping to the window, his breast looking as if newly painted for the occasion. Within doors it was cheerful, with our little gathering of friends to spend the holidays; and it was all the merrier if now and then in the dusk anybody saw an unpleasant resemblance outside, — such as, perhaps, a white polar-bear in the drift over one wall, or some other white creature of the wilds. There were no thoughts brought up, however, nor stories told, beyond the usual bounds of Christmas liking for what is strange and startling.

During those days, our deer-hound, Lufra, was often in and out among the happy party, a great, gray, bristly dog, that let the youngest pull it

about, and contributed much to the fun. She did not stay long at a time, having a charge of her own to attend to in the form of four very young puppies, — very precious, not only in her eyes, but in those of her master. They were kept for warmth's sake in one of the dry cellars beneath the house, reached by an outer stair, up and down which Lufra passed at will during the daytime. One day she suddenly came running into the house, apparently uneasy, and looking about for something. It turned out that one of her puppies had gone amissing; indeed, it had disappeared altogether in some unaccountable way. Lufra was too much troubled about it to come up often afterwards. A day or two afterwards we were surprised to find that a similar misfortune had happened, causing, of course, still greater uneasiness to the poor mother. It so chanced that this time her master was absent for the day, but her own excitement became so great that the whole household had to assist in the search, which ended in the poor little puppy being found in a hole in the floor, under a heavy box. It was still alive, but in such a weak state that it soon died. On examination, something like a wound was observed near its head, which did not look as if it could have been done accidentally. I sent for Bryce, the gamekeeper, who at once came up along with Hugh Roy, who happened to be near. After laying their heads together, they came to the conclusion that there must be rats about,

and that the severity of the weather must be driving them up the drains. It made me shiver to hear Hugh say, in his slow, solemn manner, "It's a good thing they have the cellars to come up into; it would have been a worse business had they come into the house itself." We did our best to comfort poor Lufra, but in the meantime we could only leave her to keep strict watch over the remaining two, which she seemed fully determined to do.

That same evening, while waiting for the return of the gentlemen of the party, I happened to be up-stairs, and when passing the dimly-lighted bedroom door, where two dear little nieces lay sleeping, I could n't help stealing in to see if they were all right and safe. The idea of the rats had made me nervous, and, there being no gentlemen in the house at the time, I was uneasy without knowing why. I could not help smiling to myself, however, when, peeping into the bassinet, I saw the little things sleeping so peacefully. When the gentlemen came home Missy flew to welcome them with noisy barking, which drew out an answering whimper from Lufra at her post below. After we had retired to our rooms, and the house was still, we were startled by hearing what seemed a yell right under our bedroom floor, which we knew must come from Lufra. O, what a dreadful noise then followed! Boxes and lumber seemed to be pulled hither and thither; the puppies squeaked and shrieked; and there were deep growls and



THE POACHER'S FERRET.

roars, as if from some infuriated wild animal. Everybody came running out from the bedrooms; the startled children cried, and Missy added to the general clamor by flying about, deafening us by her barking and yelping. A lantern was lighted in haste, and two of the gentlemen went down to see what was the matter. There stood Lufra, bristling and foaming, her eyes positively glaring, her back arched, and her tail erect, while between her fore-paws was something like a piece of white fur, which she tore and gnashed with her teeth. She would hardly give up the remains of it even to her master, so fierce was her fury; but, on bringing it to the light of the lantern, they were surprised to find that it was the mangled body of a ferret, which they had not the slightest doubt was the identical animal lost by Hugh Roy, and introduced to our village by the poacher.

THE WEAVER'S STARLING.

I WAS passing through the main street of the large village in our neighborhood to which reference has previously been made in these pages, when my eye fell upon a wicker-work cage hanging on the outside of a cottage in one of the cross streets, if so formal a name can be given to those nondescript rows and lanes. Above the doorway was painted, in dingy red letters, the half-obliterated name of George Balsillie, a name that always arrested my attention, as being one quite peculiar to the district. I did not need to be told what was his occupation, for that was made known by the distinct clicking and rustling of a loom, going chitter-cum-chatter with the fast-flying shuttle. Often as I had passed through the village, I had never by any chance got a glimpse into the weaver's house, or a view of the inmates. The winter had been severe, and the spring damp and cold, a sufficient reason for the door being always closed. Now, however, the balmy summer weather had forced open doors and windows, and not only was the bird enjoying the sunshine, but I observed an

elderly man sitting on a low stool quietly smoking his pipe. This was, no doubt, the weaver at last. I peeped into the wicker-cage to see what kind of an inmate lived there, when the bird at once whistled out a few most plaintive notes, forming part of a well-known old Scottish tune. Of course, introducing myself to the weaver's bird placed his master and me on terms of amity at once.

"O, ye uncivil bird," he said, coming forward, "wad ye venture to sing sic a sang in the leddy's very face? Fie shame, Wattie; fie shame, sir."

"What has the bird done?" I inquired; adding, in my ignorance, "the notes were beautiful."

"Maybe, mem," replied the weaver, solemnly; "but," with a twinkle in his eye, he continued, "wad ye like to ken the meaning o' them? They were the last words o' ane o' the verses o' 'Wanderin' Willie, haud awa' hame.'"

"Well," I said, laughing, "the bird is very sensible, for I have stayed longer than I intended, and I ought to be nearer home at this time." At the same time the thought occurred to me that I might get the repute of prying into my neighbors' affairs, to the neglect of my own domestic concerns. However, I merely added, "But what kind of bird is it?"

"A starling, mem," was the reply. "I thought ye wad hae kent a starling, mem. Never saw ane afore, did you say? Well, that's most astonish-

ing. I've had mony and mony a ane; but a better than Wattie there, I never reared."

"What for are ye keeping the leddy stannin' in the sun, Geordie?" said a voice from the house; "where's your manners, gudeman? I'm thinking I hae as muckle cause to say 'Fie shame, sir' to you, as ye have to say it to the bird, seeing he's no a cratur wi' a responsible mind."

"Ye're right, gudewife," said the weaver; "as usual ye are in the right; so I ask your pardon, mem, for no asking you to step in sooner. I'm no up to the manners like my wife Jess here, for I was never at the dancing school, an maun be excused if I'm a bit o' a savage."

I was then, in proper form, invited to come "in to the fire," and not to "sit upon the door"; and, in spite of the day being oppressively hot and sultry, I had to take the seat of honor by the fire. I noticed, when the weaver rose up, that his back was very much bent, almost deformed. He was spare in figure, and appeared to be in rather delicate health, especially when contrasted with his wife. She was the roundest, stoutest, and ruddiest little woman I ever saw, with a perpetual smile on her face,—to my mind, one of the most provoking and sometimes disagreeable peculiarities any one can have. On making a remark about the starling, Mrs. Balsillie instantly replied, in the most injured and peevish tone, "Ou ay, mem, he's that prood o' that bird o' his that I'm

sometimes fair mad wi' him." Paying no attention to the weaver's mild "Hoot toots, gudewife," with a flourish of her hand she proceeded, "There he'll sit, night after night, ay, and whiles day after day, as patientfu' as ye like, try-trying to teach that bird to whistle a when senseless tunes; but when it comes to hearing the bairnies their lessons, my fegs but he doesna show half the patience wi' them."

At that moment the starling began to whistle, quite distinctly, the tune, "Merrily danced the Quaker's wife, and merrily danced —" But here he abruptly stopped.

"That's a man," cried the weaver, delightedly. "Ye'll ken that tune, mem, I've nae doot. In singing it, I used the freedom to take out the 'Quaker,' and put in the 'weaver' in his place, and so Wattie, the loon, fancies it's an invitation to Jess here to take a bit dance to hersel' when she's low i' the spirits, or when the nerves get the better o' her. But wad ye believe it, mem, I never can get him to extend the exhortation to mysel'."

"That is certainly singular," I replied. "Does the bird always leave off at the same part of the tune?"

"Yes, mem, he does," said the weaver, "and I've seen him sit wi' his bit bright bead o' an eye fixed upon me, and a look in't as much as to say, 'What's the use o' asking *him* to dance when he's

at it the hail day lang?" Seeing that I did not quite understand what he meant, the weaver added, "Ye ken, mem, I hae to keep heezyhoozying up an' down when I'm sitting on my loom weaving, and wha kens but the cratur fancies I am dancing?"

"Geordie, I feel perfect shame to hear you speak," said his wife, who had seated herself at the wheel, and was filling the bobbins which her husband used for his work. "It's sinfu' to say the bird, a cratur without reason, has ony thoughts in its head whatever, — that's my opinion. Yet, mem, there he'll sit, a faither o' five sons and daughters, an he'll haver to that senseless bird till — till I'm perfectly wild at him."

The weaver laughed low, but heartily, and the starling, as if he understood that he was the subject of the conversation, whistled again, "Haud awa' hame." "Did ye hear that, Jess?" said the weaver. "I do declare the bird's laughing at ye. Sense indeed! I've said it afore, an' I'll say it again, there's mair sense in my starling than in mony a man, or woman either."

"Aweel, gudeman," said his wife, with the air of a martyr, though still smiling, "hae your ain way aboot it, but what surprises me is that you care for the bird at a'. Mony a ane would hate the very sight o' them, seeing what they did for ye." And Mrs. Balsillie made the wheel twirl with renewed energy.

"Jess, my woman," replied the weaver, "I'm thinking the nerves are gettin' the better o' ye, else ye wadna forget your manners, and speak o' family affairs afore the leddy. But seeing that ye've gane sae far, I feel bound to say — in case, mem, you tak' a prejudice to puir Wattie — that the gudewife has no cause to complain o' the bird, or o' the hail lot o' starlings I've reared frae first to last. For had it no been for the very accident Jess is hinting at, I'd maist likely have been a very different man from what I am the day. No that I'm hauding mysel' up for onything bye-ordinary gude, but I'd have been a wild, reckless —"

"Haud your tongue, Geordie," interrupted Mrs. Balsillie. "Ye wad make folk believe that ye wad hae been a perfect ne'er-do-weel; but what I say is this, ye wad just hae been like your neighbors, — neither gude nor bad, — supposing ye had never met wi' the accident."

I was thinking it was evident that Mrs. Balsillie would allow no one but herself to speak against her husband, when suddenly there was a loud clap of thunder heard, the sky became overcast in a moment, and the rain fell in torrents. I made up my mind to wait till the storm was over, especially as the weaver, who had run to take the starling in, thought it could not last long. "You were speaking of the accident," I said; "I should like to hear about it; but I fear I am keeping you from your work."

"O, no, mem," he replied; "I am waiting for the reels. Jess was a wee thing late o' gettin' to them this morning, as she had a big washing, an' I was done with my last basketfu' sooner than I expected. Weel, mem," he continued, "you must know that I was as camsteery a laddie as ever lived. The gudewife there whiles doesna believe it, but it's the truth, that a wilder laddie never drew breath. I was never oot o' some mischief. In a' the mischievous raids o' the school-laddies, Geordie Balsillie was first an' foremost. Did you ken, mem," he said, looking with a pathetic wistfulness in my face, "that whiles when I'm weaving at my loom, I canna help feelin' that Geordie Balsillie as a laddie, and Geordie Balsillie as a man, are twa distinct individuals. I keep going back whiles to thae days, and O, but they were *grand!* fu', lip fu', o' happiness. Now Jess, gudewife," he said, holding up his hand, and turning to the good woman, who, having stopped her wheel, was drawing a piece of the yarn between her thumb and finger in rather an ominous manner, as if preparing to interrupt the conversation every moment, — "I'm no saying I'm no happy now; for O, I've muckle cause for thankfulness; but ye ken that naebody ever feels their life exactly lip fu' o' gladness, except when they're bairus. Ay, mem, it's a true saying, that as we grow aulder, we're nae doot wiser, but we're sadder for a' that. But, hoots, I'm forgittin' ye was speerin' about the accident.

"Aweel, mem, as I was saying, Geordie Balsillie, as a laddie, was an extra throughhither callant: Sitting weaving at my web there, I see him in the school putting the nest o' young field-mice into the maister's pouch, or hiding the tawse, or even going the length o' turning the key on the eldest pupil-teacher, the present dominie, and leaving him to have a taste o' being 'keepit in.' O dear, dear, but thae were mild tricks compared wi' some o' the pranks that laddie played. I whiles live over again a' the Saturday afternoons, when we had the play. We hunted for birds' nests then in the spring-time, wi' the air fu' o' the smell o' the white hawthorn flourish, an' the sky sending down perfect showers o' sweet singing frae the larks. The peaceful quiet everywhere was broken only when ane o' the laddies gave a shout betokening that his eye had fallen upon a nest, an' that he couldna hide the knowedge o' the prize.

"Ye will hae been to auld Earl's Ha', mem, I've nae doot? It's a bonny pairt, and the laddies hovered about it, though it is forbidden ground, and there are tickets up warning trespassers. Hoots! what gude do they do? None whatever; it only makes the auld ruin mair attractive. Mony's the day that the laddies, wi' Geordie Balsillie first an' foremost, hae lain on the soft velvety sward o' the Ha' park, and watched the starlings that built their nests regularly

in the ivy-covered chimney-stalk. They felt, no doot, out o' the reach o' any danger, and gave so little heed to us, that they would flee about under our very noses. I've seen mony o' them near the sheep, and whiles they wad light on their backs, to pike the ticks and insects off the sheep's 'oo'. A' the time that Rob McIntyre was telling the grand stories he whiles made up about the auld lords and ladies that used to live there, or the fearsome ghaist stories his grandfather used to tell about the very garret-room, from the window of which the starlings seemed to come, I've lain an' planned an' planned how I could climb up to harry the nests. I think I wad hae tried it, had it no been for Rob McIntyre's ghaist stories. Mind, mem, they were maist awfu', and made your hair stand on end even in the broadest o' daylight. But the aulder I grew, the mair determined I got to harry the starlings' nests. I verily believe the thought was scarcely ever absent frae my mind. My place at the school was in front o' the window that looked out in the direction o' the auld Ha', and I could whiles see the birds fleeing in and out, and at night I jist gaed to my bed to dream o' starlings, and wad hae caps fu' o' them harried afore the morning.

"At this time there was a laddie ca'ed Tam Hepburn, that cam' to be a 'prentice to Geordie Wishart, the present cobbler's faither; an' then there were a pair o' ne'er-do-weels instead o' ane

in the village. Tam had never been able to make much o' his books at the school. Indeed, he could barely read the Testament, though he was a great muckle callant o' fourteen; but for finding oot a bird's-nest, and learning a' about their habits, he bate a'. It wasna birds only that he liked, but insects and butterflies too, and he had a box wi' a lot o' them, stuck on wi' pins rammed through their bodies. Of course he found out about the starlings in a crack, and as he had never got ane o' their eggs, or a bird aither; he quietly informed us he meant to harry the nest as soon as the birds were ready to feed. A' the ghaist stories were told him about the haunted garret-room. Tam jist gave a shrug o' his shoulders, an' a lauch, and stoutly declared ghaists were a parcel o' havers, an' had disappeared wi' the martyrs and covenanters. What he meant by this we never could make out; but as he winked, and looked very knowing and wise, we that were gude scholars didna like to appear ignorant. It was the market day, and auld Geordie Wishart had gane to the market wi' his boots an' shoes, leaving Tam to keep the shop. No sooner was the cobbler safely awa' than Tam comes along to our house, afore the school went in, an' says he, 'Geordie, I'm going to harry the starlings' nests this morning, an' if ye like, ye may gie me a hand, an' we'll divide the birds.'

"'But,' says I, looking back over my shouther

in case my father should hear us, 'I'm goin' to the schule; I canna come till dinner-time. Will 't no do then '?"

"'No!' says Tam, wi' a shake o' his shaggy pow. 'If the nests are to be harried, I'll no have a' the rest standing watching, and wanting to get the birds after we've had a' the trouble. Aweel, if ye'll no come, *bide*,' says he, 'I'll tak' them down mysel'.'

"Ye'll own, mem, I was in a sort o' a quandary. Here was the playing o' the truant, a prank I had never as yet been guilty o'; but then, on the other hand, were the starlings I had spent so much time thinking about, about to be carried away frae under my very nose. The temptation proved over strong for me, mem, and says I to Tam, 'In half an 'oor I'll meet ye in the plantin'.'"

"It was an ill day, Geordie Balsillie, that saw ye yielding to the Tempter," said his wife.

The weaver merely waived his pipe, which he had put out on my entrance, and proceeded.

"When the school was in, mem, I slippit awa', and met Tam at the trysting-place. He was most awfu' quiet, jist as if he had some weighty business on his mind. But for that matter I didna care to speak much mysel', for my heart kept thump-thumping against my breast. When we got to the Ha', Tam took ever so many bits o' iron he had been carrying tied up in his handkerchief, and wi' a hammer which he pu'ed oot o' his

pocket, he began driving them into the wa', making them like steps. Then he mounted on them, and made me mount ahint him to haud him up, which I did by taking a grip o' the ivy wi' my hands, and letting him sit on my shouther. We went on in this way till we were nearly at the stalk; but now the lime began to crumble and shake, and we came down to deliberate what we should do next. 'I'll tell you what, Geordie,' said Tam, pugging at his under lip, 'if you go up first, I believe you could reach it if you stood on my heed.' — 'Lct's try, then,' said I; and up we went again. Standing on Tam's head, I jist cam' short o' the nest; I could hear the birds cheepin', and saw the mother fleein' almost in my face in her bewilderment. Then I saw a hole where my foot might rest, an' I clung to the ivy and creeped up to it, an' found the birds within my reach. I think it was the proudest moment in my life, mem, when I put the nest into my bonnet, and lowered it down to Tam, who scurried to the ground to receive the prize. But, mem, the pleasure was short-lived. I felt the stone slip-slipping, and I clung to the ivy and roared to Tam to come up. Whether he did or no, I canna say, for the next moment all my senses were in a whirl, and when I cam' to mysel' I was lying in my bed wi' my head tied up, and feeling as if I had a head and legs, but that my body didna belong to me ony mair."

"The chimley o' the auld house fell on him, mem," said Mrs. Balsillie, with an emphatic gesture of explanation, though she still smiled, — "pairt o' 't on his back, which injured his spine. Am I no correct in sayin', mem, thae starlings have been onything but freends to him?"

"Whisht, Jess," said the weaver, softly; "I've often said Wattie is to be the last ane I'll rear. He's an auld bird noo, so let him finish his life in peace, puir beast, and no let him fancy we grudge him his bit bite an' sup, an' his dole o' affection."

"And what became of the birds you lowered down to Tam?" I inquired.

"Strange to say, mem, they were all saved, though Tam got his thumb sadly jammed. He was a fine cratur, that Tam! He waited on me like a shadow, an' he reared a' the birds, an' gave me the whole nestfu'."

"Ay, an' it was jist what he ought to have done," said Mrs. Balsillie. "I canna think how your father and mother ever let him come near the house, seeing that he was the cause o' 't a', first an' last."

"Whisht, Jess!" said the weaver, again a little sorrowfully; "dinna speak a word against Tam. He was an honest lad, and had as kind a heart as ever breathed. An', gudewife, there's a ruling hand aboon a'; and I tell ye again, if it hadna been for that accident, I'd have been a wild ne'er-do-

weel to this day. I'd have been a sodger, and here would you have been sitting, anxious, maybe, an' poring over the penny papers, on account o' me being at the wars and sieges."

"Keep me, man!" exclaimed Mrs. Balsillie, with her smile at its fullest stretch. "In that case I wad never hae kenned ye at a'!"

"Weel, woman, doesna that show that but for the starlings we wouldna hae come together? It was them made a weaver o' me."

Here the lane was filled with the shout of children rushing from school, and two or three of them burst into the cottage without ceremony, with exclamations of "A piece, mither; I want a treacle-piece." The rain having abated considerably, I bade the worthy weaver and his wife good-day, the former conducting me to the door. He was making me a kindly offer of a very fine canary he was rearing, when a man passed along the lane, carrying in his hand a pot of paste and some hand-bills, one of which he stuck up on the wall. "That's anc o' the election bills, mem," said the weaver, excitedly. "I hope your gudeman is going to vote for the Reforming member, an' no for the Conservative." Being aware that party feeling ran high in the village, I evaded the subject as well as I could, and managed to get away without disclosing my views.

Many a time after this, during these days of "argle bargle," as our smith's wife called it, I

observed the weaver in the centre of a group, talking and gesticulating against the tailor, who was the leader of the opposition apparently, while Mrs. Balsillie stood by her doorway listening and smiling benignly on all. Mrs. Dawson, the carpenter's wife, whose husband Sandy was a Conservative, was wicked enough to say that her neighbor, though she smiled, was vowing vengeance in her heart against the whole band o' Tories, Sandy an' the tailor in particular.

I am sorry to say, the animosity of the two parties ran so high, that one day, happening to be in the village, I was in momentary terror of a riot taking place. The presence of our respectable, but solitary, police-constable was barely sufficient to keep the shaking of fists in each other's faces from ending in blows. At the very moment when I thought the tide was turning in that way, a bread-cart belonging to the cathedral town came dashing down the village street at full gallop, the man waving his whip, and crying, "B—— forever!" This being the war-cry of the "Reforming member," and the party in his favor being the strongest, the crowd flew hither and thither to let him pass, forcing the weaver and the tailor to separate before the bonds of good friendship had been broken. The most amusing part of the business was, the man with the bread-cart was not on the side of the Reforming member, but was, in his own town, as stanch a Conservative as the old military

provost there. When asked what his reason was for behaving in this deceiving manner, he said, having had some rough usage that day already in other places, he had fallen upon the plan of siding with the strongest party in the villages through which he had to pass. "A's fair in love and war, they say," he replied; "an' I wasna anxious to have my bread-cart, an' mysel' tae, battered to bits."

I really felt a little sorry for the weaver's sake, when, the election being over, it was found the Reforming member had been thrown out. Mrs. Balsillie took it so much to heart, poor woman, that she had a fit of "the nerves," and went to her bed. The poor starling kept inviting her to dance over and over again, whistling till he was tired. He lost patience at last, however, tucked his little head under his wing, and shut out everything disagreeable in a good sleep. But the starling's efforts were not altogether thrown away. Now that the excitement of the election was over, the weaver, who was really a very quiet man, returned to his usual peaceful state of mind.

"I dinna think I wad hae gotten over it, mem, so easily," he explained to me, "if it hadna been for Wattie."

"And what had the bird to do with it?" I inquired.

"Weel, you see, mem, folk may say what they like, but Wattie is a bit o' a philosopher. I can

see sometimes the cratur's heed is fu' o' wise thoughts. A' the time o' the electioneering, there he sat, wi' his speckled breast bumfled up like a ba', but never whistling a note. Wattie is a whistling starling entirely, mem. I've had them that wad speak whiles, but that was a thing Wattie never could be prevailed upon to do. Aweel, mem, as I was saying, he took no notice. If I spoke to him he wad creep along the perch as far as he could get, and keek at me wi' the one side o' his head, as much as to say, 'Now dinna fash me wi' your politics an' your heckling!' But when he began to see the business was over and done wi' for the present, the puir beast couldna show his thankfulness enough. He actually for the first time whistled, —

' Merrily danced the weaver's wife,
And merrily danced the *weaver*.'

" Now, mem, see to Wattie's wisdom. It was just as plain as if he had said to me in words, — 'Geordie Balsillie, ye have din yer best to put the right man into Parliment. It's natural ye should be a wee thing down in the mouth; but what's the use o' greetin' over spilled milk? When there's an armstick atween twa armies, dinna the sogers o' baith sides foregather on freendly terms?'

" Thinks I, Wattie, ye're right; an' if a man can read a sermon in a stone, or in a running brook, he can certainly learn something frae sich

a sensible bird as a starling, more particularly from mine." Lowering his voice to a whisper, not to disturb his wife, who had been forced to go to bed with "the nerves," he continued, "I gaed awa' that very moment to the tailor's house, an' stated the case to him. He's a sensible man, an' he saw at a glance there was nae use for us to be otherwise but gude cronies as heretofore; so we shook hands there an' then, though I wadna like Jess there to ken o' t jist for a wee. When I cam' back, I set to to teach Wattie the tune o' 'Let Whig an' Tory a' agree,' an' he's taking to it quicker than I ever saw him do to a tune afore. But I'm sorry to say it doesna meet wi' the gudewife's approval, and hearing the tune so often has caused the nerves to get the better o' her."

Mrs. Balsillie must have overheard the last words, for she turned round her perpetually smiling countenance, looking more smiling than ever, and in rather a peevish tone of voice declared that if anybody expected her to be on friendly terms wi' Sandy Dawson's wife again, they were very much mistaken.

"Hoot toots, gudewife," replied the weaver, "ye maunna cherish sich bitter feelin's against a neebor. Ye hae surely no forgotten Mrs. Dawson's kindness when wee Willie lay ill wi' the pocks, an' naebody wad come near ye?"

"No, I'm no forgetting it," retorted Mrs. Balsillie. "But I'll tell you what it is, Geordie

Balsillie," she continued, "if you persevere in teaching Wattie to sing that sang, I'll — I'll thrav his neck."

"Thrav Wattie's neck!" he exclaimed, in a bewildered way, as if such words ought never to have been said, even in joke. "Ye surely did not mean to say sic a thing?"

"But I did mean to say it, and, what's mair, I'll do it too," said Mrs. Balsillie.

"Jess, my woman, I'm feared the nerves hae gotten a bye-ordinary haud o' ye." Then turning to his youngest son, he said, "Rin awa' for the doctor, Willie, and tell him to lose not a moment in coming, an' to fetch twa leeches wi' him."

"I dinna need the doctor. Sic havers! I'll no hae the leeches," said Mrs. Balsillie, stoutly. "If ye wad stop dinning that tune into my head, there's nothing the maitter wi' me. The mischief's in the bird. I do believe he's no canny."

Willie had paused at the door, hearing his mother's contrary order; but the weaver shouted, with a stamp of his foot, —

"Go this moment, an' be sure an' mind the leeches!"

As the poor woman was really in a hysterical state by the time the doctor came, the leeches were applied, and fortunately they had such a soothing effect, that Mrs. Balsillie was able to resume her usual active household duties the next day. A few weeks after this, the honest weaver

fell ill ; but this event healed all the wounds caused by the election, and drove the demon dissension from the village. The tailor volunteered to sit up with him during the crisis, and to watch with the anxious wife for "the turn" in the disease. Mrs. Dawson took all the children out of the house to her own already over-crowded one, that their father might be kept quiet. "The turn" came, bringing life instead of death, and the weaver slowly recovered. During the early days of his convalescence, it was pleasant to see the change that had taken place in Mrs. Balsillie. There was no more peevishness ; and the perpetual smile, instead of being painful, became natural and agreeable.

"I've great cause to be thankfu', mem," said the good woman to me one afternoon, when I called to inquire for her husband. "I thought whiles he wad slip awa', he was sae awfu' bad that night, just afore he got the turn, that I couldna see he wad recover. Though I say it mysel', mem, he's been a kind, kind man to me, an' you'll no find many better, gang whar ye like. But step in, mem ; he'll be glad to see ye."

The weaver was propped up with pillows, looking very white and worn, poor man, and was gazing fixedly at the starling, which had been taken out of the cage, and was now perched on the hand of little Mary, the weaver's daughter. "He's sort o' stupid, mem, wi' the opium," whispered Mrs.

Balsillie. So I seated myself, making a sign to little Mary not to move. "Merrily danced —" whistled the starling; but stopped, as if afraid of the sound of his own voice.

"No, Wattie, ye're wrang," said the weaver. "There's a time for everything, an' the gudewife maunna be asked to dance the noo. She's had a sair time o' 't, Wattie; but she's shown to me an' a' the lave that she's a wonderfu' woman when the nerves let her alane."

"Haud awa' hame," whistled the starling.

"Ay, Wattie, I thought at ae time I was on the road; but the doctor says I'm to bide awee yet. Aweel, it's the Lord's will; he kens best." And the weaver calmly fell asleep.

The starling sat with its black bead of an eye fixed most earnestly upon his master, then suddenly burst out into a gush of song, winding up with "Let Whig an' Tory a' agree," which caused the weaver to waken up with a start, and made Mrs. Balsillie, who had been enjoying the sight of her husband sleeping so peacefully, cry out, "O, whisht, Wattie, whisht!"

"Let him sing, puir beast," said the weaver, with a smile. "Ou, ay, my man, we'll hope and trust that there'll no be an electioneering business for mony a day to come, an' we'll live as neeborly as we possibly can. Who was right noo, gudewife?" he inquired. "Didna I say Sandy Dawson's wife was a true friend?"

"Yes, yes, gudeman; but dinna you fash your heed about onything, but go to sleep. The doctor said ye werena to speak, ye ken."

"Ay, so he did; but I'm thinkin' ye'll no mind if puir Wattie should sing his bit sangs noo; ye'll let us hae our ain way about it, wull ye no?"

"O, yes," said Mrs. Balsillie, with tears glistening in her eyes, "he may whistle what he likes, an' the mair he whistles the better he'll please me."

The last accounts from the weaver's house are that, with the help of the boys, the worthy woman has managed to teach the starling a new tune, which has done more to cheer the weaver than anything. She has also learnt the words of the Whig and Tory song, and accompanies Wattie, to the great delight of the whole family.

THE LAIRD'S STAGHOUND.

WE were staying at a place in the Highlands near to the village of Kinclachan, on the borders of Loch Winnoch,—a long, gleaming, mountain-surrounded lake. In front of our windows lay the great brown and purple moor of Winnoch, stretching for miles into the hills; behind us the oak copses and knolls of juniper sloped up to the deer forest of Abercruan. In the course of our strolls in the latter direction, some of our party became acquainted with the head forester, a worthy Highlander of the most thorough type, but, fortunately for us, able to converse without the use of Gaelic. The word forest at once suggests ideas very different from anything to be seen about Abercruan. There was no wood, no glades nor leafy alleys, not even any trees. The forest consisted of bare hills and miles of heath, moor, and moss, wandering away over hill-sides of green brackens, up to the purple shoulder of a vast mountain, whose gray glens and desolate corries appeared in the distance beyond. Our guide led us towards the head

forester's house, and on our way we started a roe deer, with her fawn, from a covert of fern; whilst upon a ridge, not very far off, we got a glimpse of a herd of red deer, whose clustered heads surmounting the hill-top we had at first taken for copse-wood.

The forester's abode was a house of most uncompromising plainness, perched, for the advantage of a full view, on a hill-side commanding a great part of the forest. On one side were primitive looking sheds and a dog kennel; in another direction stood a singular structure, something like an old-fashioned dove cot, which our guide informed us was a venison safe; and as we approached the door, we could see that one gable of the house was adorned with trophies, not only from the chase, but from the relentless slaughter of what gamekeepers call "vermin."

A wild road led past the door towards the nearest sheep farm and its dependent huts; on the other side of this was a patch of ragged garden, reclaimed from the hill-side, from among the bushes of which came a gruff voice, that of Alister MacLay himself, calling to our guide in Gaelic. He had not recognized any of our party at first, and a degree of jealousy towards strangers was evidently prevalent in the forest. Scarcely had we caught sight of the forester's own grizzled head and hoof-shaped Scotch cap, when we were startled by the bounding forth of a great bristling

hound, which some of our party did not at first even know to be a dog. The deer-hound came forward waving his tail, and showing by other signs that he was very glad to see us.

"What a magnificent dog!" I exclaimed. "He is taller than our Bran."

Hearing these words, the old keeper's stern looks relaxed, and having now recognized the guest he had invited, he turned to me with a genial smile to inquire if we had a staghound. Having been told that we had, and after hearing all about Bran's pedigree, old Alister invited us to rest in his little garden after our long walk. It was plain that he showed us more respect from consideration for our possession of Bran, who, it turned out, was of purer extraction even than his own Oscar, noble though he looked.

"You will take some milk and cakes, ladies," he said, with true Highland hospitality. "And as for you gentlemen," he continued with a smile, "I think I have something stronger that will suit you better. Here, Flora," he called to a young girl, who had been slyly peering at us from the cottage window, "bring out some refreshments for the ladies. Yes, sir," he continued, as if loath to leave the subject, "I would be fain to see that dog of yours. There's no doubt of it, he's of an uncommon fine strain, and the dogs have gotten verra rare."

At this moment there was a deep growl and a

yaup of alertness from Oscar, who lay outside on the footpath; and looking in that direction we observed a gentleman coming hurriedly down the path. Again Oscar growled, apparently more dissatisfied than ever, which made Alister call out, "Lie down, sirrah! Do you hear me? — lie down!"

The gentleman was now close to where the dog lay stretched out all his length across the path, making a formidable barrier to any one afraid of dogs. "I say, Alister MacLay," called the stranger, "if this dog is not kept in better order I shall be forced to complain to the factor."

The old keeper made no reply, but lifting up a small dog whip from the ground, he went forward to where Oscar was lying. "Look ye, sir, how durst ye keep the minister standing?" he said, addressing the dog. "I've never let you feel the weight o' this since ye were a bit slip o' a puppie. But as I ken ye're a beast wi' some sense, I jist say this to ye: If them that sud ken better forget their manners, — the manners o' gentlemen born, — never you forget, Oscar my man, that you're a gentleman's dog."

This speech seemed more intended for the minister than for the dog, and a hurried word or two of Gaelic had evidently a much clearer effect, for Oscar rose up and majestically strode over to where we were sitting. Turning then with a look of some significance in the direction where the

minister might still be seen, he flung himself down with a bump, and a row-wow-wow of a growl.

"That's the parish minister," said Alister, seating himself again, after having skilfully hidden a grin by the process of taking a big pinch of snuff, or "sneeshin," as he called it, with a little bone spoon, from his silver pocket-horn or "mull."

"There seems to be a dislike to the minister on the part of Master Oscar here," I said, stroking the dog's long muzzle, which he had laid in a confiding manner in my lap.

"Well, the truth is, ma'am," replied Alister, rubbing his chin, "Oscar is a strange beast, with queer twists and turns in his brain; and if he comes in contact with anything paltry-minded, he just scorns it."

"But I hope this does not apply to the parish minister," I replied. "He seems a very agreeable man."

"O, no doubt, mem, no doubt, mem," said Alister, taking another pinch of snuff. "But Oscar has an opinion o' his own, and I make bold to say that, dog though he is, he isna often wrong in the notions he forms o' either beast or body."

"And what part of the minister's character does Oscar consider faulty?" I inquired, laughing.

"Weel, mem," said Alister, tapping his snuff-mull sententiously, "Oscar considers the minister pridefu' to a fault, and a wee thing upsetting, perhaps."

"But how did Oscar form such an opinion?"

"Weel, ye see, mem," said Alister, who liked the idea of telling a story apparently, "some weeks ago I got my foot sprained, and I was sitting where you are sitting at this very moment, when the stranger gentleman came up the path. I was, maybe, dozing over into a sleep, and I waked up with a start, and Oscar there, who had likely been doing the same thing, sprang to his feet, and his back bristled up for a moment as if he had seen a warlock or a witch, instead of the parish minister's own self. For it was no other than the new minister. The dog nat'rally felt a little ashamed of himself, and, smoothing down, he went forward to receive the gentleman, wagging his tail and doing everything in his power to make amends for his rude reception. Looking askance at the dog, the minister asked if he was dangerous, and if he would snap, which, to a dog of Oscar's breed and pride, was hurtful; and I did not won'er that he should keep sniffing and snuffing at the minister's heels, and then, when he attempted to pat him on the head, should turn away with a look of disdain.

"'I'm the new parish minister,' says the gentleman, 'come to take the place of your late worthy pastor, Mr. MacLean.'

"'I'm hearty glad to see you, sir,' I said; 'as you say, the auld minister was a most worthy man. I'm glad to see you, sir, and wish you a kindly welcome, and I hope you may be long spared to

your flock. But, sir,' I says, 'I must make bold to say that I do not belong to your kirk, though I sit there sometimes, it being nigher at hand; but I will always be happy to see you as a friend.'

"With that the minister draws himself up, and says he, 'When I call upon my friends, I'm not in the habit of counting a gamekeeper amongst them'; and wi' a curl o' his lip he turns on his heel, and walks away without as much as a 'Gude day to ye.'

"Aweel, ye must know that our laird has a pew or laft in the auld kirk, and though he is away at the present time in foreign parts, Oscar, who is the laird's dog, is in the habit of going to the kirk, as he always does when the laird is at home, and lying at the pew door. A better behaved dog you could not find in any kirk on the Sabbath day than Oscar. He would not scruple on an every-day to make a splore among the shepherds' collies, and he is fond of a fair stand-up fight; but though he were to see a whole half dozen of them in the kirk-yard, he would not pay the least heed to them. Maybe if they quarrel among themselves, he'll stop to give a bit growl, and let an angry glint shoot frae his een, as much as to say, 'What, ye surly tykes! would you fight on the Sabbath day, and at the verra kirk door?'"

"And has it the desired effect of restoring peace among the collies?" I said, laughing.

"There is no doubt about that, mem; for Oscar is a terror to evil-doers, like the magistrates. If they rebelled, he would make short work with them, I'm thinking; though, for that matter, the collies ken better sense than to try his patience and temper so far. No; the collies know fine, that as their masters have to submit to the laird, it behoves them to have respect to the laird's staghound. It was fine to see Oscar in the auld minister's time rise up frae the mat at the pew door, to let him pass on his way to the pulpit. He would stand wi' his head erect, and as proud as you liked; as much as to say, 'If the laird was here, he'd be giving you a nod; but here's his favorite dog to show you what respect he can.' And then, when the minister had clapped his head, Oscar would wave his tail most solemn to behold, and lie down as quiet as need be till the kirk emptied.

"But it is changed times since this new minister came. As I said before, Oscar was standing by when the minister made his first call; and being a dog of sense, and having some English, and knowing that the laird his master has a by-ordinary respect for his auld keeper, what does the beast o' a dog do, but take it into his head to resent the minister's speech, and regard it as an insult? During the laird's absence, Oscar always stays with me, though at times he goes up to the house, just to see how they are getting on; and even when the

master is at home, he'll spend as much of his time here as he can, for he has an affection for the old place, seeing that it was here where he was born and reared. He never forgets for a moment that he's the laird's staghound, — he's too proud a dog for that; but he just looks upon me as the best friend he has in the world, next to the master. But I was speaking of the dislike to the minister that arose in Oscar's mind. The very next Sunday after the minister gave us a call, I took it into my head I would go to the auld kirk, just to hear what sort of a preacher they had got, and at the same time to show him I did not bear any grudge. I could not help pointing out to Flora, my granddaughter there, that Oscar was in onc o' his sulky fits; for instead o' going along the road bounding, he walked at our back, as douce and solemn-like as if he was going to a funeral. All Flora could do to cheer him had no effect, — it rather made him worse, for that matter; so we left him to his own meditations, whatever these might be. Weel, you see, mem, the seat we sat down in was close to the kirk door; but Oscar stalked away to his seat, and lay down. Then there was the usual stir of the folks coming in and the collie dogs being kicked or shoved under their masters' seats. When the bell had ceased tolling, the minister came down the passage with Kenneth, the auld beadle, afore him; and Oscar rose to let them pass, but wi' his face turned into the corner, in a

very rude manner. As it turned out afterwards, the minister whispered to Kenneth that he wanted Oscar put out, for he thought it unseemly and out of place to allow a dog to be in the church. We all saw Kenneth's head bent down into the pulpit, while he was explaining that Oscar was the laird's staghound, and that he was the most regular attender of the kirk. 'I care not for that,' the minister had said; 'the dog must be put out, or the service cannot proceed.'

"Then Kenneth came and spoke to the elders, one of them happening to be the factor himself, and I was sent to call the dog out. As I said before, Oscar only looked upon me as a friend. But he would not obey me, except when out foresting, as was his duty, seeing that I reared him to the work; but this was a different matter. I told the factor I had nothing to do with Oscar on the Sabbath day, but he insisted upon me asking the dog to come out; so, thinking that he would listen to me before any of the others, I went down to where he lay, and I whispers to him in Gaelic, 'Oscar, ye maun come out; it seems the new minister is not to allow dogs to bide in the kirk; so come away out.'

"He just gave a bit lift o' his head, and a glint frac his een, as much as to say, 'Alister MacLay, I'm hearing, but I'm not heeding.'

"'But ye maun come out, Oscar,' I said again, a little more firm, and I was going to grip him by

the collar to give him a pu', when he showed his teeth, the whole row of them, and there was a dour angry gurgle in his throat like what the water makes in the pool of a fall; and his tongue just hissed like a snake at me; and I would have defied any three men of the congregation, wi' the minister and his man to boot, to have taken the animal out against his will. So, fearing that our long friendship would be disturbed if I fought with him further, I came away, and told the factor to be advised to leave the dog alone. Aweel, the minister he was informed; but, to show what a limited mind he has, he ordered all the dogs to be put out forthwith, else he would not proceed with the services.

"There was more than me felt that this was a sort of a slur on the old minister, who had as tender a heart to a dog as to a man. When had he ever ordered a dog out of the kirk? Of course, not one dog would stir without his master; and as mostly every man had a dog, the kirk was nigh-hand empty. Some of them managed to tie up theirs in a neighbor's house, but the lave o' them were provoked, seeing that they had expected better treatment when they had given up their Gaelic for the minister, and so they would not come in, but stayed in the kirk-yard, discussing the matter. But it made no difference to Oscar whether the collies went or stayed; he held his own, I can tell you. All the elders tried to coax him, and then

Kenneth the beadle; but that row of white teeth feared them one and all. Then the factor, though a kindly man, has a bit temper of his own, and he went up to him with an air of authority, and ordered the dog to go home. It was a sort of laughable the look the beast gave him. He was no doubt the factor, with power to draw rents and what-not, but Oscar was the laird's staghound, owin' submission to none. They got a rope to fix in his collar, but, before they could reach him, seeing what was intended, Oscar sprang over the pew door, and taking up his position inside, defied them to meddle with him. Such a growl he gave, even the minister's heart must have trembled in the pulpit, for he put an end to the commotion by saying the dog could be kept out for the future. But the minister soon found out that if he prohibited the dogs from coming to church, he would preach to the four walls, so the dogs were allowed to come as before. As for Oscar, from that Sunday he just marched in and jumped into the pew at once, where no one came to meddle with him."

After laughing heartily at the old keeper's story, and having been refreshed by the rest and his hospitality, we took our homeward way. Our worthy host having to start on duty about the forest, gave us what he called a "convoy" in that direction, by a shorter path through the heather. The forester was accompanied by a

couple of kilted gillies, with very rough legs and Celtic faces, one leading a sturdy hill pony, and the other keeping the noble Oscar in leash, along with a far inferior dog of the bloodhound order. "Oscar wasna to be overly much trusted loose in the forest," MacLay observed, "far less the other dog." Indeed, before parting, we had this fact illustrated, and had an opportunity of admiring Oscar in his proper field.

Just before coming to a dip of the heathery ground, the deer-hound was seen to snuff the air keenly, whilst his duller companion also became excited. A pair of black fowl arose from the ground, with their heavy gobbling whirr, and we thought at first that this was what had attracted the hounds. The moment after, however, up rose a long-eared red-deer hind, like an immense hare, and started like lightning over the ridge, followed immediately by no less than four or five younger ones. The bloodhound yelled and leapt, while Oscar strained also, but backward, so as to check his meaner yoke-fellow; and it was really fine to see the shapely grace of his attitudes.

"Na, na," chuckled the forester, offering his snuff-mull delightedly to those who could use it; "a bloodhound may be ready to slip at a hind or aught else, but Oscar kens better. There maun be stag-horns for him, and the nearer to a royal head the better he likes it. The red deer are a ticklish kind o' animal, mem," he added at part-

ing, "and terribly fanciful as to being disturbit. There's some things that will just scare them out o' the verra forest, and other things that will whiles drive them to be dangerous."

This was doubtless in some degree a hint not only to ourselves, as Alister looked sternly at some bright colors among our dresses, but still more emphatically to the gentlemen who had secured low-ground shooting for the season.

We were not soon again near the bounds of "the forest," nor did we for some time see anything of our new friends except at church and occasionally about the inn of the "clachan," or Highland village. The season of ordinary sport was almost over, and the autumn far advanced. The time for nobler game had then begun to open above, over the range of Abercruan. Deer-stalking friends of the proprietor had already come "down" from the South, so that the distant crack of rifles was now heard there, though as yet sparingly. The "Macruan" himself, the "chief,"—as Alister MacLay preferred to style his master,—was expected shortly with the family and some high company besides. In these circumstances it chanced that one day we had an opportunity, such as is rarely obtained, to get a glimpse of the true old sport, which is said to be so fast dying out on the hills of the North, and here our hero, the laird's dog, Oscar, came into most characteristic prominence.

We had started early that day on a boating excursion up the long lake towards its more barren and wilder end, and had nearly reached our destination, one of the wooded islets opposite the great glen, before the morning mists had fully cleared off the mountain side. All at once, as if quickened by the echoes of a distant gun-shot, the mist of the glen broke in the sun, floating away up the dry rifts and water-courses of Ben Favar, whilst his bulging shoulder of purple green, mottled with rock or bush, came out distinct above us and below in the mirror of the lake. Up one far gray ravine went a swift rush of what might have been taken for the scattered van of the mist or smoke flown from where the rifle had been fired. It was, however, no less than a herd of the red deer in flight to their upper recesses, and looked at by a field-glass which we had with us, the farthest sky-line could be seen bristled for a moment or two with the procession of their tossing heads and antlers.

Quickly following the first shot there was another, and a third, the last by much the nearest; but in the subsequent stillness, nothing further seemed likely to be seen by us, when, from the mountain's shoulder, towards the lake, came the sound as of some rushing boulder dislodged from the steep, and bounding downwards, till it thundered along the rocky point towards the water's edge. One thrilling view we caught of a full-

grown red deer, with his branching horns thrown back upon his neck, as at frantic speed he made for the refuge of the open lake. Behind him, shooting from point to point, came a white hound, in fierce pursuit, and again behind him another, whose speed was evidently not inferior, but who had swerved on another course, to intercept the stag before the lake was reached. In the bristling gray and matchless size of the latter dog, it was easy to recognize the laird's staghound, our friend Oscar, whose relentless eagerness certainly did not commend itself at the moment to our good graces. There was something in that flashing glimpse of the chase, above all of the desired prey, in all the beauty of the wilderness, that made me wish devoutly for its escape. It was but for a few moments that the spectacle was before us. Along the shore it vanished through the brake; the flying stag, doubtless wounded, was cut off from the lake by Oscar, as it appeared, plunging into a shallower part. We could then hear the savage yelping of the two deer-hounds; next came the excited cries and cheers of the keepers and sportsmen, following by a short cut down-hill, directed by the voices of the dogs. Before any of our party could see more, the contest was over.

We had more sight than we desired of the procession homewards, — to the deer-stalker so glorious a finish to the day! On the back of the forester's white pony lay the body of the gallant

victim, with its branching antlers hanging downwards like some crown of coral. The tired sportsmen followed with the white hound, which had received more than one crippling wound; while our friend the forester brought up the rear with Oscar apparently unhurt, but very dishevelled looking, and with a red swollen eye, by no means agreeable to behold. I did not care to speak to him, and, to do him justice, he seemed shy of our notice. Old Alister, however, came a little out of his way to exchange greetings.

"The white dog," as he explained, "was one the Colonel had brought from the South to try. It had done not so ill for a Southern-bred dog, but its life had just been saved by Oscar, who was the one that fairly gripped hold at the last. The laird's own young brother, who was of the party, then of course got the offer to do the deed; and he waded in and grappled to it very gallantly, and did it fine."

The laird, as I said before, had been expected at Abercruan to give the forest its full amount of deer-stalking, but he did not appear; and at church a few days after, the family pew, usually styled "the laird's loft," was almost vacant. Only one or two of the sportsmen appeared there; those of the family who had been before present were gone. The great hound lay on his favorite mat outside the door, opposite the pulpit, Oscar having fully vindicated his rights in this respect. And it

was curious to see how he now and then raised his picturesque head as if to show that he was there, or opened his clear, round, eagle-like eye in momentary attention to the discourse, then dropped his rough muzzle again between his paws. To judge by his breathing, the magnificent fellow must have been asleep; but then this was by no means uncommon in cases of those who ought to have known better throughout the congregation. Now and then he would even give one of those eager whimpers that a dog makes when asleep, a proof that he is "hunting in dreams." Oscar had not the same help from stimulants that those had whose faces always betrayed that they were sucking peppermints; still less could he profit by the use of his friend the forester's horn snuff-mull, with the silver thistle and the glowing yellow cairngorm on the top, which used to circulate through the whole church from its owner's seat by the door.

After service that day, there was some excitement among the groups who lingered about the church-yard; but as the conversation was in Gaelic, we could not make out its nature or cause. It was already known to us — indeed, the minister had alluded to the circumstance in his prayers — that "the Macruan" had been prevented by the state of his health from coming down that season to stalk the deer; but we were not aware that anything worse was feared, till it came out from old Alister MacLay on the road.

"No, there's nothing more in the way of news from London," said he, but still with a gloomy shake of the head towards the deer-hound, who was lagging behind. "Come on, sirrah! I'm thinking it will be long ere you run another stag, my man."

"That would be rather a recommendation to him than otherwise," I said; "but what is the matter, Mr. MacLay?"

"There will be news ere long," was the grave answer. "Did you ever read Ossian, mem, or any of the ancient bards?"

"Not except in translations," I said.

"It's weel known how you'll read there that these dogs could see the spirits of the chiefs they belonged to, no matter how far off their masters were, when aught befell them."

"Has anything of the kind been seen by Oscar?" we asked.

"Weel, it's not just for me to say," replied the forester, warily; "but ye see a deer-hound is a dog that thinks shame to open its mouth saving to a stag at bay; but yestreen he just growled out in the dead o' the night, and again before the cock-crowing, and most awful eery and doleful it was to hear!"

"It was that!" emphatically put in Donald, one of the gillies from behind, with a thoroughly Celtic shrug of his whole body.

"Phroo! who's wanting *your* word?" said the

keeper, indignantly; "just keep your head in its ain place, Donald lad."

It came out clearly that they believed the dog had seen the ghost of the laird, their chief; and even in these days of telegraphs they would have spurned any idea that the electric fluid could compare with the true old deer-hound breed for thus swiftly conveying intelligence, more especially when it was of this gloomy nature. The very least that they could expect was that Oscar might have beheld a *wraith*, which only indicates a future death. In this belief the forest people remained when we parted.

At all events, judging from the next news it could not have been the laird's proper ghost that his staghound had seen and howled at. His health was not in a good state, and he had gone to a warmer climate to pass the winter.

It cannot even be regarded as a coincidence that Macruan's death took place shortly afterwards. The only further circumstance in connection with my story, was the bringing home of the body to the family burying-place. This was on one of the small islands at the farther end of Loch Winnoch, for a genuine Macruan disdained to be interred in the parish church-yard. It was a proud, though a mournful day for Abercruan and the clan in general, a large gathering of whom had assembled, all in the old native garb and proper tartan. The laird's body had been embalmed in Egypt, a

thing that had never before happened in the memory of Loch Winnoch. Twelve boats, fully manned and crowded with the funeral procession, all dressed in the red Macruan check, followed the black-draped barge that conveyed the deceased to the last resting-place of his fathers. In the boat nearest that in which the body lay were some members of the family; among whom most conspicuous was one figure that reached forward from the boat's bow, with head intent, and long rough muzzle that seemed fixed towards the pall in front. It was the laird's staghound. Winter had begun to spread over the hills, no rife broke the echoes then, but a low, plaintive dirge-song in Gaelic accompanied the movements of the oars; then suddenly arose the full *coronach*, wildly mournful, and the shrill notes of the bagpipes burst into play, waking up a scream and a wail that seemed echoed from all the glens of Abercruan. When it ended, the silence came back like the close of doom. It would have been a relief to hear the wind, or to catch a sound of the *belling* of the deer from the forest; but they were silent. All at once came along the lake a cry, dismal beyond conception, the beginning in fact of a dirge howl on Oscar's part, which was peremptorily stifled by some one near him.

Faithful above all the laird's dependants, he never passed us afterwards without bringing the tears somehow into our eyes. We lost sight of

him finally in the spring, on leaving Loch Winnoch side. It seems the noble dog was subsequently taken up to London, where he doubtless still is. To meet him by any chance in crescent or park would be strange; the memory of the Highlands never returns to us, with its purple glories, its bracing air, and the hot light over the steel-blue lake, but we think of Oscar. Wherever he is, may he be an indulged favorite, with many dreams of slipping from the leash, and of flying in the chase, and, above all, of coming back triumphant to his master's knee, and of pushing his hairy nose softly into the ready hand of the laird.

THE DOMINIE'S GRUMPHIE.

AT one end of the large village in our neighborhood, on a piece of rising ground near the parish church, stands the parish school. Mr. Innes, the Dominie, as the school-master is called in Scotland, is a most important functionary in many ways; he occupies a good social standing, and is, moreover, a special favorite with all. He is a middle-aged, tall, gaunt man, with a long face and iron-gray hair. Of course he wears spectacles, and of course, too, he is absent-minded, and eccentric in some of his ways, as school-masters often are. He dresses in black, more invariably than the ministers themselves, the week-day suit perhaps not being quite so new and glossy as the Sabbath one, to which a rather antiquated touch is added in Mr. Innes's case by his clinging to the old fashion of wearing crimped cambric ruffles on the breast of his shirt, and gaiters over his shoes. He is a bachelor, his house being kept by an unmarried sister. He is so learned a man, and so excellent a teacher, that the school has a high reputation, and the best families in the neighborhood send their children to it.

A little niece and nephew having come to reside with us for some time, it was proposed that they should be placed under Mr. Innes's charge. Accordingly I went up one day to enroll their names, and took this opportunity of visiting the school while the pupils were at work. As we approached the door, and the sound of the half-suppressed hum of many voices became audible, little Kate crept closer to me, and showed by the changing color on her cheeks that she considered this a momentous epoch in her life. Fred, on the contrary, who was the younger of the two, strode manfully on in front, his hand placed firmly in the pockets of his knickerbockers, bravely whistling, or attempting to whistle, some popular air.

I must pause to explain that the whistling was an accomplishment of a very recent date; indeed it was only the evening before, while we sat at tea, that Fred had discovered he could whistle, and no one at the table seemed more surprised at the unusual sound than himself. When it was remarked that he had grown into a boy at last, Fred's cheeks turned crimson, and his eyes fairly gleamed at the step he had made towards manhood. After tea he hastened away to his bedroom to discover if this power was a reality, and so earnestly did he practise it that by supper-time he had managed to whistle a sort of an air. On this very morning, before setting out on our way to the school, there was a great commotion in the

nursery, caused by Master Fred's refusal to have his frock and blouse put on. He insisted upon having his knickerbockers to wear instead, which were kept for Sundays and high days only, declaring stoutly that "uncle had said he was a boy now, and boys did n't wear frocks."

"You a laddie an' feared to pass a cow this very week," said Nancy, the maid; "gae wa' wi' yer havers; come, let me finish the dressin' o' ye, else Miss Katie will hae to gang to the school her lane, wi' yer aunt."

Being reminded of this fact, poor Fred's disgust at the girlish garments became more intense, and he began to try the effect of soft words to coax the stubborn Nancy. After various arguments, he ended by saying, with a perceptible tremor in his voice, "But, Nancy, I *am* a boy; see I can —" Here there was a faint attempt at a whistle, but owing to his anxiety to do justice to such an unmistakable boyish accomplishment, it ended in a melancholy "whif — whif." Nancy, who, being strong-minded to a fault, could not enter into the boy's feelings, laughed mockingly, and poor Fred made a baby of himself, and wept aloud. As neither of them knew that the above conversation had been overheard, a message was sent up to the nursery to the effect, that as Master Fred was going to school for the first time, he had better wear his knickerbockers, thus causing Fred to triumph, but saving Nancy's authority nevertheless.

Brave as Fred was, he was a good deal discomfited, when, the school door being opened, a hundred and fifty pairs of eyes were turned full upon him. He was glad enough then of the friendly shelter of my dress, and clung to it even more than his sister did. We were soon seated by the master's desk, Fred preferring to take up his position on a form beside some boys of his own age close to my chair. While the lessons were being rehearsed by the class, Master Fred quite recovered himself, and returned the stares of the curious manfully. The boy sitting next to him must have thought he was taking it too coolly, or perhaps wanted to try what stuff Master Fred was made of, so he gave his rather long hair a pull from behind, whispering to his next neighbor, "A lad-die in breeks."

Such conduct was rather insulting, and it was natural that poor Fred should feel a little bewildered. The wish to prove himself a thorough boy rose uppermost in his mind; so stuffing his hands into his pockets, he began to whistle out loud and clearly. You should have seen the faces of the little boys on the form. Some held their breath in astonishment at the daring displayed by the new boy, while the others cried, "O! O!" with uplifted fingers.

Down came the master's cane on the desk with a loud crack, accompanied with a shout, "Let the boy who made that sound stand out!"

"It was him, it was him did it," cried some of the girls from the form behind, pointing to Fred, much to Katie's horror and consternation, who expected to see her little brother led out and publicly whipped. How the matter would have ended it is hard to say, but at that moment the school-room door was pushed open with a sudden bang, and the shock head of half-witted Dick, the village "natural," was thrust round the corner, while his body seemed to be clinging to the wall as if afraid to trust more than his hands and head into such a dreadful place as the school-house. "Yer swine's awa'," was all he said before disappearing, but these three words were sufficient to electrify the whole school.

The biggest boys seized their caps from the pins behind them, and sat on the very edge of their seats, their backs bent and their heads protruding, in readiness to rush out; while those of a younger age made a dash at the door, but were stopped in time by the meek-looking, long-legged pupil-teacher. The smallest of all, including the girls, began to stuff their books into their bags, hoping, as the day was already somewhat advanced, they would not be required any more that afternoon.

"Seats: keep your seats! — silence!" shouted the master, bringing his cane down on the desk with several emphatic whacks that evidently struck terror into the hearts of the younger ones, and

caused my eyes to wink and water. "Tommy Bruce, come back, sir!" he shouted to a boy who had boldly made an attempt to run out from between the very legs of the pupil-teacher, but was held by them as if in a vice. "This is most aggravating," said the master, in a state of perplexity; and to my question of what was the matter, he replied, "It's a little pig, not three months old, which I bought the other night, and it has got out of its sty, and is doubtless ranging through the village at his own —"

Again the head of Wild Dick was thrust round the door-post as before, with the additional intelligence, "Yer grumphie 'll be at the crafts in a wee minute."

As there was scarcely a boy belonging to the village whose parents had not a piece of ground for their potatoes and corn at the so-called crofts, this additional piece of news conveyed by Dick now made the matter a public one. In spite of the master's shouts, and the efforts of the pupil-teacher to keep them in, the doorway could not be closed against the resistless outburst of the boys, who poured out in a body, on their way to protect their parents' property against the invasion of the Dominie's grumphie. One boy, whom the master laid hold of by the neck of his jacket, managed to wriggle himself out of it, leaving that garment behind him, while he made his way down "the school brae" in a succession of somersaults bewil-

dering to behold. "That laddie will do more harm than ten pigs," said the discomfited school-master; "run, John, run," to the pupil-teacher, "and see that the beast is kept back from the crofts. It'll be a bad business if the corn be trampled and the potatoes trodden."

It was impossible to remain in the empty school-room while such an exciting chase was going on outside; and though the worthy school-master politely apologized for the interruption, I saw it was an immense relief to him when I proposed to go and see the animal caught. From our elevated position on the school slope we could see the whole proceedings. Such fun these children had, to be sure; and what an imp of mischief that little pig was! They had got it turned away from the crofts, if it ever had been there, and into the plantation at the end of "the old ha' wood," and there they hunted it up and down till you would have thought they must have been perfectly exhausted."

"Geordie Mather has gript it noo," cried some of the girls who had been content to take up their position beside us; but though this statement was true enough, the said Geordie Mather, who turned out to be the boy without the jacket, although he had managed by a clever spring to jump on piggie's back, appeared to be quite unable to hold it, for, with a squeal and an impish grunt, away went the animal once more. With its tail twirled provokingly, it ran now here, now there, sometimes

through the midst of a group of twenty, who fell upon it in a mass, burying it as it were. "They've gotten it this time," cried the girls; but, instead of that, there was piggie away again with the long-legged pupil-teacher after it in full cry, and Geordie Mather following him like a wheel hard after. It is likely that John would have captured the little pig this time had not the incorrigible Geordie taken a somersault just at the moment, managing to land right in front of the pupil-teacher, who, not being prepared for this, lost his balance, and came down all his length. Up sprang Geordie, and, as if to revenge himself for all the "palmies" he had received, planted his foot on the discomfited teacher's back, held out his other leg and arms to their fullest stretch, in imitation of an acrobat he had seen in a travelling circus, and shouted, "Hurrah, hurrah!"

"Now I see clearly by that action of Geordie Mather that they don't want to catch my grumphie till they have had some sport with it first," said the Dominie; "so as they can't do much harm so long as they keep to the 'plantin,' I will ask you to come over to the house, ma'am, and take a rest; my sister will be glad to see you."

The Dominie's house was close at hand, and we were not many minutes in reaching it and being ushered into the garden, where he left us to eat gooseberries while he went in search of his sister. It was an old-fashioned garden, just such a one as

you would expect a man like Mr. Innes to have. There were all the varieties of vegetables growing in abundance, and all kinds of fruit bushes and trees, some of the latter, especially the apples, laden with the promise of a plentiful crop. There were beds of lavender and thyme, chamomile and rosemary, with bunches of balm of all sorts, and hardy flowers nestling behind the tall boxwood borders; and conspicuous amongst them were tall bushes of southernwood, or "appleringie," a sprig of which, along with some fragrant sweet-peas, Susy, the servant, never failed to bring to church. There were three or four hives of bees at the foot of the garden, under a wooden house, and in front of them were especial beds of the flowers they liked best, so that if the bees should happen to take a lazy fit, they might get the material for their honey close to their own doors.

We had just seen thus much when the schoolmaster returned, followed by his sister. Miss Innes was a middle-aged spinster, with a healthy face and a pleasant gray eye; and if she came under the designation of old maid, she was at all events a most agreeable representative of the class, being well known in the neighborhood for her kindness; and, moreover, celebrated among children for her wonderful stores of luxuries. Her genial smile made them feel as if they had found a sure friend; at any rate, it was love at first sight on Fred's part. From that time, for weeks, we

heard of nothing but Miss Innes, and her jam, her home-baked scones, her pretty parlor, her wonderful samplers, and sewed pictures of people and ducks, and, above all, the stories she could relate of giants and goblins and fairies, so that my attempts were regarded as very tame in comparison, if not altogether despised. Kate, who loved dolls more than anything else as yet, came home in triumph one day with the news that Miss Innes had a doll. "Yes, aunt, it is true; I am not joking," she exclaimed; "she really *has* a doll. You can't say I am too old *now* to play with dolls," she added, slyly; "and it has ever so many frocks and hats and cloaks, and a pair of *real* leather shoes."

"And who do you think made them, aunt?" said Fred. "The master, when he was a little boy, and Miss Innes says he was very proud of dolls then. What a lot of palmies he gave a boy to-day though!"

Of course all these wonderful things took months to discover, for on the occasion of our first visit we only got the length of visiting the garden, as the return of the pig was expected every moment. Indeed, it was only after Miss Innes had joined us that she became aware of the animal's absence.

"What! little grumphie out again," she exclaimed, starting. "It seems as if nothing could keep the beast in. I had the sty heightened this

very forenoon. Did you promise them a penny; Matthew," she continued, turning to her brother, "if they caught the piggie at once?"

"Promise them a penny?" cried the school-master, with a laugh. "They were off before I could say Jack Robinson. A palmy would suit them better."

"Toots, toots, Matthew," said Miss Innes, "when will you learn sense? I'm sure you of all men ought to know that bairns will be bairns, puir things. Just excuse me a moment, ma'am, till I send off Susy to offer them a penny, and I'm thinking grumphie will be here afore you can say Jack without the Robison."

Not long after Susy's departure a procession appeared, headed by Geordie Mather carrying the grumphie, as they called it, rolled tightly in his waistcoat, which he had stripped off for the purpose.

"An' who was the clever laddie that caught him?" said Miss Innes, after she had seen the little pig shut securely into an out-house till the sty could be examined.

"It was me, ma'am," said Geordie Mather, "an' Tommy Bruce he helpit to haud him by the tail till I rolled him up in my waistcoat."

"Then ye'll have to divide the penny with him," said Miss Innes; "but losh me, laddie, what a heat ye're in! gae wa' into the kitchen. an' Susy will gie ye a seat by the fire till ye're

cooler. An' Tommy, ye can go too. Now dinna stir till I come to ye. We canna gie them a jeelie piece," said Miss Innes, in a whisper to me; "but Geordie, the loon, kens weel what I sent him in for. He's a terrible laddie that for mischief, but a fine callant tho'."

"He and Tommy Bruce give me more trouble than the whole school put together," said Mr. Innes. "There is n't a day passes but I have to give him a palmy, an'—"

"An' I wonder you can do it, Matthew," replied his sister. "Which of your pupils was the maist attentive when you lay ill with the sciatica in your knee, I should like to know? Who travelled three miles to fetch salt water and tangle to boil for poultices to ye, and carried the milk ilka day two miles to let me have Susy at home? Was n't it just Geordie Mather?"

"And how many pennies and jelly pieces did the young rascal get for doing it?" said the master, with a smile.

"Whisht, Matthew," replied Miss Innes, "dinna say it was for that the callant went, for I'll no believe it. The laddie has a good kind heart, for a' his bit mischievous pranks."

The Dominie now bid me good-day, to return to the school-house, though it was merely to lock his desk and the door, for the boys had taken good care not to bring piggie back before the usual hour for going home had arrived. Here Katie and

Fred, who had been making a tour of the garden, came running with the news that they had discovered a large cage full of all kinds of birds on a table in the summer-house.

"Yes, my dears, these are the master's birds," said Miss Innes, moving briskly forward to the place where the birds were. "My brother is very fond of rearing canaries and linnets, and for that matter I'm afraid I waste a good deal of valuable time with them too."

Outside the little summer-house where the large cage was, there were hanging two small cages with a solitary canary in each. The one in the shade trilled and piped its little notes in a deafening manner, as if vying with the songsters inside, but the other sat on its perch silent, with drooping wing, and dim, listless-looking eyes.

"That one is surely not well," said Katie; "poor birdie—look up, birdie."

The bird drew itself up and sidled towards the edge of the cage, giving a faint chirp-chirp in answer to the caress; but as if the exertion was too much for it, it sunk down into a more listless state than before.

"That dwining bird's a sore subject with the master," said good Miss Innes. "There's a little bit of a history connected with it, but it's too old-fashioned for bairns' ears," she said, patting Katie on the back, "though they're very fond of stories for all that; but the bird must be coming round,

or it likes the sound of your voice, my child, for he hasn't given a single cheep to anybody for days. The master will be proud to hear of it."

The downing bird must have taken a fancy to Kate; for as Miss Innes kindly invited the two children to spend "the piece hour" with her, it cheered up considerably when she spoke to it, and would peck at the green food when given by her hand. Consequently Kate soon became a prime favorite with the worthy Dominie, and the bird was expected to recover, which before had been considered doubtful.

The right-hand wall of the Dominie's garden was the boundary wall of the church-yard, and was so low that the graves almost looked as if they were a part of his grounds. "But what has the church-yard to do with the grumphie?" I hear some one asking. Patience, and you will see it has a great deal to do with it.

It was a very plain-looking church-yard, stretching down to the main road, and often as I had passed it, though some of the tomb-stones were weird-looking enough in a waning moonlight night, I never had felt the least sense of eeriness. The backs of many of the cottages stood in it, in some cases the windows of the best rooms having it for their principal view. There was one old woman who took a pleasure in pointing out the particular "head-stone" she had erected to the memory of her husband and children, never forgetting to draw

attention to the space left for herself, "when the Lord should see fit to send for her."

All this caused the church-yard to be regarded as a pleasant place rather than otherwise, and nobody would have thought of hastening past it in the gloaming, as is often done elsewhere. Close above the open main road it rises almost cheerily to the elevated level of the school-house brae at its side; there the proportions of the fine old church are grandly set forth, and the tomb-stones are raised to the open sky. In the front there grows the only tree within the enclosure, a great tall healthy plane-tree, which seems to have drawn all the sap of the vicinity to itself. Under the shadow of it a very tall Maltese cross has been erected to the memory of Mrs. Wauchope of Bal-kiddo. This cross, though beautiful, was an eyesore to many of the worthy villagers, who still clung to the old-fashioned shapeless head-stone with winged cherub heads, or perhaps a grinning skull and cross-bones for ornaments; but when Mr. Haldane, of the Hill Farm, had one erected to the memory of his son, the indignation was even greater. Mr. Haldane having a more artistic taste than his neighbors, had chosen an upright stone with an arched top, and a thing like a helmet or a Scotch cap at the summit, so as to produce the effect in an uncertain light of a head and shoulders.

"It's a sad thing to see the love o' new-fangled

notions creeping into our very graveyards," said the cobbler, when battling with the weaver over the vexed question. "There, look at that grand cross o' Balkiddo's. To be sure, they belong to the English Church, which is some sma' excuse, but when wad his worthy father have allowed a thing o' the kind to stand at his wife's grave-head?"

"O, but Balkiddo belongs to the gentry, an' it's no for the like o' us to —" But here the weaver, who always tried to restore peace, if possible, unconsciously fanned the flame.

"That's some o' your Conservative notions, Balsillic," said the cobbler. "Na, na, my man, we have a right to criticeese when we like and *what* we like. Thank guidness, Scotland is a free country still."

"Aweel, that being the case, by your ain showing, hasna Haldane a right to put up what kind o' a headstane he pleases?" said the weaver.

"But he needna hae gotten it made so as to make nervish women and bairns grue at it for a ghaist in the gloaming," said the tailor. "I got a fear myself ae night I was passing."

"An' what I'm saying is this, as I've said the same afore," said the carpenter. "It's an ill-done thing o' Haldane to put up a thing o' the kind, seein' that his futher was a man o' great discretion, and hated ony o' the auld notions to be done awa' wi'. He was a most particler man, auld Haldane ;

and having that stane sae close to him, is enough to make him rise frae his grave."

"Hoots, dinna say that, neebor," said the tailor with a shudder. "It's an ill thing to gae the place the name o' a ghaist."

"Isna your bit burial-ground next to the Haldane's?" said a young man, nudging his next neighbor, for it was well known the tailor, perhaps because he had been at sea in his youth, was very superstitious.

"Whisht, wisht, Bob Sclater," said the weaver, mildly, "we're wanderin' frae the point althegither; there's no a ghaist in the question. We a' ken nowadays sic a thing is perfect havers."

"Ghosts havers? I'm no so sure about that," replied Hugh Mackintosh, a man who had come recently to the village, and had set up in business as a shoemaker in opposition to our friend the cobbler.

"Ye'll hae seen ane, I'm jaloosing," said the cobbler, with a sneer.

"I'm no prepared to say yes to that exactly," said Hugh, "but my father told me his father had seen ane, and that is no verra lang syne."

"Keep sic stories for the Heelands, my man," replied the cobbler, loftily. "They'll no gang doon wi' the like o' us Lowland chieles; we're ower auld-farrant hereabouts."

The laugh consequently turned against the shoemaker, who took the first opportunity to leave the

group and make his way home to his house, which happened to be one of those that stood close by the church-yard, with the back looking that way. Hugh was a man who seldom mixed with his neighbors, and never once joined the evening social meeting in the village inn. It was, therefore, very startling to the select circle who had gathered round the kitchen fire of the inn that evening to be interrupted by the sudden entrance of Hugh Mackintosh, who flung himself upon the nearest bench, apparently about to faint.

One ran to get feathers to burn under his nose, while others chafed his hands, and the innkeeper poured some spirits down his throat, which, though nearly choking him, had the effect of restoring him to consciousness.

"Och! och!" said the poor shoemaker, sighing with relief to find himself in such goodly company, "I hae seen ane now, at ony rate."

"Seen what, my man?" inquired the innkeeper.

"A ghaist, as sure as I'm living I've seen a ghaist. Och! och!" And here Hugh appeared about to faint again, but was brought once more to his senses by a repetition of the old dose.

"Stuff and nonsense," said David Mather, the minister's man, "you must have been drinking, or perhaps yer brose hasna agree wi' ye, an' ye've had the nightmare."

"Let's hear what ye saw," said some of the

young men of the company, trying to hide a smile, one adding, "Had ye the presence o' mind, Hugh, to speer at him if he was takin' a dauner by himsel', or was't a general rising, as the auld story has it?"

"O, whisht, whisht!" said Hugh, in evident distress, drawing in his breath with a hiss, as some said, like a serpent. His continued distress, however, had the effect of causing his audience to have compassion on him, and more than one said kindly, "Aweel, let's hear what ye saw." It seemed a relief to the poor shoemaker to tell his story, which he did without further interruption.

"I happened to open the window o' my ben-end, an' there, in the light o' the moon, I saw a white form. It was lying on the tap o' a grave. The next moment the moon was hidden behind a cloud, but I saw it move. First it gave a glisk to the right, as if about to flash clean ower the wa' down on to the road below, but it seemed to take a new thought, for in the twinkling o' an eye, it came glancing in the direction o' my window, and I was expecting it to come *through* me, when all of a sudden it gave a — och!"

"Here, man, take a wee drap mair," said the host; "an' what did it do next, my man?"

"It give a most unearthly yell, an' then vanished."

"Did onybody ever hear tell afore o' a ghaist yelling?" said David Mather, severely. "That

fact convinces *me*, my man, that ye've been drinking. Now, there's nae hairm that I can see in meeting a'thegether in an open manner to hae a crack ower the papers an' hear what they parliamentary gentry are about; but to drink at hame on the sly is a bad practice, an' the sooner ye break yersel' o' the habit, my man, the better."

As Hugh refused to go home to his own house again that night, he was accommodated with a bed in the inn. If the truth were told, some of the company were not a little relieved to think their houses were not so close to that part of the churchyard, and, consequently, could afford to laugh at Hugh's alarm.

The next morning, just as Mr. Innes and his sister were about to sit down to breakfast, Susy the servant came running in with the news that the grumphie was off again.

"Off or no off, I must have my breakfast," said the Dominie; "and as for that incorrigible imp, I think the sooner we turn him into pork, the better."

"But the beast must be found, Matthew," said Miss Innes, in distress.

"There will be no need to put a placard on the kirk-gate," said Mr. Innes; "the news of its loss will be over the width and breadth of the place before this. Keep your mind easy, the grumphie will be found. But if you like, I'll send round the drum. I'll hae Robbie to announce by tuck o'

drum, 'Neighbors a', the Dominie's grumphie's awa'." And the worthy Dominie laughed heartily at his own joke.

But though diligent search was made for the grumphie, both far and near, no trace of it could be found. It happened to be a very wet day, which no doubt cooled the ardor of the school-children; but as the next was fine, and a Saturday besides, the search was renewed with increased energy. It was getting on towards the afternoon, and the children had been thinking of giving up the hunt, even though Miss Innes had extended the amount of the reward to a whole shilling, when they were startled by the unmistakable squeal of a pig. The sound came from the direction of the church-yard, towards which all the children scampered. There they found the gate open, not a usual thing on a Saturday, but David, the sexton, had been prevented by the rain from finishing a grave the day before, and had returned to complete it. Lo and behold, in descending into the grave, what had he stepped upon but the prostrate form of the Dominie's grumphie, lying at the bottom of it!

It was a relief to think the ministers would not be required to "exorcise" or "lay" the ghost which Hugh fancied he had seen and in which some people were beginning to believe. It was now quite plain that the grumphie was the spectre, especially when it became known that the open

grave was close to the shoemaker's window. Even Hugh Mackintosh was sure of this, and so much relieved was his mind, that he insisted upon bearing the captured offender home. Consequently, that impish animal was ignominiously thrust into a sack, slung on Hugh's back, and carried to his sty in triumph. In case he should escape again, which did not seem likely, as poor piggie was more dead than alive, Hugh volunteered to make the sty so secure, that unless the grumphie got a pair of wings he could not get out. This having been done, poor piggie roamed no more, but had to content himself with his straw bed and his trough, and his trough and his straw bed by way of a change.

"Well," said Miss Innes, with a sigh of relief, "I'm glad that animal is circumvented at last, though I never expect he'll make good ham, after the chasing he has had. It's a wonder to see the beast alive after all he has come through, so I ought to feel thankful. Why, Matthew, what are you laughing at? I see nothing to laugh at for my part, rather the reverse."

"I was thinking if it wouldna be an advisable thing to send round the drum after all, or to put up a bill on the church gate to-morrow. Our worthy quadruped has caused a good deal of excitement, and the nerves of the nervous folks may have been unstrung by the story of Hugh's ghost. It's wonderful how these superstitious notions

creep in, and, as the tailor says, it is an ill thing to give the village the name of a ghost."

"An' what wad ye put on your bill, if it's a fair question?" said Miss Innes, rubbing away at her china teacups, which she always washed with her own hands.

"Neighbors round, our grumphia's found."

"Hoots, sic nonsense, Matthew!" said Miss Innes, trying to hide a smile; "you mind me o' the time when you used to be as daft a haveral as grumphia itsel'. Do you remember when I had to plead for ye to the master when you played the tru —?"

"Whisht, whisht, Mary!" said her brother hastily, spreading out a great palm towards his sister's lips. "There's some o' the bairns outside — what if they heard you? Let that flee stick to the wa'."

THE SAILOR'S MONKEY.

FOUR miles from our little hamlet is the cathedral and university town; which, boasting of a harbor and a fine beach, is a popular resort in summer for sea-bathers. One market day, when turning into the principal street, an infuriated bullock came rushing along, scattering the people in all directions, who fled as if for dear life into the shops and houses. A narrow lane was close at hand, but observing no open door in it, I ran along in search of a place of refuge. On looking over my shoulder for a moment I was horrified to see the bullock standing at the end of the lane, with head erect, blood-shot eyes, nostrils dilated, and foaming at the mouth. Hoping that he would find the lane too narrow, I paused to take breath; but the shouts from the street beyond, and the pattering of many feet, warned the animal that his pursuers were close at hand. Lowering his head, therefore, as if to be in readiness to sweep everything from his path, with a tremendous roar he rushed after me. I ran on, but my strength failing me, and my foot tripping

on a stone, I fell flat on the footpath. Fortunately the bullock did not vent his rage on me, but I shall never forget his look as he swiftly passed me and disappeared down the steep bank to the beach.

"Are you hurt, mem?" said a kindly voice in my stupefied ear.

"I can scarcely tell," I replied; but on regaining my feet I found that I was more frightened than hurt, and though I had got some bruises about my face and arms, they were fortunately very slight. My clothes, however, were so soiled with mud, that I was very glad to accept the kindly invitation to walk in and get myself put to rights. The next moment I found myself in the private parlor or kitchen of a very old-fashioned inn, and discovered that my kind friend was the hostess, Mrs. Harvey, of whom I had often heard, her good qualities being well known to many of our neighbors.

The Star is a quiet, old-fashioned inn, removed from the bustle and excitement of the market; and to those who have nothing to do with the business being transacted in front of the two fashionable hotels, it must be a relief to have its shady, cool parlor to retire to on market days with Mrs. Harvey able and ready to supply one's wants.

"My fegs, mem," said Mrs. Harvey, after I had been seated, "but you have had a narrow escape! It was most fearsome to see that animal

come down the lane. I gied ye up for lost a'the-gether; but let's be thankfū ye've gotten off as weel as ye hae done, and if ye will jist sit for a minute by the fire to gie yer dress a bit dry, we'll hae ye cleaned and made decent-looking in a trice."

"I am afraid I shall be in your way," I replied. "This must be a busy day with you."

"O, dinna put yoursel' aboot, mem," she continued. "Maggie here — that's my sister's auldest lassie — can mind the bar as weel as I can do. I've seen the day when it would have ta'en us baith, ay, an' we wad hae been sair forfeughen to get them served; but thae grand hotels hae ta'en a heap o' business awa'; though I shouldna complain, for I've a lot o' my auld customers still."

At this moment Mrs. Harvey's name was called, and by a voice that evidently expected to be attended to without delay. So with an "Excuse me, mem, that's Mr. Nichol o' Hillend, ain o' my auldest freends," Mrs. Harvey squeezed her portly form through a little door in the partition of the bar.

During Mrs. Harvey's absence I took the opportunity of looking about me. The inn, like many more of the houses around, had been built to stand siege of time and old feud. The walls were of great thickness, and the ceilings so low that men even of middle height were forced to bend their heads till they reached their seats in the kitchen or parlors. Yet these walls have their advantages,

for they make the inn cool in summer and warm in winter; and when the snow is on the ground, where will you find a brighter fire or a snuggler seat, than in Mrs. Harvey's private parlor?

It would take pages were I to describe all the various wonderful things to be found in this parlor. The baskets of foreign shells, the cases of stuffed birds of many hues, the intricate carved ivory boxes and fans, the savage-looking clubs and knives, and I cannot tell you all what besides. Before the fire is stretched a magnificent tiger-skin rug, which I afterwards discovered was the pride of my worthy hostess's heart. Under the side-table is a stuffed kangaroo supported by a large sea bird and an animal like a white squirrel. If you seat yourself by the fire, and with your feet on the soft tiger skin, turn your eyes away from the head with its gleaming, fierce, glass eyes, you will see on the side-table a magnificent model of a ship in full sail, peacefully making its never-ending voyage along the well-polished mahogany. Among the many beautiful things around, the model ship always seems to my eyes to stand out as the most prominent object in this private museum. What a number of voyages I have had the privilege of taking in imagination in that model ship, in company with the worthy hostess of the Star inn! After all, that infuriated bullock served me a good turn, and I was made to realize in this instance that "all's well that ends well."

Mr. Nichol of Hillend did not detain Mrs. Harvey long. He had just looked in apparently to order a chop, to be ready after the market was over. "Now, Mistress Harvey," I heard him say, "you are not to trust Maggie there to cook it; mind ye that, and see that it is done rarely, gudewife!"

"Hoots, Mr. Nichol, ye surely dinna need to tell me how to cook yer chop, seeing that I've made yer dinner ready for ye for the last three-and-twenty years. I canna understand what's makin' ye speak o' 't the day."

"Ye 'll hae forgotten, then, that Maggie cooked the ane I got last week," was the reply.

"Hoots, but ye've a gude memory, sir. I couldna help it, seeing that I had just gotten the news o' my puir son Johnnie's shipwreck. Ye wad scarcely hae had a heart for minding chops yersel', sir. At ony rate, I'm thinking your gude lady wad hae been like me if sic news had been brocht to her o' Maister Peter."

"Aweel, gin ye cook this ane right, we'll sae naething about the last. An' what is Johnnie bringing hame to ye this time, think ye? He'll hae a difficulty in selecting something new."

"He's jist bringing himsel', sir, for he writes me that he's lost every stick an' clout. But what care I, if he's only safe himsel', puir chiel! He'll maybe hae gotten enough o' the sea this time, an' bide at hame; for O! but he takes his mither's heart wi' him, an' there's ay a sair time in store

for me on windy nights! O, but I wish the laddie had been born wi' a less roving bent. An' yet, wi' a' his fauts, he's a laddie, ony mither wad be proud o'."

"He's a fine manly fellow," said Mr. Nichol. "And I'm glad to hear he is safe-once more. I've often told you, gudewife, that he wad turn up some day, like my son Peter. He's ower bad a penny to drown."

"Hoots, toots, sir, laddies will be laddies; an' if I am prood o' my Johnnie, I'm thinking ye're about the same wi' Maister Peter, for a' ye were sair hard upon him for rinnin' awa' to sea. But I'm glad ye've forgiven him, for he's as blythe-hearted a cratur as ye'll see ony gate."

When Mr. Nichol took his departure, Mrs. Harvey returned; but as it was close to the hour when my train left for home, I could only wait to hear that her son, on his voyage from Australia, had been shipwrecked in a severe gale off the Irish coast, and that he and other two men had reached the shore by swimming, while the rest of the crew, and several passengers, had perished.

"You'll maybe look in again some day when ye're passing, mem," said the worthy woman, when I rose to go. "Ye're no likely to see Johnnie, for he's a queer fish. He's that shy, for a' he's been round the world twice, forbye voyages here, there, and a' gates, that he'll no

“speak to onybody but me an’ Maggie there. She needna be sae glad to see him back again, as she is, puir lassie, for he jist sits an torments the very life out o’ her.”

In a week or two after this I found myself again in Mrs. Harvey’s parlor, being drawn to her cheerful fireside by the intense cold. The good woman was out when I entered, but Maggie, her niece and able assistant, gave me a kindly welcome, and, bidding me draw my chair nearer to the fire, said her aunt would be in presently. A customer entered the bar, and I was left alone with the curiosities. No sooner was the bar door shut behind Maggie, than something sprang on my back, and began to pull at the ribbons of my bonnet in a very determined manner. I thought it was a cat, and tried to shake it off, but the more I shook it the firmer it clung to my throat, till I expected every moment to be choked outright.

“Go down, you horrid creature !” I said ; but it only gave another squeeze to my neck. Thinking it might be more advisable to propitiate the enemy, I tried to coax it, by speaking in a very soft voice, unfastening its paws the while. I had succeeded in getting them loosened, and was in the act of swinging it round my head, when, drawing them from my hands, it escaped, and, with a strange cry, escaped under a chair. “Was it a cat?” I thought. “But if it was n’t a cat,

what other animal could it be?" And I went cautiously forward to its hiding-place.

A long and peculiar-looking tail protruded from beneath the bar of the chair, which certainly could not belong to the feline species, and puzzled me greatly. At this moment I heard Mrs. Harvey saying to her niece, "Wha d'ye say is in, Maggie? O, I mind," she continued, in answer to Maggie's reply. "You mean the lady that was knocked doon by the bullock. But, lassie, hae ye tied up that beast o' a puggie? It'll be at its tricks again, and maybe gie her a sair fright. Awa' ye go an' grip him, for I canna touch the ugly cratur."

The mystery was at once explained, and seeing the tail disappearing under the chair, and a pair of twinkling black eyes peering at me, I must own that my courage began to fail me, and I called to Mrs. Harvey to hasten to my assistance.

"Aweel, mem, I dinna wonder that ye should be frightened," said the worthy woman; "I was the very same mysel' the first time I saw him; an' I'm no free to touch him even yet. I tell ye plainly, I wadna thole the cratur in the hoose, if it wasna for his extraordinary affection for my son Johnnie. After he gaed awa' it was most pitiful to see the distress the cratur showed; an' if it hadna been for Maggie I do believe he wad hae made awa' wi' himsel', though he's only a puggie."

"Is he more reconciled to his fate now?" I inquired, thinking at the same time that the loss of his master had not cured him of his mischievous tricks.

"Weel, yes, mem," replied Mrs. Harvey. "Yet he hasna forgotten Johnnie a grain. See to this, mem." And the good woman took from a press an old blue jacket, that had evidently seen hard service at sea, and laid it on a chair.

No sooner was this done than the monkey, who had been watching her movements for some time, came crawling out of its hiding-place, and whisked itself up into the chair. After feeling the coat carefully, with a cry of joy he lifted up a fold, and crawling under it, lay down with an unmistakable expression of happiness beaming in his twinkling black eyes.

"Puir fellow," said Mrs. Harvey, stroking the animal's head, cautiously, "where's your master? He might hae bidden a wee thing langer wi' his mither, mightna he, Jackie? But he's awa' again. O, ay, mem, even the shipwrecking didna daunt him; he maun be aff the moment his new claes came home. O Johnnie, Johnnie, but ye're a sair trial to yer mother, my bairn!"

It was amusing, but at the same time pathetic, to see the distress of the monkey at these words. Whether he understood what Mrs. Harvey said or not I cannot say, but he sobbed quite audibly, the tears trickling down his cheeks. Every now

and then he wiped them off, while Mrs. Harvey kept saying, "Saw ye ever the like o' that, mem? The puir beastie, he's greetin for my Johnnie."

"But where did your son get the monkey?" I inquired. "Was it from some shipmate after he came on shore?"

"No, mem, he brought the wee cratur safely to shore fastened round his neck," said Mrs. Harvey. "It was a most wonderful thing that he wasna drowned a'thegether. Johnnie fought a long time to restore the cratur to life, for the saut water had nigh-hand chocket him. But Johnnie was a ladie wha couldna be easily turned frae a purpose, an' was determined no to give in till everything had been tried, an' so his perseverance overcame the very death throes, an' the puir puggie came round again."

Maggie, Mrs. Harvey's niece, came in at this time to get some worsted for a stocking she was knitting, and, hearing the last words, she stopped to pat the animal's head, as it lay with its face buried in the jacket, saying, "It was a gude thing that Jacko was saved, for you mind, auntie, Johnnie said he never wad hae gotten hame if it hadna been for the puggie."

"Aweel, Maggie, I'm ay telling ye that ae gude turn deserves anither," said Mrs. Harvey, with a smile. "It was jist right and proper that the puggie should help Johnnie, for I canna see

what use thae beasts are for, but jist to dance an' caper to make the bairns laugh.

"You see, mem," she continued, "Johnnie has a proud spirit, and he wadna write to tell me o' his plight, for I ay insisted he'd rue the day he went to sea, and somehow he felt to come back wi' a' thing gane save the claes on his back, an' them in sic a condition that the auld-claes-man wadna hae g'en twopence for them, — no, though he makes a brag that he gies the highest prices, and refuses naething. Yes, Johnnie's hail worldly possessions were the claes on his back an' that queer cratur o' a puggie."

"But how did the monkey prove himself a treasure?" I inquired.

"Weel ye see, mem, Johnnie was ay a gude hand at a tin whistle, and the very last penny he had in his pouch he spent in buying ane. Then wi' Jacko tied by the neck by a string, he played on his whistle, and made the puggie dance to the tune; and the English folk were that pleased wi' the bit cratur's antics and the fine music, that when the puggie gaed round wi' the hat they couldna resist drapping their pennies in right and left. An' so my laddie was able to pay for a seat in the train whiles; an' what wi' that an' walking and getting a lift in a wagon, he got hame to his mither."

"An' I'm sure I was glad to see him too, auntie," said Maggie, with an ominous sniff, as if she meant to weep the next moment.

"An' wha was misdooting it, my lassie?" said Mrs. Harvey, kindly. "I'm sure the lady here will tell you I said no many days gone that ye were ay far ower kind to your cousin, for he's often harder upon you than I like to see."

I had appointed a boy to meet me at the inn with a hamper, but he brought the message that the articles I wanted could not be ready till the evening. It was therefore decided that the hamper should be left at the Star, Mrs. Harvey kindly volunteering to see it packed and sent on by the last train; so, bidding her a hearty good-by, I took my departure, promising to visit her soon again.

The hamper arrived in due time; but as I was engaged with some visitors, I did not open it immediately. I might not have done so that night even, had it not been for our servant Phemie, who came to tell me that she was afraid a rat or a mouse was squeaking in the hamper. The lid was at once cautiously lifted, when, to our consternation, instead of a rat or a mouse, out sprang Mrs. Harvey's monkey. I am ashamed to say that I fled in terror to my bedroom, locking and bolting the door, and leaving Phemie and the other members of the family to secure the animal as best they could. It was no easy matter, I can assure you. After being chased and hunted from under every chair, and out of every corner, Jacko, determined at all costs to make his escape, made a dart across

the room, and before any one could stop him disappeared up the chimney. As the room had been very warm during the evening, the fire had been allowed to go out, so that Mr. Jacko ran no chance of being burned if he escaped suffocation. Every method was tried to coax him from his hiding-place, but all our wiles proved useless.

"I'm thinking the beast has got out at the top of the lum," said Phemie; "there's no end to the tricks o' thae puggies."

This idea, being reasonable, became popular, yet we could not think of putting on a fire next morning, and were forced to vacate the dining-room till it suited Mr. Jacko's pleasure to come down. It soon became evident that he was there, for various articles began to disappear, such as sofa tidies and fancy ornaments from the mantel-piece, till we were forced to put everything of a portable nature under lock and key. Even after this had been done, Mr. Jacko had apparently been attempting to break open the cabinet doors, but had been compelled to give it up as hopeless.

The next question was, "How did the creature live?" for we took good care to remove anything eatable, in the hope that the pangs of hunger would force him down. But hour after hour passed, and brought no signs of submission. Mrs. Harvey had been sent for, and had promised to come the day after the market; but now that she knew where he was, she did not hasten to relieve us of

our unwelcome guest, but allowed several days to elapse before she sent for him.

During this time my unfortunate little terrier was constantly being blamed for stealing from the neighbors. First some fish were taken from a hook at one of the cottage doors, then a basin of milk disappeared from another, the thief having entered by a small window which had been left open; and as for the eggs laid by the fowls in the early morning, there never was one to be found. Poor Missie really could not understand why every one looked so cross at her, and ordered her with an angry stamp of the foot "to go home." She bore it, however, with her usual placidity, being certain, perhaps, that her usual good qualities would be discovered in the end. I must own, however, when her particular friend, Mrs. Berrie, flung some water at her when she was paying one of her usual visits at the cake-baking hour, Missie became sulky, and showed this by her determination to remain at home, lying with her nose on her paws under the sofa from morning to night. This being the case, it was impossible to accuse her of further depredations, especially of the theft of the winter apples and pears that began to disappear from all the gardens round us.

"I'll tell you what, mem," said Phemie, coming in with the account that all the russets of a favorite kind were gone; "this canna be tholed ony longer. It's that thief o' a puggie up the lum; an' it's a

shame an' a sin to let them blame an innocent doggie. An' what's mair, mem, now that it's apples and pears that's disappearing, it'll be mair than puir Missie that'll be blamed, for a' body kens she canna taste apples nor climb a tree. Na, it'll be the bairnies that'll get the blame this time; an' that puggie maun be gotten oot by hook or by crook,—that's to say, mem, if you will say the word."

"But how do you know he is there? I can hardly believe he would stay in a dark chimney all this time," I replied.

"I saw him this morning, mem," said Phemie, in a whisper, "peepin' in at my sky-light window; an' I got oot o' my bed in a jiffy, and opening it very carefully, I saw the cratur put his hind legs an' his tail into the chimney-pot, and then lower himself down till jist a wee bit o' his head was seen. It's my belief he's built himself a nest there."

"Well, how will you manage to get him out, Phemie? It seems to me that everything has been tried to wile him down. If Mrs. Harvey would only come, she might be successful."

"Ay, but she hasna come, mem, an' doesna seem to be overby anxious. I daresay she is very glad to get rid o' the beast. We've tried saft measures wi' him, an' you see, mem, it'll no do. Puggies are camsteerie animals, I can tell ye; an', what's mair, they're no easy killed. I'll jist

light a wee bit of fire in the grate, an' the smoke will either drive him out at the top, or if he hasna built up the lum a'thegither he'll maybe plum down, but if he fa's into the fire we'll hae him aff afore he's b'urnt. If he did get a bit singe, it's just what he deserves."

As the presence of the monkey was becoming intolerable, I at last agreed to have a small fire lighted. But the lighting of that fire was no easy matter. If Phemie lighted it once, she did it a dozen times. As quickly as it was lighted it went out; and instead of the smoke going up the chimney, it filled the room to suffocation.

"O, mem," said Phemie, in a tone of despair, "he'll hae stuffed the sofa tidies into the lum. What's to be done now? I see there's nothing for it but to set the chimney on fire and burn them out."

I preferred to send for a chimney-sweeper, however, rather than run the chance of setting the house on fire, and a boy was despatched forthwith to the neighboring village. Phemie during the boy's absence insisted upon lighting the fire once more; and, to her great delight, it seemed to burn better. She was just drawing my attention to this when some of the children who had been set to watch the chimney-pot began to scream out, "O, here's the puggie! He's oot, he's oot."

Sure enough Master Jacko was sitting on the chimney can, blinking and sneezing from the

effects of the smoke. But finding that his present quarters were by no means comfortable, he ran along the house, and, swinging himself down by the help of the water-barrel pipes, darted along the top of the garden wall, and took refuge in an apple-tree.

"It's no the first time he's been there, mem," said Phemie. "He kent the road there straight, and never haltit. But now, how are we to catch him? We're just as far foward as ever."

Before many hours elapsed, Mrs. Harvey's niece Maggie arrived, but looking so sad and worn-out that I was afraid to ask how her aunt was, fearing that the good woman was seriously ill.

"It's no auntie, mem. She's vry weel, — that is to say, just wonderfu' considerin'," said Maggie. "But my cousin Johnnie has met wi' an accident at the port, when they were loading the ship; and they've sent him hame. But, O, mem, he'll never be the same Johnnie again." Here the poor girl sat down on the grass under the apple-tree, where the monkey was still hiding, and cried bitterly.

"Why, what is the matter with him? Do the doctors think him in great danger?" I inquired.

"No, mem, no exactly in danger o' his life," said Maggie. "But they're going to cut off his foot in the morning, an' he'll be a lamiter a' his days. But what angers me is, auntie almost looks

pleased, an' she said this very morning to me, 'Gae awa' wi' your greetin', lassie; he'll rove nae mair; he'll bide at hame now, an' my heart will be at rest.' But I'm forgettin' the puggie, mem. I maun be off hame again; for Johnnie keeps harping on having Jacko, and he bade me hasten back. I do believe he likes that puggie better than he likes me."

The monkey had been making his way slowly down the tree, being attracted, no doubt, by Maggie's familiar voice; and while she covered her face for a few moments, to hide her emotion, Jacko leapt into her lap, and seemed deeply affected by her distress.

"I thought ye wad come for me, Jacko," said the poor girl. "Ye were a help to him awhile, Jacko, and I promised to take care o' ye for him. It was too bad o' ye to rin awa', for he thinks I wasna kind to ye; an' bein' a puggie, ye canna tell him I did the best in my power for ye. But we'll be aff hame now, mem; for Johnnie is awfu' impatient, and keeps crying on constantly for the bit beast."

Not many days after Jacko had been returned to his owner, and our house had been restored to its usual state of repose, though the tidies had to be burned out of the chimney after all, I paid Mrs. Harvey a visit, to inquire for her son. The good woman was sitting by the fireside, with Jacko sleeping peacefully in her lap, while Maggie

crept about on tiptoe, in case she should disturb the inmate of the bed, who lay watching her movements with a smile upon his bronzed and sunburnt face. As I had been led to suppose the sailor was very shy, I intended simply to inquire for him at the door; but when he heard who I was, he invited me to come in, saying he had to apologize for the way that the monkey had troubled me, and hoped there had been no serious damage done.

"It was the most extraordinary thing how he managed to get into the hamper," said Mrs. Harvey. "Maggie says she thinks he slipped in when I was awa' getting a bit o' twine to tie down the lid, and then, thinking it fine fun to hide from me, he had covered down under the straw, and I never saw him."

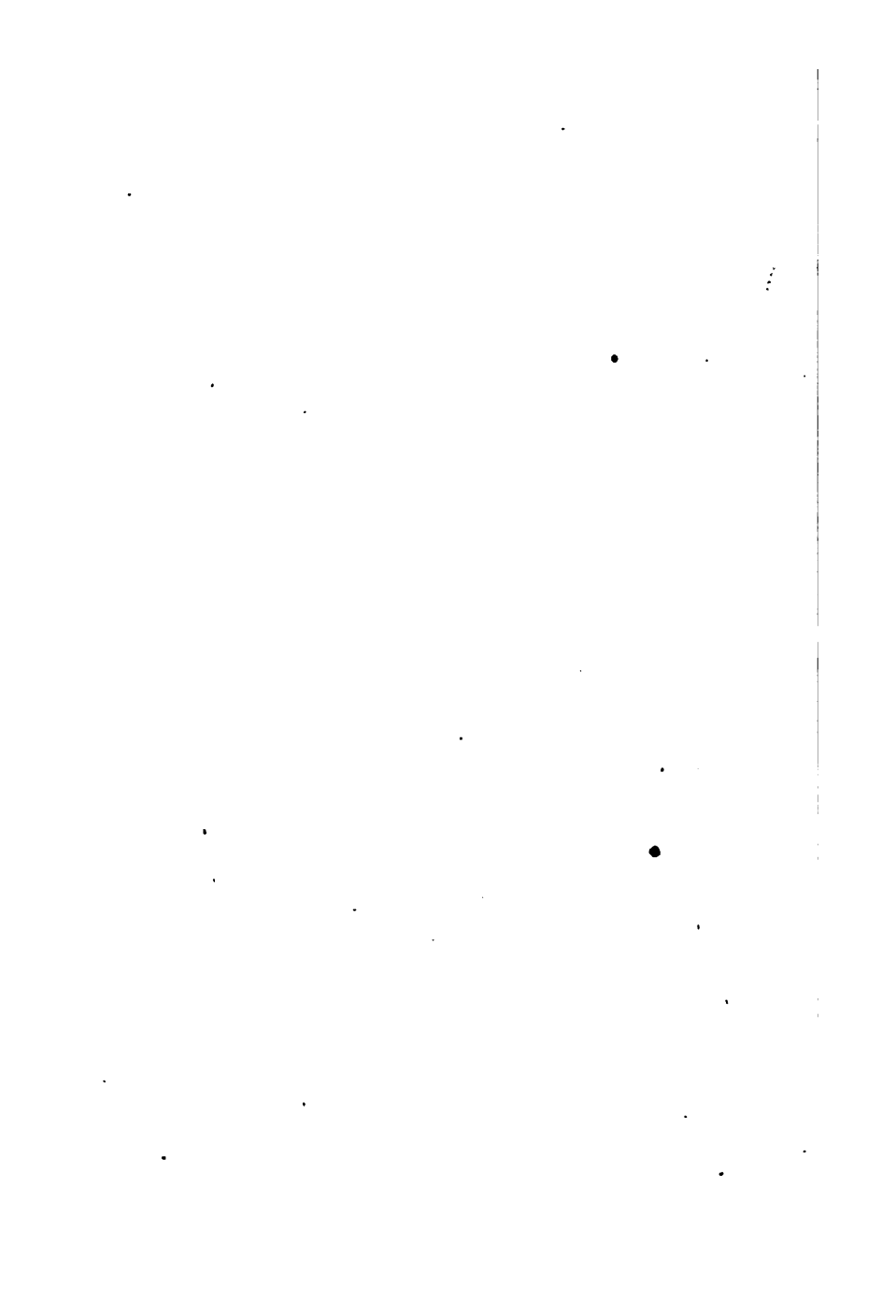
As the infuriated bull had been the means of introducing me to the worthy hostess of the Star inn, so the monkey, and the supposed trouble I had had on his account, served as an introduction to his master, and from that time I was a welcome guest in the private parlor or museum, where the model ship still sailed peacefully. One might have thought the sight of these things would have saddened the poor sailor's life, now that his foot had actually been cut off, and all hope of his continuing at sea was at an end. But instead of doing so, they seemed to brighten his hard lot; and, when his attention was drawn to a shell or bird, it

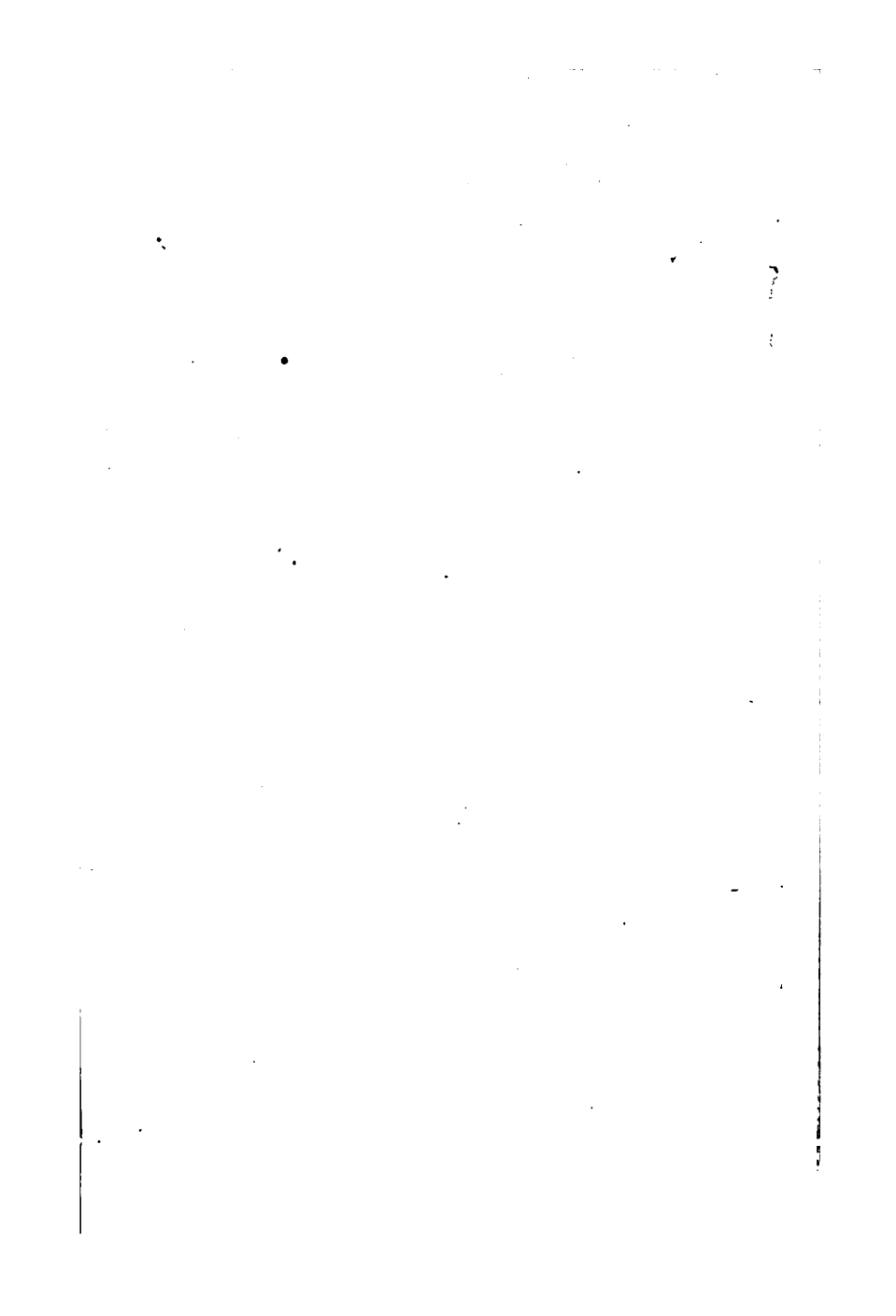
was sufficient to recall the particular voyage on which he had picked it up, the strange shore it came from, the names of his shipmates, and the little incidents and adventures that happened during the voyage. So interesting were these stories to me that I found myself, at any rate once a week, if not oftener, in the little parlor; and it appeared that the narrator was as pleased to relate them as I was to listen to them, for his worthy mother would sometimes draw me aside and say, "I wish ye wad come oftener, mem. I couldna help thinking when the doctors said my laddie's foot must come off, that I would be able to have him ay at hame. My heart gied a jump, that it did, an' it wasna pure sorrow that I felt. But now, mem, I'd be glad to find mysel' shaking him by the hand, and seeing the porter hurling his hammock and his sea-chest awa' up the loan ance mair. I'd gie a' I possess to mak' a sailor o' him again; for my puir laddie is pining, an' I canna help fearing he'll maybe sink, for his love o' the sea is most uncommon. O, mem, try an' come often; for when he's sitting telling his bit tales o' the sea to you, Johnnie's face brightens, an' his e'e has the auld happy look it sae seldom wears now. Ye dinna ken him sae weel as I do, mem. I sit an' watch him by the hour thegither, an' I can see plainly that when ye come in an' say, in your ain cheery way, mem, 'Well, Jack, are you ready for an imaginary

voyage to-day in the model ship? It's a pity to waste such a steady wind and a favorable tide,' then his face just brightens, an' as he goes on I fairly believe he feels himsel' at sea again."

"He seems to be much amused with Jacko," I replied; "I heard him laughing at the animal's droll tricks as I came in to-day."

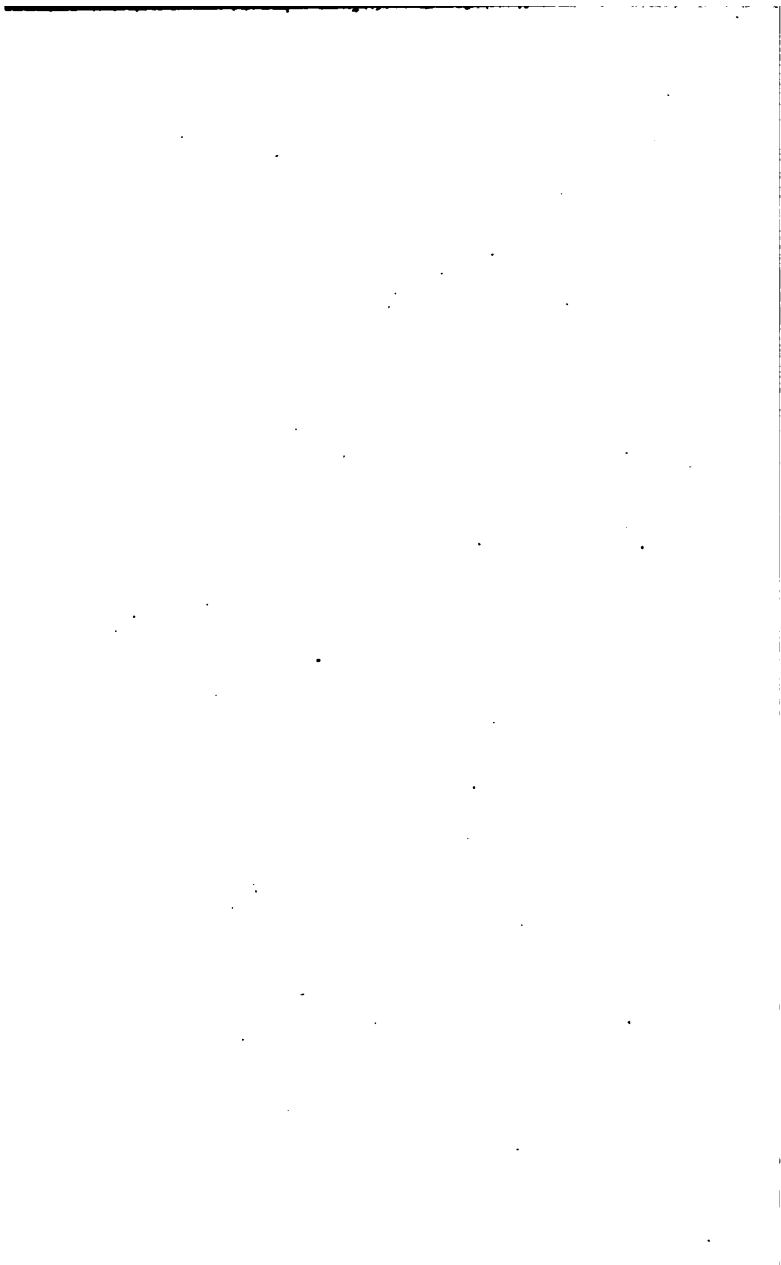
"O, yes, mem, the puggie is a great help to wile away the dreary hours for him, poor lad. An' Maggie, she's a gude lass, an' helps to keep him cheery; but he never seems to enjoy himsel' sae much as when he is relating ane o' his sea stories to you, and I never hear him laugh hearty now, but when he hears the bairns outside speaking o' Mrs. Harvey's puggie; for you see, mem, he ay keeps up the joke against me, that I said, when I first saw the beast, 'Get out wi' yer ugly puggie, — I'll no gie it house-room.' An' now I wadna part wi' the puir beast, no, not for a hundred pounds down!"

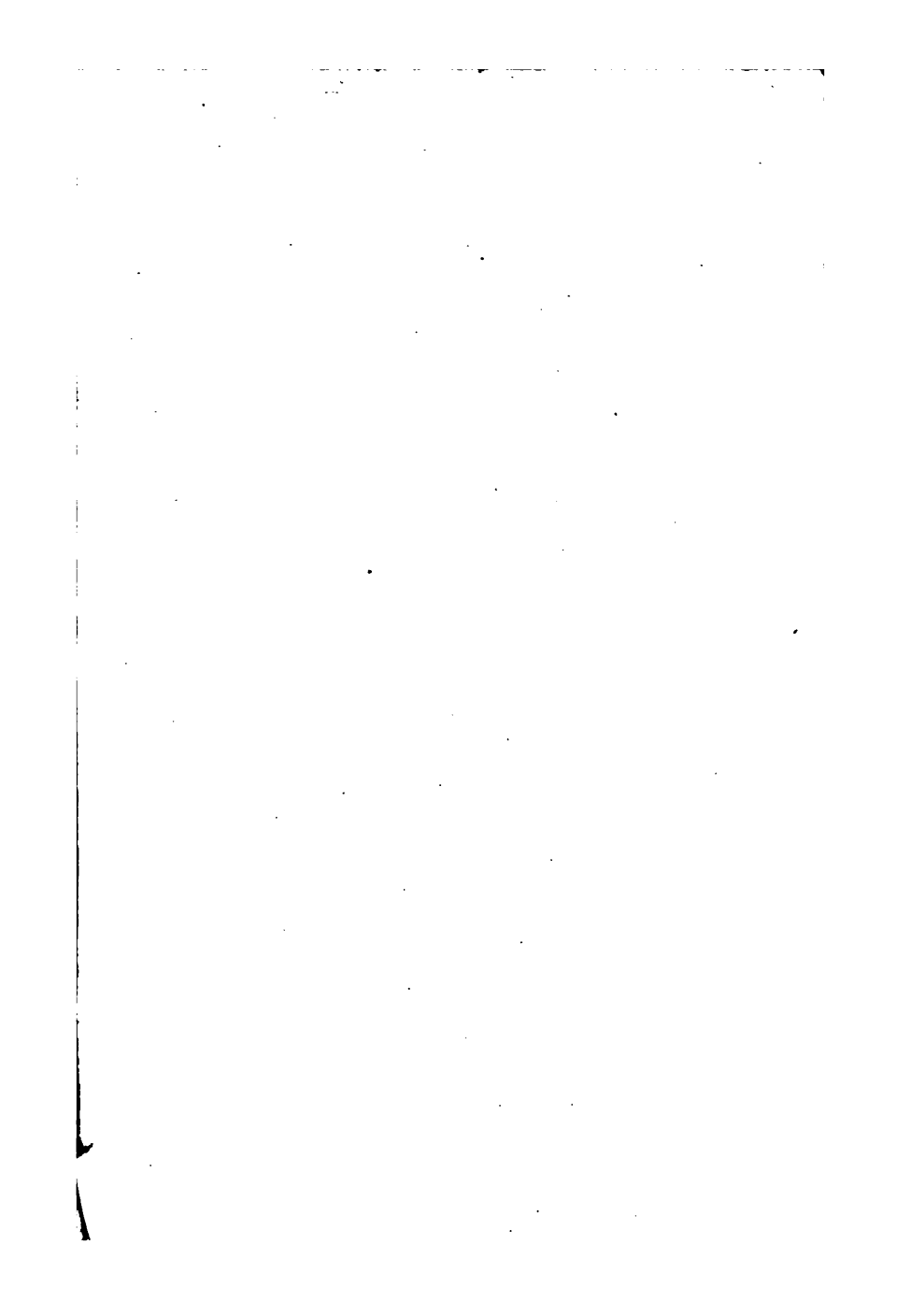




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