

# THE GENTLE PERSUASION

SKETCHES of  
SCOTTISH LIFE

BY  
ALAN GRAY

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The gentle persuasion

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SCOTTISH LIFE

BY  
ALAN GRAY

BULMAN BROS. LIMITED  
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M. Rev.

Canon McElhannon  
with Alan Gray's  
affectionate regards  
1918.

**I** dedicate these simple sketches of Scottish life to the beloved memory of the "little lady," who for forty years was the inspiration of my life. When God called her to the rest of Paradise, those who knew and loved her said—and they said truly—"A Mother in Israel" has been taken from us.

Requiescat in pace et perpetua  
lux luceat ei!

Alan Gray.

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# THE GENTLE PERSUASION

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## I. *The Colonel's Funeral*

MANY years have come and gone since I, Alan Gray, bade farewell to bonny Glenconan, in which I spent the happy days of my childhood; during these years I have feasted my eyes on some of the loveliest scenery in the Empire; my lot has been a most varied one, bringing me in contact with all sorts and conditions of men; yet in spite of these things I have never forgotten, and never can forget, the quiet sylvan beauty of my native glen, or the quaint old-world characters, who then lived in it, all now, alas, gone over to the great majority.

The other day I had occasion to make a long and tedious journey across the snow-covered, frost-bound prairie. There was no wind to speak of; the air, though keen, was not too cold for comfort; my sleigh was well equipped, my horses strong and willing; my Jehu, a French Canadian, could speak very little English, and my French was very rusty; and so as conversation was denied me, I lay back among the fur robes, and fell into a reverie. On the previous evening I had been in the company of a very dear friend, the Rev. Harold Courtney, one of the most devoted and enthusiastic clergymen in the great Northwest. In the course of conversation he happened to remark; "I have often wondered, Gray, what led you, the son of Presbyterian parents, to become an Anglican. You are not the sort of man that would act in a matter like this without the strongest convictions. How did it all come about?"

"Well, Courtney, it is too long a story to tell to-night. You are right, however, in supposing that I could not have made the change without being fully convinced of the superior claims of the Anglican branch of the Church. It took me a long time to unlearn what had been so carefully taught me in my younger days, and to see the defects of the system in which I had been reared. It meant the severing of many associations that were very dear to me. Some day, perhaps, I'll tell you the whole story."

Doubtless it was the memory of this chat that set my wits awandering, and called up before my mental vision scenes and incidents of long ago that had made lasting impressions upon my impressionable nature. How vividly I could realize those scenes: I can see them clearly still. Let me tell you all I saw as I dozed in my sleigh that fine January day.

I saw myself again a boy in my native town of St. Conan's on the northeast of Scotland. The country was clad in the russet mellow robes of harvest. I could see the Conan Water pursuing its quiet journey to the sea between finely wooded banks. On the north bank there was the Craig, a little hamlet consisting of St. Conan's Episcopal Church, the Parsonage, the Craig inn, where the "Defiance" coach used to stop and change horses on its way to and from the city, and a few cottages; on the opposite bank the long straggling village of St. Conan's. St. Conan's had for many centuries been a place of considerable importance; its Moot Hill, where in olden days the Earl of Buchan held his Court and where justice was executed, was still pointed out to the curious. A fine old one-arched bridge spanned the river and formed the bond of union between Craig and St. Conan's. The main street of the village ran parallel with the river and ended eastward in the market square, where stood the old Pres-

byterian parish church, the old parish school and the principal places of business. On this day which stood out so clearly in my vision, the school was deserted and the whole village was more than usually quiet. The flag on the tall staff in the square was floating at half-mast; the shutters were on every shop window, and the blinds were down in every house. At intervals the tolling of a bell resounded through the air. Groups of men in their best Sunday "blacks" were wending their way towards the great entrance gate of the castle. The school children were all on the qui vive for what was about to happen. I could see myself among the rest, a lad of twelve, comfortably clad in homespun, eagerly watching for the funeral cortege that would soon appear. At last it came. No hideous hearse was there; but relays of the local volunteer company, in their picturesque tartan trews and scarlet tunics, took turns in bearing the body to its last resting-place. Colonel Forbes, the brother of our "auld laird" had been a famous soldier, and the men who loved his family and name were carrying him to his burial after the manner that belonged to the Forbeses of Glenconan. In front of all strode a stalwart piper, in kilt and plaid of the same dark green tartan, that of the Clan Forbes, playing a weird and mournful coronach. In my vision I could see the long procession take its way by the main street bridge towards St. Conan's church on the Craig. At the gate it was met by a little white-robed company of men and boys, who turned and led the way through the churchyard, the clergyman reciting the introductory sentences of the Anglican burial service. When they reached the church door, six of the oldest tenants on the Glenconan estate took the casket from the bearers and carried it up the nave to the chancel steps, where the first part of the office was said.

Shall I ever forget the beauty and solemnity of that

service? It was so different from any service I had ever seen. All was so orderly and so void of anything like gloom.

There was undoubtedly a great deal that to my boyish mind was unintelligible, but the general impression produced on me was so profound that I was thrilled to the heart in a way I had never been before.

Following the cortege out from the chancel to the east end of the churchyard, I heard the words of Christian hope in a glorious resurrection spoken by an old and venerable man of commanding appearance, when the casket had been lowered into the grave, which was lined with moss and flowers; I listened entranced while the choir sang the beautiful hymn:

“Father, in Thy gracious keeping

Leave we now Thy servant sleeping.”

and then, when all was over, I crept away out of the crowd, to ponder over what I had seen and heard.

Brought up on the Shorter Catechism, explained, or I should say distorted, by stern and unbending teachers, I actually believed there was nothing good in any other faith. But here I had been brought face to face with a new phase of Christian belief, and one which to my boyish mind was far more beautiful than that to which I had been accustomed. Young as I was, I had thought a good deal about such matters. Were I to go to my father, he would give me no sympathy, but tell me to mind my lessons, and leave such things for older heads to consider. There was, however, one man in the village with whom my fondness for books made me a great favorite. This was old Mr. Lindsay, who had himself been a probationer of the “Auld Kirk”, but who, because of inability to sign the Confession of Faith, had never been received into the ministry. For many years he had been a teacher of a semi-private school in another parish; but ever since

I could remember he had been living near our home, retired from professional life, and spending most of his time among his books. To him I would go for advice and instruction.

As soon as our frugal supper was over, I said to my mother, "Mother, I am going to see the auld dominie, and get him to help me wi' a gey hard Latin version that I have to do for the morn."

"Weel, weel, Alan, do ye sae, but see ye dinna bide ower late, else your father 'll no be pleased."

In a few minutes I had knocked at the old man's door and had been admitted into the sanctum, where I had spent many a happy evening among the books.

"Come awa, laddie, and sit you doon. What's the difficulty the nicht? I haena seen ye for twa or three days. Are they all weel at hame?"

"Yes, thank ye, Mr. Lindsay, a'bodys fine, I hae a question or twa I wad like to speir at ye, if you please, about the use of the ablative absolute; but," and I hesitated, "It was something else I wantit maistly to speak to you aboot. I gaed to the colonel's burial the day."

"Aye, weel, we'll take the Latin first, syne we'll hear aboot the ither maitter. My leg was gey troublesome the day, else I wad hae gone to the funeral. He was a good man was the auld colonel, ane o' the 'gentle persuasion,' in the richt sense o' the word, an' deserved a' the respect that could be shown him."

In a few minutes I had told my difficulty in the Latin version and had the construction fully explained; and you may be sure, my books were very speedily replaced in my schoolbag.

"Noo," said Mr. Lindsay, taking a pinch of snuff from his silver box and leaning back in his arm chair. "Ye was at the funeral, ye wis saying'. What thocht ye



o' that? There would be a lot of folk there, I'll warrant. I heard the pipes playing the coronach and I couldna help thinking of the many times that the sound of the pipes had sounded in the old colonel's ear as he led his Highlanders to victory."

In my simple Scotch way I tried to tell my old friend all I had seen and heard.

"It wasna like ony ither burial I ever saw. They didna hae a black morteloth ower the coffin, but a purple ane. Wasna that queer?"

In ordinary conversation the dominie used the broad Doric Scotch of our part of the country; when he had any instructions to give or any important thing to communicate he spoke in good colloquial English, although sometimes a Scotch word might creep in.

"Weel, you see, Alan, the Episcopalians have a meaning in their use of colors. They teach through the eye as well as through the ear, just as our Master did. For several hundreds of years purple has been used as the emblem of penitence and sorrow; and as penitence and sorrow for sin, if genuine, will bring peace, so this color teaches that mourning for one who is dead in Christ is not without hope, but will end in the joy of the resurrection morning."

"What a beautiful idea, Mr. Lindsay, I never thought they had any meaning in it at all, but just used that color because it was pretty. And they had, oh! such lovely flowers made up in wreaths and crosses, laid on the coffin. Oor folk never hae onything o' that kind."

"No, the auld kirk likes to make death as gloomy as possible. In fact they look on death as if he were always an enemy. Now the Episcopalians teach that if a man is seeking first the Kingdom of Christ he has nae need to fear at death. To hear some Presbyterians speak you would think that death meant an end o' a' thing;

whereas the English Prayer Book teaches that it is only the beginning of another stage of life. In a book I have here, by a great man called Tertullian, who lived in the fourth century, it is said that the Christian Church of the first days turned the gloom of the funeral into a triumph, and that between the death and the burial their religious exercises were expressive of peace and hope. They felt that death could not and did not separate them from the love of their heavenly Father or from the fellowship of the saints; and so they made use of palms and flowers to give expression to their hope and trust."

'Now I hope I understand better the meanin' o' what I saw to-day. But, there wis ae day nae long ago I heard auld Willie Scott the mason—and ye ken he's great on religious matters—say to a man in Jamie Reith's smiddy that there wis only a tissue paper wall between the English Kirk and Roman Catholics. He said that their white gowns, an' organs, an' chantin' an' hymns, were a' relics of popery. It wis jist a kirk for the 'gentle persuasion,' he said; they dinna want any poor folk there."

"Dinna ye heed ony o' auld Willie's havers; he's only a poor narrow-minded body, an' disna think anybody will be saved except the 'Auld light' folk. The white gowns were used in the oldest and purest ages of the Church, more than a thousand years before the black Geneva gown was heard of, an' as to organs, weel, King David himsel' played on a harp, an' I'm thinking if the Almighty was pleased wi' that, he wouldna hae ony objection to a grand instrument like the organ. As for the chantin' there was plenty o' that in the temple when the Maister Himsel' was worshipping there, and gin He had thocht there wis onything wrang He wad sune hae let them hear aboot it. If Willie thinks the English version o' the Psalms is inspired, he's awfu' sair mista'en. Some of the metre Psalms are perfect doggerel."

“But I’ll tell you Alan, he spak’ a true word when he said that the Episcopalian kirk was the kirk o’ the gentle persuasion; for there is something in it, as a system, that helps to make a man gentle, and kind, and unselfish. No doubt there may be many imperfect characters among them, but the teaching of their Church, the use of their Prayer Book, their ordinances and Sacraments, all help to make them o’ ‘the gentle persuasion.’ Why, laddie, the very service ye heard the day is a proof o’ the perfect democracy of her system. It is the same burial service that she uses for the poorest of her people as for the most exalted in rank. So you see in the way Willie meant she’s not the kirk o’ ‘the gentle persuasion’.”

“Thank ye very much for takin’ the trouble to explain all this to me. I wis wonderin’ if ye could lend me an auld Prayer Book for a day or two; I would like to read a bit o’ ’t.”

“Surely I’ll dae that, Alan;” and with that he went to his book-shelves, took down a copy of the Book of Common Prayer and handed it to me.

Putting the precious volume in my pocket, I set out for home, arriving there in time for family worship, which, according to the custom of his people, my father conducted every evening.

Such was my day dream. So was the first seed sown many years ago; but to me it sometimes seems as yesterday, so vividly can I recall it all. My reverie was a pleasant one. By and by I may go back in spirit to those old days and tell you something more of the way by which God led me, and some of the difficulties which I had to overcome, before I could throw in my lot with the great Anglican Communion.



## II. The "Monastery"

---

"**A**LAN GRAY, come to my desk."

At the sound of these ominous words, thundered out by the master, every pupil in Glenconan School cast a furtive look at the spot whence the summons came, and another at poor luckless me as I made my way to the dread tribunal, carrying in my hand the tawse which had been flung at my head.

"Is this your book, boy?" he said sternly, holding up gingerly a well-thumbed copy of Scott's "Monastery."

"No, sir, it does not belong to me."

"Yet it was found in your desk. Have you been reading it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Um, just so; and where do you get such books, pray?"

So long as my answers would only involve myself, I was quite prepared to reply; but now I was silent.

"Did you hear my question, Alan Gray? I said—Where did you get such books?"

Not a word came from me to break the dread silence. Many years have flown since that day, but I can yet see the storm of passion that swept over the master's face as he spoke. A volcano slumbered within him, which he tried to suppress. He was a hard, severe man, was The Reverend Archibald Angus. A Presbyterian of the old school, he had no sympathy with the natural love of a boy for all that was legendary and romantic, and could not brook the idea of any pupil of his daring to read such

unhallowed literature, as he believed all novels to be. A strict disciplinarian, he demanded the most abject submission to his authority, and had no mercy for anyone who dared to thwart his will. Theologically and socially he was narrow and crabbed, and his system of teaching, if system it could be called, was tyrannical in the extreme.

During the mid-day recess a tell-tale had volunteered the information that I had been reading a book which was not a class book. Mr. Angus had gone to my desk and, on ransacking it, had found a copy of "The Monastery," which he had promptly confiscated.

"Have I not forbidden you to read novels? And yet you persist in even bringing your fictitious rubbish here! But you shall not defy my authority. You must be made an example of. Hold up your hand."

I obeyed. He stood to his feet and rained blow after blow, first on one hand, and then on the other. His face was livid with passion and he went on as if he altogether forgot that it was a thin, white-faced slip of a boy, and not a man, he was punishing. I bore the pain as long as I could; at last I gave one big sob and burst into a fit of weeping. The master ceased and, taking a step or two from his place, he hurled the forbidden book on the peats that were smouldering on the hearthstone.

I watched my chance; when he returned to resume his seat I made a dash for the fireplace, snatched the volume from the flames that were already beginning to curl its boards, made for the door with the fleetness of a deer, and was down the road towards the river ere anyone could intercept me. I made for the "Pinkie" well which had a nice stone seat beside it, rested for a moment to recover my breath and review the situation, and was about to move on when I heard a gruff voice near me exclaim:

"Hallo, ye soonril, what mischief hae ye been aifter noo?"

The voice was that of old Willie Scott, the stonemason, who was engaged in mending a gap in Miss Milne's garden wall. He was an "Auld Licht" of the sternest kind, and was disliked by many of the young folks. To those who only knew him casually he was sarcastic and seemingly uncivil; but to his intimates Willie had many redeeming qualities. He and I were good friends, and so I was rather glad to see him at this juncture. I replied:

"Oh, nae very muckle, Willie. The maister gae me a lickin' for having ane o' Walter Scott's novels in my desk. He put it into the fire, but I snapped it out and ran off wi't. The book wasna mine, Willie, sae I couldna let it burn."

"Aye, aye, and that's the set o't, is it? An' what business had ye to be readin' sic' a book when ye should hae been at your tasks? I sair doot ye're an ill loon, Alan. What'll happen to ye the morn, think ye?"

"Oh, I suppose I'll get anither lickin', but I can stand that sae lang as he doesna get a hand o' George Graham's book. Man, Willie, you should see Mrs. Graham's library! She has all the Waverley Novels, as well as Dickens and Thackeray. George often let's me hae a book to read."

Willie opened his eyes a bit wider and gave a low, prolonged whistle.

"Aye, aye, and sae ye're takin' up wi' that Prelatist, are ye? Ye micht as well turn Papist at ance when ye're about it. I wonder what yer mither'll think when she kens of her laddie keeping such company."

"Oh, ye needna complain, at ony rate. My mither kens that I often go to the Hilltown to see George, and she's well enough pleased. Man, if ye only saw Mrs. Graham's books! The sicht wad mak yer mooth water."

"Perfect trash—a lot o' lees," burst forth the old man.

"Aye, but just look at some o' thae pictures in the 'Monastery,' Willie."

The mason, in spite of his narrow views, was really fond of books, and in his own way was a hard student; but his reading was mainly confined to Puritan theology and to such church histories as Calderwood and Wodrow. The perusal of any work of a lighter character he would deem a waste of time. Still, he laid down his trowel, seated himself beside me, wiped his hands on his coarse linen apron, and carefully turned over the leaves of the little volume. The first picture that turned up was the interior of a mediaeval church. I could see that he was impressed with the beauty of the architecture. There was the great east window, filled with stained glass, intersected with delicate stone tracery; below it the altar, surmounted by a stone reredos, with a series of bas-reliefs depicting scenes in our Lord's ministry. On the super-altar stood a cross, flanked by two tall candlesticks. In the foreground of the picture was the chancel-arch, Norman with dogtooth ornaments, while between that and the Holy Table were the choir stalls with richly carved canopies, on either side of the central passage. To me the whole was a thing of beauty. I could not understand the meaning of it all but, taken along with the narrative, it had cast quite a glamor over me. The old man gazed intently on the picture for a few moments, then pushed it towards me with a gesture which said plainly: "Yes, these old churches are very fine, but I must not admire them too much. The 'Auld Licht' notion of a church as plain as a barn, without any pretensions to architectural beauty, must be right. We must not think of these things at all. God can surely be, perhaps better, worshipped in a plain barn than in a magnificent cathedral." Willie was by no means an unreasonable man, but his attachment to the Seceder

Kirk, of which he was an elder, kept him from giving vent to his own personal impressions in this regard.

The reading of Scott may have sometimes interfered with my studies when it should not have done so, but it gave me an idea of the Church's corporate life, that had never been set before me, at school or in church. Without any intention on Walter Scott's part, he was doing then, and he certainly is doing still, an excellent work as an exponent of the religious life of the past. The perusal of his works has done for many what it did for me, that is, it has implanted a certain knowledge respecting church matters, and men have felt constrained to study the Book of Common Prayer and to compare its usages with those of the various ages described in the novels and metrical romances.

I could not go to school again that day, and so I slipped home by a back road and found our mother knitting busily, but quite ready for a chat.

"You've surely got out sooner this afternoon, Alan," said she as I entered the cottage. One look at my mother's face showed me she knew something was wrong. I sat down beside her, showed her the wales on my hands, and told her the whole story. No matter what trouble I might get into, I could always go to her in the full assurance of receiving the sympathy that my case needed, and perhaps more than it deserved. If I was in the wrong, who could point out the fault, so gently and yet so convincingly, as she!

"Preserve me, laddie," she said, "the master's been ower sair on ye the day. We'll say as little aboot it as possible, for ye see ye were in the wrang, and ye ken, Alan, I wad be the last to approve of your disobeying Mr. Angus, even if he is a bit narrow-minded and tyranni-



cal. I'll call in and see him this evening, and we'll get a'thing made right.'

And so she did. The harshness and severity of the master could not stand against my mother's gentle persuasiveness. I never heard what she said to Mr. Angus, but I can remember, many years afterwards when I went to visit him, he asked for my mother and said: "Ye were blessed in a good mother, Alan; I never was in her presence yet but I felt a better man for it. No one could be merrier than she; and yet with it all there was an atmosphere of unconscious saintliness ever about her that had a wonderful influence upon everyone who knew her."

When I returned to school on the following day nothing was said of my escapade. In the playground there were some who would have liked to lionize me as a bit of a hero, but somehow or other I shrank from any reference to the subject.

I never again took any such books to school, but I continued to read the Waverley Novels—very often aloud for the benefit of others. In the long winter evenings we would sit around a blazing peat fire, in our stone-flagged kitchen, and listen while father and Mr. Lindsay discussed current topics of the day. An old college friend used regularly to send his copy of the Edinburgh "Courant" to the dominie, and the news it contained formed the subject of many a warm discussion. One matter which at this time was causing considerable disturbance, in certain circles, was the movement for the final extinction of the disabilities against Episcopalians. On this the two took opposite sides. Mr. Lindsay, although not actually an Anglican, was fully in sympathy with the movement; my father, on the other

hand, had been brought up a rigid Presbyterian and knew nothing of any other faith. He saw no need, he said, for the existence of the "English Kirk" in Scotland. The Reformers had abolished prelacy and all that appertained thereto, root and branch. The voice of Scotland for over three hundred years had been in favor of the Presbyterian faith and the Presbyterian form of worship. Why could not everybody be content to worship as the godly followers of the Covenant had done, without all the outward show and ceremony, and read prayers, that were considered necessary in England? Like many of his fellow-countrymen, my father held in the greatest abhorrence any cringing to English customs. To imitate the people of the south seemed to him a giving up of the independence that Scotland had striven so hard to maintain. In our home I never dared to join in the discussion of my elders, but, when Mr. Lindsay and I were in his study one evening, I broached this subject and asked him to tell me how and when the "English Kirk" came to Scotland.

"Well, you see, Alan," said he, "what you call the 'English' Church is not the English Church at all; the Episcopalians are really and truly the representatives of the Christians of long ago who first brought the gospel into this country. You've read in your school history about St. Columba coming over from the north of Ireland in his 'curragh' and settling with his followers on the island of Iona, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Lindsay, but the maister told us that he was exactly like oor ain ministers, and that he had nae bishops in his kirk, and nane o' the forms and ceremonies that the Papists and Prelatists hae nooadays."

"Weel, I canna juist speak as decidedly and dogmatically as Mr. Angus does; but I am sure o' one thing—Columba and his Culdees used the same kind o' prayer

book that was used at that time all over Europe, and any reader of church history kens that it spak' o' a three-fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons; and they used the same kind of forms for baptisms, marriages, burials, and for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and a' the records that hae come down frae these Culdees show that they kept Christmas, and Easter, and a' the rest of the great festivals, just as the Episcopalians do. So you see, the original form of Christianity in this country was the same as in England."

"Weel, but why do they ca' the Presbyterian the 'Auld Kirk'? Surely the kirk which had bishops was the auldest kirk!"

"Aye, noo ye've hit the mark—that's just what it is. For a lang time the Christianity planted by St. Columba and his followers was simple and primitive and pure, but sometime before what we call the 'Middle Ages' the church began to get a great deal of power, even in civil matters; abuses crept in. The Bishop of Rome was allowed to usurp authority in this land, which never belonged to him. In the sixteenth century the papal power ruled everywhere—and in Scotland the corruptions in discipline which it brought about were worse than in any other part of the west. The bishops and clergy came actually to be held in contempt among the people, who really tried to be religious. Then came what we call the Protestant 'Reformation.' Things were so bad in Scotland that it seemed to the reformers of no use to try and purify the old system; they resolved to bring in a new order of things altogether; and so by an act of parliament passed in Edinburgh in 1560 they destroyed the old church and in its place put an entirely new church, invented by themselves, and established by themselves. The bishops who were put down must have been poor successors of the Apostles, for they submitted with a feeble show of



protest. For more than a hundred years those who still clung to the old ways had to do without bishops, and it is to the credit of many that they kept their allegiance to the ways of the Primitive Church, as individuals and small communities, when there was so much to tempt them to go with the crowd."



### III. The Old Aumrie

---

IN the rural districts of Scotland, forty years ago, the parish schools had no summer vacation; autumn was the holiday season. We schoolboys envied the lot of the lads who had returned from college and were enjoying all the fishing and fun of the first summer days; eagerly we watched the ripening of the fields of oats and barley, and when Jeemes Dewar, the village oracle, proclaimed to the worthies in smithy assembled that Hillton would begin reaping on the following Monday, you may be sure we spread the news like wildfire. When school prayers were over on Wednesday morning we waited breathlessly for the announcement of the vacation. And we were not disappointed.

"You may tell your parents that the holidays will begin on Monday, and the closing exercise will take place on Friday of this week."

As Mr. Angus uttered the authoritative fiat, every eye glistened and all sorts of glorious "ploys" loomed in anticipation.

We got our holidays in autumn that we might be free to lend a helping hand at home or in the harvest-field during the busy season. How different are things nowadays! The twentieth-century boy must on no account be subjected to any work during his holiday time; he needs not only to have all his vacation for rest and amusement—he even looks to have amusement provided for him. The boys of our day were cast in a hardier

mould. Harvest-time, while it brought to most of us lots of hard work, brought also lots of fun. Certainly, when we returned to our school tasks our appearance gave the impression that harvest work and harvest fare agreed with us marvellously well.

Many an Aberdeenshire lad, eager to secure a college education, earned enough during harvest to buy his class books and leave a few shillings for pocket money. If he managed to get into the scholarship list his bursary would pay matriculation and class fees; and with an occasional box of supplies from home, he was able to get along comfortably during the winter session.

Well, as soon as the date of closing was announced, the "buskin" of the school was the theme of conversation. Every spare moment was given up to that. Bands of boys scoured the woods for the nicest evergreens, which the girls made up into wreaths and festoons; contributions of fruit and flowers were solicited from all who had gardens, and no one was so churlish as to refuse. Is there a Glenconan laddie who does not remember with love and gratitude the kindly receptions given by some of the old people—how Mrs. Blair would strip her apple trees and rose bushes that we might have a "braw buskin"? And how old Hillton would choose out the ripest and neatest sheaves of grain to help us in our harvest decorations!

No one was late for school on Friday morning. Just on the stroke of nine, prayers were said by the dominie, and we commenced the work of adorning the classrooms. By noon everything was done and the rubbish swept away. Boys and girls hurried home to snatch a hasty meal and don Sunday attire for the afternoon function. By three o'clock all were in their places in school; precisely at a quarter past the hour the parish minister and his elders entered, and we all stood respectfully to receive them. Prayers was offered and a Psalm or paraphrase

was sung. The minister called up the bigger pupils to say the Shorter Catechism and answer questions on the portion of scripture history studied during the year. (Religious knowledge formed the first and most important task of every day when I was a boy.) The little ones, too, had a chance of showing their acquaintance with the rudiments of the Christian faith, even if it was only to the extent of that contained in the "Mother's catechism." Then came the presentation of prizes and the reading out of the names of Glenconan boys who had won bursaries or college honors during the previous university session.

How the old school rang with shouts as lame Jamie Wilson stepped forward to get the silver medal for Latin prose composition, or when Geordie Sangster was complimented by the minister for his progress in Euclid and presented with several handsomely bound volumes as prizes. There was no jealousy or discontent among us, for we knew that though Mr. Angus was a hard man he was scrupulously just.

The giving out of tasks to be learned during the holidays was always left to the minister. Sometimes it was the Sermon on the Mount we had to commit to memory; at other times it was a certain number of Psalms or paraphrases, or one of the shorter Epistles. The wiseacres of today will probably sneer at such simple ways, but I could tell of many a man who, in his old age, thanked God and the minister that he learned those grand passages in his youth.

A few words of fatherly advice from the good man—and to know the Rev. Dr. Orr was to love him—then a parting benediction and the great function was over.

A very simple state of things it was undoubtedly; yet it produced the men and women who have made for Scotland her splendid reputation among Christian nations.

Our harvest vacation—it was my last before I went to Sandy Jamieson's carpenter's shop to learn my trade—stands out before me in bold relief.

Our mother had an uncle, William Leslie by name, who with his wife tenanted the old farmhouse of Braeside of Darvel. Uncle William, as my brother Ronald and I called him, was a splendid specimen of the Scottish tenant farmer of a past day. His sterling uprightness and more than average intelligence commanded the respect of all who knew him, while his genial nature and his great fund of old stories caused him to be beloved by us boys. Nothing delighted us more than a visit to Braeside, and when my mother told us of the proposed trip we were in great glee.

On a lovely harvest morning father saw us three—mother, Ronald and me! safely bestowed on the “Defiance” coach, and off we went to the sound of the guard's horn. At noon we reached the Darvel toll house, where Uncle William sat in his shanrydan phaeton waiting to convey us the last two miles of our journey. I need not descant on the heartiness of our welcome, or of all that was done to make us happy. I have lived that week over again many times since then. The farmhouse at the Braeside had at one time been a dower-house of the Forbeses of Darvel, but for several generations it had been occupied by our forebears. It formed two sides of a quadrangle, the other two sides of which were stables and farm buildings. The dwelling house was full of all sorts of odd little apartments, and had just that mysterious something about it which awoke in an impressionable boy a desire for the romantic and legendary.

One evening during our visit the wind was whistling shrilly in the old wide chimneys, and we had all gathered around a blazing peat fire in the room which Uncle William used as his study and business room. On either side of

the broad open fireplace stood two large easy chairs upholstered in quaintly-embossed leather. They were so different from all the other furniture that my boyish curiosity was aroused, and I asked the old man whence they had come. My mother, who sat in one of them, smiled at my eagerness.

"If you would like a story to while away the evening, I'll tell you how these chairs came to the Braeside," said Uncle William, and of course we were at once all attention. Generally he spoke in good colloquial English, with a strong north-country accent, but when he waxed enthusiastic over anything he would fall into the broad Doric Scotch.

"It was in the spring of 1746, just after Prince Charlie and his men had been defeated at Culloden. The Duke of Cumberland's redcoats were scouring the country far and wide in search of the luckless Jacobites, who fell on all sorts of devices to avoid capture. One evening, just about bedtime, my grandfather and his wife were sitting around this very fireplace when they heard a gentle tap on the window. At first they were a little alarmed and did not move from their seats, but when a second tapping was heard my grandfather, taking a candle in his hand, went to the door opening into the front garden, and unlocked it. Two men, weary and footsore, stood there. One, whom he at once recognized, was the Laird of Darvel.

" 'We are in great danger, William,' said he. 'Can you take us in for an hour or two? We need food and rest. This is my friend Mr. Oliphant, of Gask, a faithful follower of our prince and a loyal member of our poor church.'

" 'Say nae mair, sir; come in baith o' ye; ye are welcome to onything that William Leslie can do or gie.'



“They stepped quietly into this room, where in a very short space of time an abundant table was spread. An earnest discussion took place as to what had best be done to protect them from their pursuers, who, they said, were not far away. The night was dark, so there was little chance of annoyance before morning. In that wee room there the two noble Jacobites slept till daybreak, while my grandfather kept careful watch. When the first signs of daybreak began to appear my grandmother emptied yonder aumrie of its store of cheese and oatcakes; she folded a blanket so as to make a rug wide enough for one to lie upon, placed it far back on the broad bottom shelf of the aumrie, while a similar arrangement converted the upper shelf into a bed. On these two shelves the two wanderers placed themselves, and in front of them, to screen them from observation, she placed the provisions that had been removed. Nothing needed to be said to any of the other members of the household, for no one save my grandmother ever interfered with anything in this room. Everything about the place went on as usual till breakfast time, when one of the servant lassies came in and said that a company of soldiers were in the courtyard.

“William Leslie at once went out and was accosted by the officer in command.

“ ‘We are seeking two rebels who we have reason to believe are in hiding here.’

“ ‘There’s nae rebel aboot this toon sae far as I ken, but ye are welcome to search and see,’ said my grandfather.

But and ben the house did these rough soldiers go, high and low and into every nook and cranny did they peer, but all without avail. Nor were the men who searched the stables and outhouses any more successful. They came as they went. For many days did the poor



fugitives keep in hiding, only coming out at night when all was dark and still to stretch their wearied and cramped limbs.

"When he had ascertained that the soldiers had left the neighborhood, my grandfather conveyed the laird and his friend to the sea-coast by night; arranged with a friend of Jacobite tendencies, who was the skipper of a fishing smack, to take them on board as deck hands, and in this way they escaped to the continent.

"Many years elapsed ere they could return to Scotland in safety, but when Darvel did return he marked his gratitude by giving to my grandfather a deed entitling him and his descendants for three generations to sit rent-free in Braeside, and at the same time he sent thae two armchairs from his ain study in Darvel House for the use and comfort of the faithful couple in their old age."

I had listened to the old man's tale with breathless interest, and when it was finished not a word was spoken by one of the little company. The old man again broke the silence.

"Aye, Alan, laddie, this house has seen mony strange sights. Ye maun ken that a great number of the Jacobites were Episcopalians and, as they persistently refused to pray for the Elector of Hanover, whom they regarded as a usurper of the crown of Great Britain so long as there was a single royal Stuart to claim the throne, the most tyrannical and unjust laws were enacted against them. No more then eight Episcopalians could assemble for worship at one time, and even then it was only regarded as family worship.

"But for all that, mony a time did the good priest of Linshart meet his poor persecuted people in this very room at the midnight hour. The auld aumrie is very precious to me, for mony a time did Mr. Skinner use it

as the altar from which he dispensed the bread of life to the faithful. Sae careful did they need to be that sentinels were posted all round the hoose to give warning in case of a sudden visit from the emissaries of the Government."

"Surely there was something in their faith very precious in their eyes to cause them to be so much in earnest."

"Aye, laddie, so ye may say. They were upholding an apostolic ministry, apostolic worship and apostolic sacraments which, with the teaching of the apostolic faith had came down to them through the ages, sometimes much disfigured by unapostolic legends and superstitions, but still there in all their fulness."

"Mr. Lindsay lent me a book full of bonnie poems, Uncle William, and in ane o' them there's a stanza that says:

'In Scotland's altar service  
All churches must unite.'

"That's ane o' Bishop Coxe's 'Christian Ballads,' and it's gaun to come true yet."

"Is he no an American bishop, Uncle William?"

"Aye, thae words o' his express the loving gratitude of the great American church to the poor disestablished Scottish church for her gift of an apostolic ministry and an apostolic form of worship. The Scottish Episcopal church has a noble history, and although so long as there was a Stuart left many of her members were true to the old family, they are now most loyal subjects of the Hanover dynasty. They are doing a grand work for God and the church, and if they will only 'bide their time in patience' God will bring unity and order out of the trials and disorders of the past."

We sat long by the ingle nook, and the old man glowed with enthusiasm as he gave me just the information I craved.

I was gradually gaining an insight into the cause of religious division in Scotland, and the more I heard about the "Gentle Persuasion" the more was I drawn to admire their constancy and devotion.



## IV. The Parting of the Ways

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I AM sitting on a seat by the roadside at Bendochy in Manitoba, enjoying to the full a glorious August day. Over head the sky is a great vault of blue, without the speck of a cloud in it; in front of me the Assiniboine in making its way round the beautiful wooded bend, which seems from my seat as it were an island in one of our Scottish lakes; the woods around me are alive with the chirp of grasshoppers and the song of birds; a pert little squirrel is eyeing me very suspiciously from a hole in an old tree. The peacefulness is most comforting. It is a veritable paradise.

I am thinking of the days of "Auld Lang Syne," and wondering if there are any still to the fore of the friends and acquaintances, who had a share in helping or hindering me, when I came to the "parting of the ways."

The mosquitoes are getting a little troublesome, so you will excuse me while I gather some leaves and grass, and light a smudge.

There now, that's all right. I'll see if I can call to memory some of the "characters" in the old village of long ago. Of course, the ministers come first. There were four kirks in Glenconan.

The established Presbyterian church stood in its ancient burial-ground on the north side of the square, quite close to the old house in which Dean Skinner wrote "Tullochgorum". The first minister I remember was the Reverend Dr. Ogg, whose smile and kindly words were like a benediction to us children. He died when I was twelve, and was succeeded by a man of an alto-

gether different type. Before he came to us he had been Assistant in a large city parish, and, as we thought, rather gave himself airs on that account. It's true, there were few country ministers more popular with the gentlefolks; no one was more welcome at a garden party, and, he was a first-class tennis player. He had taken his B.D. degree, and was generally supposed to be of a scholarly turn; but, insofar as turning his learning to practical account was concerned, results were meagre. When I was about fifteen years of age, I saw a good deal of a Mr. Cowie, a man of beautiful life and wide reading. He was an elder of the Parish church, but had distinct leanings towards Plymouth Brethrenism. My converse with him raised the question of the Baptism of Infants; and, for a time I was at loss to know just what to believe. I went to Mr. Greig, the parish minister, and laid my difficulties before him. So far from helping, he hindered me. He did not understand the eagerness of my countrymen for the acquisition of knowledge; he treated me as a forward child, who was inquiring into things entirely beyond his grasp. He was too busy to go into the matter then, and told me to go home and forget about it. I asked for bread, and he gave me a stone. My father and mother were members of his church; but, they did not lay down any hard and fast law to me, so long as I went to church.

For some time I wavered in my leanings. Our home was near to both the Free and United Presbyterian Churches. Occasionally I attended the last named, mainly because I liked to hear Mr. Haldane, the U.P. minister, commenting on the Scripture lessons, as he read. One could not fail to be instructed. He was a dear old man, and was beloved by everybody. His quiet, unobtrusive, saintly life was one long uplifting sermon. You could not be in his company without

appreciating the rays of happiness and kindness that were all the time going forth from him. No one would have classed him as an eloquent preacher, in the ordinary acceptation of the term; but, he possessed a gentle persuasiveness, that had a wonderful influence on his little flock.

For several years I most frequently attended the Free Church, of which I became a communicant at the age of sixteen. The minister, the Reverend William Manson, had taken a brilliant degree in classics at the University of Aberdeen—and he had been equally proficient in Oriental languages—during his course at the Theological Hall.

While possessed of great goodness of heart, he was by most thought to be an ambitious man. I knew him well, and it always seemed to me that it was not ambition as it is usually understood, but rather a consciousness of his own intellectual power and ripe scholarship, and a feeling that these were not finding their complete development in the quiet, old world village, where his lot was cast. I have often thought, too, that the General Assembly of his church did not know what they cast away, when they chose a "Higher Critic", in preference to him, for one of the Divinity Professorships. It was under his fostering care that I was first led to interest myself in religion as "the way of life," and I shall always retain the deepest gratitude for his wholesome influence on my young life. He had, however, a certain dignity and aloofness, that kept me from daring to intrude into the inner circle of his friendship.

There were several things that came into my life about this period, and compelled me to relinquish, for a time at least, the strong desire which I had for a college education. I resolved to learn a trade, by means of which I hoped to earn my living, and put by a little to-



wards college expenses. I was indentured as an apprentice carpenter, and three very happy years I spent at the "bench". I never was a good tradesman, but I learnt enough to enable me in after years to erect, partly with my own hands, a mission church on the Red River.

Mr. Manson took notice of the fact that I seldom participated in the ploys of the other village lads; and, when he found out that I was making a brave effort to prepare myself for college, he constituted himself my private tutor. For nearly two years I studied under his direction, and made such progress that I was able to qualify for the post of Junior English Master in a small English Grammar School.

I used to think that my inability to enter college was something of a calamity, but, when I look back upon those days in the perspective, I am firmly convinced that I was being guided and controlled in all this by one wiser than I. There were many things besides classics and mathematics which I ought to know before I made the plunge into academical life.

Undoubtedly the experience through which I passed gave me an outlook on life, which has been of inestimable value.

Now and then I made my way across the river to the "Chapel", as the Episcopal Church was called by the villagers; I learned to follow the services in the Book of Common Prayer; but the prejudices against a pre-arranged form of worship were hard to uproot, and my Scottish soul revolted at the English accent of the clergyman. Nothing is more repellent to my countrymen than to think of their being dominated by the "Sassenach"; and, nothing has contributed more to the success of the Scottish Episcopal Church than the ministration of clergy of Scottish birth and lineage. My old friend, Mr. Lindsay, was sometimes very caustic in his



criticism of a certain young English cleric, who was in charge of a country living at no great distance from us. "Poor laddie," he would say, "he seems to think oor "sturdy Scotch folk are as illiterate as the working men "he had in his last English curacy. The time has lang "gane by, when oor folks were sae under the thraldom "o' priest and laird that they couldna ca' their souls "their ain. Nae man has a greater respect for the church "and the minister than oor folks hae; but, whatever is "presented to them maun appeal to their reason and "common sense, or they'll hae nane o't. There's nae "a man in his congregation that canna tell him why he "is an Episcopalian. He needna think he can drive his "folk as he would a herd o' stirks."

Mr. Lindsay was always delighted to help me, when I asked his assistance, but, when he saw me impatient to find a way out of my quandary, he would say, "Mind the auld Latin motto—'Festina lente'. Just you tak' your time, and get a clear grasp o' things before you set aside the faith o' your fathers." I have no doubt but that I was saved from many misgivings and serious misunderstandings, by giving heed to the wise counsel.

I never got to be well acquainted with the rector of the Episcopal Church, very much to my regret; but, perhaps it was just as well that I should "dree my ain weird."

It was about this time that Mr. Lindsay introduced me to Bishop Wordsworth's "Theophilus Anglicanus", which gave me a full explanation of the genesis, and development, and organization of the Church of Christ. He also lent me Palmer's Treatise on the Church, which I found very useful, but not altogether satisfactory to my way of thinking.

I was very unwilling to say anything of my religious difficulties to my own family; and so, when the time came for me to begin my work in England, I left home to all outward appearances happy and contented, but in reality groping after truth, tossing to and fro on a sea of uncertainty and seeming contradiction.

## V. Crossing the Rubicon

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**I** HAVE always looked upon the River Tweed as my Rubicon.

While life in the dear old home-land had for me much that was sweet and attractive, it had yet been a "cribb'd, cabin'd, confin'd" life; my idea of men and things had of necessity been mainly drawn from within the narrow limits of an old world, rural district; in matters of faith and practice my mind had come to be in a state of great unrest, bordering on revolt.

Life on the southern side of the Tweed was broader and more generous; the society into which I was cast had in it elements which could have been born only of a more comprehensive outlook and a greater interchange of thought; religion rested on a more Catholic basis.

I have already told how for some time I had been looking toward the Rubicon; I crossed it when I crossed the Tweed. Not all at once, however. I had been many months in England before I could have said that my emancipation was complete.

Shall I ever forget my first day in my new home? I had arrived in Tynecaster at an early hour on Sunday morning, and being very tired after my long journey I went to bed at once. When I awoke the sun was high in the heavens, and my ears were filled with the most delightful music I had ever heard. I rose, went to my window and drew up the blind. My room overlooked a goodly-sized park, enclosed by high stone walls. A

regiment of soldiers were on parade, and their band was playing a stirring march. I could not understand it; did I not arrive on Sunday morning? I could not possibly have slept for a whole day—and yet, there was a band playing a march.

I dressed hastily and made my way to the common-room, where one solitary man sat reading.

I bade him good-morning, told him who I was (I had seen none of the staff on my arrival), and then, with some shame-facedness, I said:

“Excuse me troubling you, but will you please tell me what day of the week this is?”

My companion looked up in astonishment. He imagined, I think, that I was a little “off” in the upper story, and answered:

“Why, it’s Sunday, old man. What makes you dubious?”

“Well, I heard a band playing a march, that was all.”

“Oh, yes, the ‘Noodles’—the Yeomanry, that is, are up for their annual training, and I suppose you heard the band playing them to church. You’ll get accustomed to these things by and by.”

I said nothing, but thought a good deal.

What would the douce folks in bonnie Glenconan think if they knew I had gone to a land where such doings were permitted! Why, the ministers would denounce it from every pulpit in the district.

When I went into residence at Tynecaster Grammar School, I was but a mere stripling, hardly out of my teens. My knowledge of classics and English was not extensive, but it was thorough, thanks to Mr. Lindsay, and was quite sufficient to warrant me essaying to prepare a class of boys for the local examinations held annually

by the universities. At first I felt somewhat diffident about giving instruction in the history and contents of the Book of Common Prayer—a necessary subject in the Locals; but ere very long my diffidence had vanished. I made good use in the evenings of the opportunities for study afforded by the Church Institute Library and Reading-room, and I attended the lectures on Church history given in that institution. You can readily understand what a boon such a place was to me.

Tynecaster was near enough to Scotland to prevent my feeling in an alien land, as I had expected. The broad Northumbrian dialect bore a strong resemblance to my own northern tongue, and the ways of the people were in many respects more Scotch than English.

I had to run the gauntlet of the traditional practical jokes that were wont to be perpetrated on teachers who hailed from “the land of cakes”; however, as Mr. Lindsay had prepared me for this, I passed through the ordeal, and was voted, “Not a bad sort of fellow for a Scottie.”

There were lots of Scotch folks in Tynecaster, but very few of these were Churchmen, and so I did not get much from them in the way of sympathy. Scotsmen in England are said to be very clannish, and to stand by one another in fair day and foul; my experience did not bear this out. When I was first introduced as a brother Scot I got the hearty handclasp of fellowship; but, when they came to know that I had leanings towards “the English Kirk,” they seemed all to have become very suddenly short-sighted, for in most cases they failed to recognize me when I met them in the street.

There was, however, one notable exception, an old man from Perthshire, Tom Laidlaw by name, who kept a second-hand bookstall in the Market. Many a happy

half-holiday did I spend with him, among his literary treasures. Brought up among the descendants of Jacobite non-jurors, he was a staunch, devoted Churchman. I told him one day of the strange attitude taken towards me by these brother Scots and was much amused by his pawky reply.

"Man, Alan, I'm astonished at ye. Do ye no ken hoo the average Scot regards the releeigious opinions o' his neebour? Orthodoxy's *my* doxy, an' heterodoxy's *your* doxy. He's nae conceited, oh no; he only thinks that his neebour's views are richt when they agree wi' his ain."

We had no school chapel, and so most of the boarders attended the neighboring Church of St. Jude, under the charge of one of the masters. When it was my turn to perform this duty, I was at first delighted with the well-rendered musical service; but when that ceased to have the charm of novelty, I began to long for something to help me in my spiritual life, which I did not get there, either in the services or the sermons. The last named were, as a rule, nice little theological essays, couched in beautiful English, and delivered in the well-modulated tones characteristic of the typical young English cleric. I often wished these highly-respectable, well-bred people in the pews around me could have listened to one of the rugged bursts of whole-souled, impassioned eloquence to which the Glenconan folks were accustomed, Sunday after Sunday, from their saintly and devoted, if somewhat narrow-minded, pastor, in the "Auld Licht Kirk."

Do not imagine that I was captious, or over-critical, or discontented; I was simply in that delicate condition when one needs all the spiritual nourishment that can be given, and I was only offered husks. Somehow or other I could not help feeling that a crisis was imminent,



and yet I could not have diagnosed the symptoms. Everything around me was commonplace enough; still, crises often spring from the commonplace.

One fine Saturday afternoon in autumn I was searching for fossils in a disused quarry, and I was so absorbed in my work that I was not aware of any one being near me till I heard a familiar voice addressing me:

"Weel, Mr. Gray, and what do ye think you are doin'?"

I turned, and saw Tom Laidlaw's honest, pawky face looking down upon me from the bank overhead.

"Why, Tom," I said, "I was just trying my hand at practical geology. But, I've had enough for one day; let's have a rest and a chat."

A few minutes, and we were seated together on a nice mossy knoll.

"Is it not wonderful, Tom, how one can read the past history of life on the earth from the layers of dead matter buried beneath the surface?"

"Aye, it's nae doot very wonderful; but, man, there are even mair wonderful testimonies of the past life of the Church that have come doon to us in things that some fowk wad call speeritual fossils. There's the three Creeds, that tell us of the Apostolic doctrine—the Sacraments, that include the breaking of bread, and presuppose fellowship; and there are the devotions of the Church, enshrined in the grand auld liturgies, and, in these latter days, in our Book of Common Prayer, they are the prayers; truly a wonderful collection of speeritual fossils. The world's been turned upside doon ower and ower again sin' the first Christian days; but the teaching of the Apostles—the Apostolic ministry, the Sacraments and sacramental ordinances, and the 'set form of words'—are just as much in evidence today as they were nineteen hunder years ago. Men hae tried to mak' new speeritual

formations o' their ain, but they are nae mair like the God-made formations of the one, holy, catholic, Apostolic Church than a plaster o' Paris replica is like the fossil frond ye unearthed a wee while back oot o' the auld quarry."

For some time neither of us spoke. I sat staring vacantly into space, ruminating over what I had heard; Tom was seemingly as much taken up with filling and lighting his pipe as he had been before in giving a theological lecture. He could see that I was giving in, that all my supports were falling to pieces beneath me, and he resolved to complete his work.

"Can ye no see that these things, which have stood all the wear and tear of the ages, must be of the very essence of the Church of Christ? and, if this be so, why should you keep back from throwing in your lot with those who are in possession of them? I honor you, my lad, for respecting the teaching of those who had a claim on your loyalty; but the time has come when you must make a decision according to the dictates of your own conscience, and no one whose opinion is worth anything will do anything but respect you for doing so."

Again he relapsed into the Doric. "There's aye been a faithfu' remnant in auld Scotland—the 'gentle persuasion' as ye've nae doot heard folks ca' them, an' ye'll be nane the less a true Sçot when ye become ane o' that same company."

"You, who have all your life been a Churchman, and have received the most careful teaching in Church matters, can have no idea of the struggle that one who has had none of these privileges has to undergo in breaking loose from all the traditions of his family and friends. However, I may tell you that I see my duty clear, and I mean at once to take my stand in defence of the old faith. I shall write to my father and mother, and tell them of

my purpose, after which I shall put myself in the hands of those who can prepare me for confirmation."

"Glad am I to hear you say this, Alan. You will nae doot hae mony diffeeculties; but the blessing o' the Maister will go wi' ye, and ye need hae nae fear."

A few weeks after this I received the sacred rite of the laying on of hands from a Bishop of the old Scottish Church.

Many years have passed since then; but I have never ceased to hold in the highest esteem the simple, homely teaching of the old bookseller; and I have never for a moment regretted crossing the Rubicon.



## VI. Settling Down

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**E**VEN if a traveller spends but a day or two in Edinburgh, he may see many things that will call forth surprise and admiration. The Castle, the High street, with all its closes and wynds, the ancient palace of Holyrood—indeed the whole of the Old Town—all are full of historic interest. If he has been fortunate enough to enlist the services of one of the authorized city guides, his interest will be greatly intensified, for the old man will reel off, in a dignified but somewhat monotonous voice, a farrago of historical information that will simply appal his auditor; and, should the said auditor attempt, in the evening, to enter in his notebook an account of all he has seen and heard, he will find himself in a state of chaos and will give up the effort in despair.

It is no exaggeration to say that our Scottish capital is one of the most historic cities in the world. It is no wonder that Scotsmen are proud of it. Its natural position is wondrously picturesque; the romantic and legendary lore that hangs, like a Scotch mist, around its ancient courts and archways, is of the most thrilling character; the relics of past grandeur that meet one everywhere are such as to compel investigation and inquiry; in fact, there are so many items of interest crowding in on the visitor's brain that he feels that he would like to spend a year, instead of a day or two, in the contemplation of them.

“Edina, Scotia's darling seat,” as Scotia's peasant-bard affectionately terms it, indeed deserves all that ha

been said in its praise; but there is another and sadder aspect under which it may be viewed, one that is only realized by those who have spent years of residence there. One might truly go further and say that the seamy side of the Maiden Town is only fully understood by comparatively few of its inhabitants.

Around the base of the great rock on which stands the old fortress of the Scottish kings, and within a very short distance of their ancient palace, there are vast tenements in which thousands of the poor, and miserable, and sinful, are huddled together, seemingly regardless of decency and cleanliness and comfort.

To one of these districts I, Alan Gray, came to work as a lay reader, previous to my ordination. The clergyman of the church to which I was attached was in many respects a man worthy of esteem and regard. A scion of a well-known English family, he maintained all the traditions of his race with dignity and self-respect; he had a beautiful voice and read the services in a manner which could not fail to attract people of culture and refinement; and he was ever ready to give of his wealth to relieve the needy and distressed. The congregation were almost entirely of the moneyed classes; the poor were not encouraged to attend the mother church, but were relegated to the care of a lay assistant, who held evening services in the schoolroom. Occasionally, however, some of the latter might be seen in the gallery of the church, where there were a number of free seats. As a matter of principle, I sat in the gallery when I was not asked to read the Lessons; and almost invariably I chose the same pew, where I had for my neighbor a quiet, douce, middle-aged man, whose horny hands told that he had done many a hard day's work in his life. On the first occasion of my noticing him, he was listening with great intentness to the sermon. When the preacher



was about to descend from the pulpit, I could hear my companion mutter:

"Imphm, a strong smell o' brimstone; that'll be ane o' his grandfaither's auld sermons."

I was amused, but of course showed no sign.

Some weeks afterwards I was again in my accustomed place, and my neighbor was in the same pew. The sermon came to a close and this time I heard the remark:

"High and dry, an' no a bit o' noorishment in the whole affair; that'll be ane oot o' his daddy's auld kist."

Again I was amused; but I was yet to be more startled. This time he spoke even more audibly, and with a good deal of contempt:

"A perfect plash o' gruel—naething in't ava—fashionless stuff. That's ane o' his ain."

Naturally I was anxious to know this strange character, and you may be sure I took the first opportunity of making his acquaintance. On my commenting on his strange remarks, he said:

"Weel, ye see, it's weel kent that the minister has three sets o' sermons—a boxful o' his grandfaither's—ane o' his faither's—an' a wheen o' his ain that he wrote when he was a curate doon in England. Folk that hae sat lang in the kirk ken what batch the sermon comes frae—it's easy kennin' them. He's ower sair taen up wi' playin' gowff nooadays that he has nae time for preparin' good speeritual meat; it's cauld hash a' the time."

I asked my quaint neighbor to spend an evening with me at my rooms, and there I got from him an account of his own strange and eventful life. He was the illegitimate son of a rakish Scottish peer, who had not given him his name, but had paid for his upbringing and education. Being of a restless disposition, he ran off to sea at the age of eighteen. For years he had led a

roving life, draining the cup of worldly pleasure to his very dregs. One day, in a drunken spree, he got his leg broken and was removed to a hospital, where he made the acquaintance of a converted Jew who was trying to do good work among the sailors in that port. During the period of his convalescence he commenced the study of Hebrew to while away the time that hung heavy on his hands, and, under the careful instruction of his Jewish friend, he was soon able to read portions of the Holy Scriptures in the original. After a time he gave up the life of a sailor and settled in Edinburgh, where he attended Hebrew and Syriac lectures at the University. At the present time he was taking the regular arts course, with a view to graduation, and was gaining a somewhat precarious livelihood by giving private lessons in Hebrew to young men who were studying for the ministry.

James Macnicol was certainly a singular character, but I found him true as steel to the Christian life he had adopted, and was anxious to do all he could for the careless and godless around him. He was an expert swimmer, and, during the summer, one would find him occupying his evenings in teaching a class of young lads that most useful art. He had the impression that any occupation that would keep the young fellows from going astray was worth trying.

"It's the only kind of decent amusement that I am acquainted with," he would say, "and if I do what I can it will always help on the good work a wee bit."

Surely a most excellent principle, and one that might well be taken as the basis of every Christian's practice. The Master Himself gave it His warm commendation when He said: "She hath done what she could."

I was not long in enlisting the kind sympathy of my eccentric friend, and I not only got his sympathy but his warm co-operation. When I commenced holding services

in the school on Sunday evenings, I was somewhat discouraged to find that my congregation, which generally did not exceed twenty in number, consisted mostly of old women and children; not one of the many young men residing in the district put in an appearance. I spoke to Macnicol about this and asked him what he thought should be done to get in touch with the class referred to.

"Do many of the young men belong to the Episcopal church?" I asked him.

"The feck o' them dinna belang to ony kirk, Mr. Gray," he replied. "Maist o' them have been baptized, I suppose, for it's wonderfu' how the careless an' degraded among the parents have unconsciously retained a belief in the efficacy of Holy Baptism. Wi' some o' them, nae doot, it's degenerated into a kind o' superstition—still, the belief's there and what's wanted is to get baith parents and children to understand a' that baptism involves. My advice to you wad be to let them see, in some way or ither, that ye take an interest in their lives—in their amusements even. Say naething aboot releegion at first, but just mak' yersel' their friend and get in touch with them. Higher things will come later on."

As the outcome of this chat I set about organizing social evenings, under the then popular title of "Penny Readings." The rector's wife gave us an old piano, much the worse for wear, but still capable of being used. Until we were able to purchase a set of teacups, etc., we hired a few dozen from a friendly hardware man. I enlisted the services of some of my fellow collegians who could sing or play a little; simple popular programmes were drawn up; refreshments of very plain character were brought in—and we were ready for the fray. Macnicol invited his swimming class and told them to bring their chums. When the opening night came the per-

formers were there in force—but the audience, where were they? A few of the Sunday evening congregation occupied the front benches; the young men congregated at the door but hesitated to come in. They were evidently afraid of being preached at. I took the chair, said a few words by way of introduction, and then announced the first item on our little programme. It was only a well-worn college chorus, but we sang it lustily. Songs, readings, recitations, piano selections of popular music, and more choruses followed in order. The old women listened with attention; the children looked as if they were enduring these for the sake of the tea and cakes which were to follow. By and by a toosy head appeared at the door, then another, and another, and before the first half-hour had gone the audience was more than doubled.

“Come in, lads,” I called out, “and take a seat. There’s lots of room.”

In they came, most of them with a sheepish or suspicious air. When anything of an amusing nature was being read or sung their interest quickened; they even applauded in a quiet way.

When our programme was ended I asked Macnicol to say a few words.

“Ye ken me, lads,” he began; “we’ve had lots o’ fun in the water afore noo. But we canna be soomin’ a’ the time, and so oor frien’ Maister Gray has arranged to hae an evenin’s fun in the school ilka week, an’ he wants you a’ to come. We’re goin’ to hae some refreshments noo, so ye can juist hae a crack wi’ ane anither till the young ladies hand roon’ the tea.”

At first they were too shy to take advantage of the opportunity to chat, but ere long the hum of conversation mingled with the clatter of cups and plates.

The ice was broken, and we never again permitted it

to freeze up. It took a good many weeks to get in touch with the young men, but quiet, persistent effort won the day.

Before the long winter had come to an end we had introduced popular lectures in simple colloquial phraseology; occasional magic-lantern exhibitions were given; and now and then we spent the evenings in parlor games of various kinds.

Some of the young fellows braved the scorn of their neighbors and came to our Sunday evening services; these brought others, and so the work progressed. We had many who fell away and went back to their old loafing ways—their drinking and gambling and worse—but, in spite of many difficulties, our pioneer work began to tell. Before long I had about a dozen in training for confirmation, and very soon after I had been admitted to the diaconate I presented my class to the rector, who approved of the candidates and presented them to the bishop for the “laying on of hands.”

The nucleus of a mission congregation, thus formed, developed under my successors in the curacy into a large and flourishing church. In the meantime I obtained the desire of my heart, that of being sent to the pastorate of one of the old congregations that had lived on and flourished through the persecutions that followed the Jacobite Rising of 1745.





## VII. Drumscondie

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I DO not suppose that one out of every ten Scotsmen has ever heard of Drumscondie, seeing that it is only a little bit of a place (I call it a village; but the inhabitants thereof dignify it with the appellation of "town"), occupying an obscure corner of what many regard as the most obscure county on the east coast of Scotland. At the present time, it has little about it to attract notice from the busy world around, but this was not always the case. In the days when the stern and masterful Douglasses were lords paramount of that part of the country, when—

"Princes and favorites long grew tame,  
And trembled at the holy name  
Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat,"

Drumscondie was a Burgh of Barony, owing allegiance to them; its Baron Baillie, who was their appointee, held his courts there, and executed summary judgment, when the need arose; its chapelry, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, was an appanage of the parish church of St. Michael of Glendouglas, the rector of which held a prebendal stall in the Cathedral of St. Andrews.

In the eighteenth, and in the early days of the nineteenth century, the village was a centre of the domestic hand-loom industry, and boasted of a population of five hundred souls.

By the time that I became its rector, the weaving trade was little more than a memory; but there were still not a few roofless cottages that were pointed out as

the weaving shops of worthies whose names were quoted with unction by the fathers of the village. They must have been a lively lot—these old weavers!

I can recall vividly, as if it were yesterday, a night I spent by the bedside of old David Grant, who soon afterwards passed over to the great majority. My wife had stayed with him during the first watch, and had gone home, leaving her patient sleeping peacefully. I was sitting by the peatfire reading, when a sound from the boxbed caused me to spring to my feet. The old man had got out of bed, and was making his way to the outer door, a stout oaken cudgel in his hand. I sprang forward to intercept him, as I could see he was in a state of delirium; and, should he get outside, it might mean sudden death from exposure. I managed to get in front of him, and was about to push him backwards towards the bed, when he raised the stick, and aimed a blow which would have felled me had it fallen on my head. Closing in upon him I managed, after a struggle, to get him back among the blankets where he lay panting.

“Where were you going, David?” I said.

“Could ye not leave me alane, man? I was gaun doon to Lucky Begg’s to redd the row; there’s a fecht on among the weyvers, and they’ll kill wee Johnnie Chisholm. He can haud his ain, if he gets fair play but there’s aboot half a dizzen o’ them at him. What’ll folk think if I’m no there when there’s sic ongauns?”

When David was well, and able to hold a conversation, he beguiled many an evening for me with his reminiscences of bygone days. It was from him that I got the bulk of my information regarding my own church when I first settled down there.

“Wha can tell you better than me, Maister Gray? I was born here, an’ brocht up here, and, although I’ve been a bit of a rovin’ blade, I’ve spent the maist o’ my

days here. There's the remains o' ither three Episcopal kirks here. Ye ken that auld dyke o' stanes an' clay; weel, that was the back wa' o' the hoose that was used for a kirk when Maister Petrie was the minister in the '45; but when the Bluidy Cumberland cam' by on his road to fecht Prince Charlie, he set fire to the auld biggin', and took Maister Petrie doon to Stanehyve, whaur he put him into the jail, doon aside the harbor. There was ither twa ministers in the jail wi' him; and what do ye think the Episcopalians did when they wantit to get their bairns baptized? They stood outside the jail window on a bit o' rock; and ane o' the men that was a gey strong chield, held up a fisher's creel wi' the bairnie in 't, an' the minister bapteezed it throw the bars o' the jail window.

"Weel, efter the awfu' defeat at Culloden, the Episcopalians had to keep very quiet, for you see their religion wis proscribed. Noo and then Bishop Watson wad come roon' in his auld gig, and haud a service in some o' the hooses. But he was watched sae closely by the government folk, that he couldna even cairry his communion vessels except in a secret box below the seat o' the gig. Ye ken that pewter cup and plate in the press in your vestry; that belanged to Bishop Skinner, the son o' auld 'Tullochgorum.' Mony's the time that he's used it here when he would be veesitin' some o' his freens.

"Aboot 1790 things were a wee bit quaieter, and they got anither kirk—that's it biggit on to the gable o' The Home. I can mind my auld mither takin' me there to a service when I was a bairn. It had an ootside stane stair that led up to the gallery. We were sittin' in the gallery, an' I was putten oot 'cause I let my ball row doon on the heids o' the folk below.

"Syne, in the year efter Waterloo they biggit the auld kirk that is noo a pairt o' your parsonage. I helpit to

dig the foondation o't. Oh, man, but the Episcopalians were prood when it was biggit! The maist o' the weyvers cam' there to worship, aye, an' they cam' frae a' the fishin' toons alang the coast. Mony a time have I been sent by John Duncan, the beadle, to see if the fishers were near at hand afore he would begin to ring the last bell for the mornin' service.

"Yer present kirk—oh! it was biggit about twenty years ago. Aye, it's a rael bonnie kirk; but, for me, I aye likit the auld ane best."

You can easily understand how deeply interested I was in all this local church history, and how I valued the honor of serving in such historic ground.

Sometimes David's reminiscences took a distinctly secular turn. He would tell me of the old coaching days, when the four-in-hand, tooled by Archie Hepburn, in scarlet coat and topboots, passed through the village twice a week, and was the only regular event of importance in their quiet lives; how, as soon as the toot of the guard's horn was heard, every weaver flung down his shuttle and hurried to the Douglas Arms to get the newspapers and hear the news; and how, in Lucky Begg's bar-parlor, there was keen competition for the honor of entertaining the coachman and guard.

"There was aye plenty o' hame-brewed ale on coach days," David would say, "and yet ye hardly ever saw onybody the waur o't. An' sic a collyshangie there would be, ilka ane tryin' to get the news that maist interested him. Peter Wyllie—man, what a cratur he was, aye arguin' aboot politics;—he was terrible taen up aboot the Reform Bill, and bude to ken the latest news aboot it. Syne there was Jamie Polson—Jamie was an elder, and wis awfu' keen on the Patronage question, that brocht on the disruption o' the free kirk in 1843. Mony a wordy war did Archie and him hae aboot that.

"I tell you, Maister Gray, there was some stir in the toon on coach days; and, even when the coach set oot doon the south road to Embro, there was little mair work dune that day."

Most of the weavers were also crofters, and farmed a few acres of land, enough to provide them with oatmeal for the year, and a winter's feed for the cows that supplied the family with milk. There was a piece of common land, called the "bogs," and every crofter had a right to pasture his cow there. A boy collected the cattle by the blasts of a well-battered horn, and, driving them before him to the pastureland, herded them there till noon. The whole band re-formed in procession and retraced their steps to their respective byres, where buxom matrons in "soo-backit mutches," relieved them of their burden of milk. In the afternoon, the same programme was gone through; and so it went on, through the long sunny days of summer and autumn, and was only discontinued when the snows and frosts of winter made grazing out of the question.

To one who had spent a number of years amid the din and dust, the sins and sorrows of city life, this return to Arcadian simplicity was very welcome.

Seven very happy years I spent there, and many a valuable lesson did I learn from the descendants of the loyal churchmen who had stood by their lawful prince in his hour of need, and had given loving and devoted heed to the godly teaching of their faithful though persecuted pastors. It was in these days I began to realize the full import of Tertullian's words: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church and the mōre we are mowed down the more we grow." The older generation of church-folks were churchfolks from stern conviction; they would let nothing stand between them and the Apostolic Faith. I had not been long settled in Drumscondie when I had



an opportunity of noting the soundness of the early training that had been given to those old folks by my predecessors of long ago. Old Sandy Barras, who had been the treasurer of the congregation for over half a century, was nearing his end, and I called to see him. After reading the service for the visitation of the sick, I talked to him for a little, and in the course of conversation, I received this bit of advice:

“Whatever ye do, Mr. Gray, teach the bairns the Collects and the Psalms. When I was young and strong, I thocht that a’ this learnin’ by rote wis juist nonsense—a parrot could do that. But, sir, since God has laid me doon on a bed o’ sickness, and often I’m no able to get a bit o’ sleep the hale nicht through, I’m mair than thankful that I can say the Psalms an’ the Church’s prayers without a book; they’ve been a great comfort to me.”

It was not many days before I was sent for to administer the Holy Communion for the last time to this faithful old Churchman. I shall never forget the scene that greeted me when I entered the room. It was on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, and there had been a celebration in church. We used the old Scotch Communion Office at Drumscondie, which provides for Reservation for the Sick; and so I wended my way through the village, carrying the Communion vessels. All who saw me knew whither I was going, and no one spoke. When I entered the sick chamber I felt as if I were entering a sacred place. Everything was so spotlessly neat and clean; the dying man was slightly raised in bed, and his eager look betokened anticipated joy and peace. A small table, covered with an immaculately white cloth, had on it a bowl of beautiful winter flowers. None in that household knew anything of what is now known as “*Catholic*” ritual; but they had a grip of the Christian verities that made them instinctively do everything “*in decency and*



*order*"; aye, more, they recognized the special presence of the Divine, and no trouble was too great to give expression to the honor which was to be theirs.

Sandy Barras was my first friend in Drumscondie; no one respected my office more than he; and when he gave me his counsel, as he often did, it was never in a dictatorial way, but as an aged servant of God would advise a young brother and seek to keep him from falling into such mistakes as are liable to spring from inexperience.

He was my first, but by no means my only staunch friend in my new charge; of some of the others I may speak another day.



## VIII. An Auld-Harrant Laddie

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I WAS quite a stranger in my new parish when I first made the acquaintance of James Morton, one of the brightest and most original characters it has ever been my fortune to meet. He was then but a boy of sixteen, but, somehow or other, one never thought of him as a boy; there was an indescribable something about him which called up to one's mind the oft-quoted text from the Book of Wisdom: "He being made perfect in a short time hath fulfilled a long time."

A little matter of parochial business led me to pay a visit to the House of Glendouglas, and, the weather being fine and the roads in good shape, I set out to make the journey on foot. I had left the main road which led over the Cairn, and was passing along the magnificent beech avenue that formed the approach to the mansion-house, when I came upon a party of two who had taken up their position at a point from which could be obtained an excellent view of the house and its surroundings. In an invalid's wheel-chair was seated a lad of striking appearance, young and yet having an air of maturity that compelled attention. He was engaged in making a water-color sketch of the scene before him, occasionally making a remark to a tall, sweet-faced woman, who leant over the back of the carriage, and whom I rightly surmised to be his mother. I had noticed her in church at the early Communion service on the previous Sunday, and had been struck by her quiet and unassuming, but reverent, demeanor. Raising my hat, I wished them a good morning.

"I know you are Church folks, and I'm sorry that I have not been able to call upon you as yet; ere long I hope to get over the whole parish. I do not need to tell you who I am, but, may I ask to whom I am speaking?"

The young lad turned his head and respectfully saluted me, blushing as he did (and it was only when the blood mantled into his cheeks that one thought of him as a boy); his mother dropped a courtesy, with a grace that told its own tale, and replied:

"I am Mrs. Morton, sir, and this is my eldest son, Jamie. He is not very strong, but he dearly loves, when it is at all possible, to get out of doors, and do a little sketching."

Her accent was distinctly Scotch, but I could easily perceive that she was a woman of education and refinement; and, while there was just a breath of pathos in her speech, there was at the same time a note of dignity and independence that warned me to be very guarded in what I had to say.

I glanced at the sketch, and even my *dilettante* knowledge of the canons of art could tell that here was an undeveloped genius, who only needed a master's guidance to produce really good work.

"Has your son had any lessons, Mrs. Morton?" I said.

"No, sir, I am sorry to say, we have not been able to arrange for that as yet. My husband died three years ago, and I've been so much taken up with providing a home for my little flock, that lessons have been out of the question. My boy has been unable to move about like other bairns, which has not lessened the difficulty. But he's a very sensible lad, Mr. Gray; he knows that it's God's will he should be as he is, and he's quite content. Some day, no doubt, all will be right."

It was not what she said, but the manner of saying it, which told me that I was speaking to one whose faith

was a real, living principle, and who recognized the loving hand of the Father of Love, even in the heavy affliction laid upon her. I was touched by what I heard, and resolved to take an early opportunity of improving my acquaintance with the artist and his mother. At present, my engagement called for my moving on, so I shook hands warmly with both, and went on my way to the "big house." As I neared it, and noted the sweet sylvan peacefulness of the surroundings, I could understand the evident pleasure afforded to the young artist by the scene. Here was an excellent specimen of Scottish castellated architecture, with round towers and high-pitched roofs, the white "harled" walls showing up in marked contrast to the lovely green ivy that in many places clung to them, and in the foreground a verdant lawn studded with trees that had seen centuries of growth—one in particular, a copper-colored beech, lending to the picture a bright tint that was very charming. It was easy to understand such a scene appealing to all that was romantic and artistic in the boy's mind.

On the Sunday following I was delighted to hear the wheels of the invalid-chair passing up the nave of the church just before the commencement of evening service, and still more so to note the keen, intelligent eyes of my young friend looking up into my face as I stood in the pulpit. It is very hard sometimes to explain the cause of one's confidence; but, somehow or other, I felt I had come into touch with one who would understand me, and who, in his own way, would be a source of encouragement to me. How fully this was realized I only knew when I was called upon to say good-by—for a time—"till the day break and the shadows flee away."

A day or two afterwards I paid my first visit to Jamie's home. Mrs. Morton herself opened the door in response to my knock, and ushered me into her modest

sitting-room. It was a quaint old-fashioned room, with open rafters black with age. Near the big open fireplace Jamie sat in his easy-chair reading. I was introduced to the other members of the little household, and a chair was given to me in the family circle. At first my artist was shy and did not say much; but when I told him of visits I had paid to the National Gallery and the exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy, in Edinburgh, his eyes sparkled again, and he could not help exclaiming:

"I wonder, mother, if I'll ever be able to gang and see them. My! that would be grand."

My eye happening to light on a beautiful old corner cupboard, through the glass door of which I could see a fine tea set of china, decorated with grotesque dragons in a lovely shade of green, I remarked on the uncommon character of the design. Jamie seemed pleased with my notice of them, and said:

"I suppose thae draigons are intended to represent the deevil. Is it no funny, sir, what queer notions fowk hae o' Auld Nick? I aften read Burns' Address to the Deil'; an' Dr. Gerrard, that was here afore you, lent me a copy o' 'Faust.' Syne, Milton has his idea o' Satan in 'Paradise Lost,' and Scott has a heap to say on demonology in the Waverley novels. I've thocht a lot aboot it, and my opinion is that he has a' sorts o' gifts an' graces, or else he wouldna be able to get fowk to pay ony attention to him. I think the deevil, if he has ony shape ava, is a handsome chield. What do you think?"

I tried to explain my ideas on the subject and quoted the passage from St. Paul, which speaks of Satan as among men in the guise of an angel of light. We chatted away cosily for a considerable time, Mrs. Morton putting the closure on the subject by saying that she would give us a cup of afternoon tea, which would speedily exorcise the demon from the old china. Many a chat did we have



afterwards on similar subjects, and many a delicious cup of tea did we have out of the cups with the green dragons upon them.

Not long after this Mr. Prior, an English artist, came to stay for a time in my parish; a mutual friend brought the two artists together, and the elder assumed a brotherly tutelage of the younger. Inaccuracies in drawing were corrected, and much valuable instruction was given in technical detail. Jamie was grateful for the help given him; but he never became an imitator of the style of his friend. In spite of much that would be termed crude, there was a bold dash about his own work, which was far more in keeping with the rugged character of the landscapes that he tried to reproduce. He had imbibed, with all the fervor of his poetic temperament, the spirit that breathed in the hills and dales of his own land; his firs were *Scotch* firs; his streams were not gentle English brooks, but brawling *Scotch* "burns," leaping over granite boulders; his clumps of fern and braesides of heather made one recall Aytoun's "Killiecrankie" in the "Burial-march of Dundee." It was very amusing to hear Jamie criticise his friend's work. He could be very sarcastic when he liked, but there was no sting in his sarcasm.

"They mak' fine pictures for a young lady's scrap-book, or for Christmas cairds to send doon to England, whaw'r the fowk want a' thing dune in their ain wye, but, losh me, there's nae Scotsman wad ever tak' them for pictures o' this country. He's ower particular aboot getting ilka blade of grass o' the richt shape. Ye can lay them doon on the table an' look at them through a magnifyin' gless, and they'll look rael bonnie; but hang them upon the wa', and they dinna gie ye ony idea o' the hale thing as ye see't in nature."

There was a great deal of truth in what Jamie said,

and there was not a grain of bumptiousness in him when he said it. He was not satisfied with his own work, and longed for the time to come when he would be able to take a course of study in Edinburgh. At last it came. Through the kindness of friends arrangements were made for his going to the Life School in the National Gallery, and his mother and he set out for the great metropolis, leaving the other children at home in charge of their grandparent. For two seasons he studied hard, and made wonderful progress in spite of the serious difficulties that had to be overcome. Every day a strong man had to take him in his arms and carry him up the long stone stairs leading to the gallery; he was then placed in his chair, from which he could not move unless with his mother's aid. But he was brim full of enthusiasm, and his patience and perseverance were amply rewarded.

His homecoming was hastened by the sickness of the sister next to him in age. She also had been an invalid for years, and had required a great deal of care. Her weakness, however, had not been without good fruit; her faith was strengthened, and her disposition, naturally sweet and placid, had an added sweetness and calmness, which endeared her to all who knew her. She was endowed with the same artistic taste as her brother, although not in the same degree. During the second winter of Jamie's absence from home she contracted a severe cold, which developed into pneumonia. Everything that could be done was done, but she had no rallying powers. We sent for Mrs. Morton, who at once returned home, leaving Jamie in Edinburgh in the care of his younger brother. In two days it was evident that she could not, humanly speaking, recover, and I set out for Edinburgh to bring home the two brothers. What a sad journey that was! On the way home I tried to be as cheerful as possible, and to prepare both lads for what I felt to be

the inevitable. Very little was said, but it was easy to see that Jamie was deeply moved, and that he realized upon how slender a thread his own life hung. By some misunderstanding on the part of the railway officials there was no order given to stop the train at our station. Here was a dilemma! I alighted at the nearest station at which the train was scheduled to stop, carried my poor boy into the waiting-room, and then set out to procure a closed carriage to convey us over the last seven miles of our weary journey. It was a bitterly cold night, and I was greatly alarmed lest Jamie should catch cold. Not a word of complaint escaped from him, not the least token of impatience, although I could see that his heart was full to bursting. Late at night the carriage drew up at the door; the poor mother came out to greet us; she did not require to speak—the set look of distraction in her face told us the sad news. We were too late by some hours. For a time both Jamie and his mother shrank within themselves, as if they would bar an outsider from the sacred privacy of their grief; true to their Scotch nature, they did not wear their hearts upon their sleeves “for daws to peck at.” But Father Time is a great consoler, and Jamie and I resumed our companionship as of old. My weekly visit to him was eagerly looked forward to by both of us. When I was feeling in the “dumps” Jamie’s quaint drolleries would act like a charm, and restore my wonted cheerfulness. Often when he was out in his wheel-chair he would hear all sorts of humorous things, which he never failed to retail to me in his own inimitable way, not infrequently illustrating the same with a few deft strokes of his pencil. The simple villagers little thought that they were being analyzed, and all their weaknesses and peculiarities cartooned, mentally if not actually, by one of themselves.

“I had a visit frae auld Joseph Shand the day,” he

said to me on one occasion. "Naething will suit the puir bodie but I maun paint his picture. I tellt him that I was gey busy juist noo, but I would see what I could do later on. What do you think he said, sir?—'If I were to come round the nicht, efter I've gotten ma supper, you could put on the first coat o' paint, and syne it would be dry for the second coat the morn's nicht.' Poor auld Joseph, he thinks that a portrait is paintit like a barn door. He has been oot o' sorts lately, so I speired what was the maitter wi' him. 'weel, man,' he said, 'I saw the doctor on Monday when he was owerby, an' he said it was a stomach tribble. Ye see there's twa kinds o't; there's disgeestion an' indisgeestion, an' the deil a bit o' me minds whilk o' them's the maitter wi' me.'"

Another day I found him simply bubbling over with merriment over an encounter he had had with the Free Kirk minister. The minister, in the course of conversation with him, had made some slighting remarks anent the Episcopal Church, as being full of empty forms.

"Man," said Jamie, pretending not to understand what he meant, "ye're wrang there; oor kirk has nae empty forms. The ither Sunday nicht we had the maist o' the young folks frae the Free Kirk there, as weel as oor ain; we've nae empty forms noo."

As I have already said, Jamie was an auld-farrant laddie, bright intellectually and spiritually; brimful of humor, and yet yearning with all the force of his intense nature to see right into the heart of things; content to endure great weakness of body, in the full belief that one day he would leave all his infirmities behind him, and stand without a single flaw in the presence of his Master. It is many years now since he shook off the trammels of earth, but, when I meet him again I shall know him, and shall be glad.

## IX. Boycotted

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I OFTEN look back with longing to the simple rural life we spent in the dear old parsonage at Drumscondie. We rose early, both summer and winter; at eight o'clock breakfast was on the table, at one we had dinner, and at six in the evening we assembled for that delightfully cosy meal yclept High Tea. Then, in the winter, there was a hurry-scurry for a little, while the table was being cleared, the dishes washed and put away, and other domestic duties attended to; after everything was prepared for the morning, the whole of our little household, including Janet Spence, our faithful domestic and friend, gathered around the big open fireplace in the nursery. Mother, daughter and maid took their sewing, knitting or darning, and all listened while I read aloud from one of the old favorite works of fiction, or an ancient ballad from the days of chivalry. George Macdonald's Alec Forbes and Robert Falconer, Malcolm Marquis of Lossie and Dooble Sanny with his Stradivarius, Miss Mulock's John Halifax and Phineas Fletcher, Sir James the Rose and Sir Patrick Spens—were very real personages, in whose doings we took the keenest interest.

Many a happy evening did we spend in such delightful company, and much food for thought did we gather for the busy future.

I was reading one evening the *Siege of Torquilstone* from Scott's "Ivanhoe," when an interruption came in the shape of loud knocking at the kitchen door. I ceased reading while Janet went to see what was the matter. Presently the trampling of heavy boots was heard on the stairs, my study door was opened, and then shut, and



Janet returned to tell me that three young men wished to see me. On my entering the study, one of the visitors whom I had met once or twice before, came forward, and introduced his companions.

"We're a deppytation from the Mutual Improvement Society, Maister Gray," he said, "an' we've come to ask you if you would be so good as gie us a lecture some evenin' soon."

"A lecture?" I said, "why, I never gave a lecture in my life. I would gladly be of any service to your Society, but really I fear I am of no use in the way you mention. I don't know what I could talk to you about."

There was silence for a moment, and then an idea struck me. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I have for some years been trying, in my leisure time, to find out the origin and history of some of the old Jacobite songs. I could tell you how these songs came into being—what events in the romance of the white cockade called them forth—and, if you like, I would sing some of the songs."

I could easily see from their faces that this was more than they expected.

"That would be splendid. We've never had anything o' that kind before. We'll lat a' body ken about it, an' the hall will be crooded."

"Don't say too much about it, boys," I interposed, "because it is only an experiment."

We arranged the day and hour, and the deputation departed, much pleased with the result of their visit.

I collected my notes, made a sketch of the Jacobite story from the Revolution of 1689 down to the sad defeat at Culloden, and introduced the most notable of the songs in their proper historical order.

The evening of the lecture arrived, and I proceeded to the place of meeting. The building known as "The Hall," had at one time been a Free Kirk day school, and



was still to a great extent in the hands of that body. My chairman was an old man, very much esteemed in the neighborhood. In politics he was an ultra-Radical; in religion he was a Congregationalist of a very narrow type. In introducing me he said very little, and that of a vague and general character. It was something new for these folks to hear a parson singing old Scotch songs; some seemed to look upon it with considerable suspicion; others showed their enjoyment and appreciation by attending closely to my remarks, and vociferously applauding my simple rendering of the old ballads. In his closing remarks the chairman expressed the thanks of the audience to me for the trouble I had taken, but said he was quite sure "if the young Pretender were to land on these shores now, the great mass of the people would rise and drive him back again to the ship which had brought him hither."

I saw I had got into a hornet's nest, but I made no reply. This, however, was not the end of the matter. Various chats with the young people of the village led to my opening a night school for them, in the Hall, on two evenings weekly, and, in the conducting of this, I took good care that the study of Scottish history had its due share of attention. For two winters this went on. Beyond opening our meetings with prayer, nothing of a religious character was introduced. My class soon included all the young men of the village; and, more out of gratitude to me than from any other cause, the members of my class took to attending our Sunday evening services. What our congregation gained in numbers my Free Kirk neighbor lost, and great was his indignation.

Something must be done to stop the deplorable leakage. Ministers and elders used their influence individually with the young men, sermon after sermon

was preached to show the delinquents the imminent danger they were in spiritually from coquetting with Black Prelacy; but, the results were meagre. The religion of the "Gentle Persuasion,"—that took a real and living interest in their everyday lives, that aimed at making their lives brighter and happier, that laid no ban on innocent and rational pleasures, that took even their recreations under its fostering care—appealed strongly to their common sense; and, not a few who had been fed on the dry husks of an effete Calvinism owed their emancipation from its thralldom, directly or indirectly, to our village night school.

But the Free Kirk Session was not to yield its hold without a further effort. By fair means or foul, my evening school must be stopped.

At the beginning of my third winter, I went to the "Provost" to arrange for the use of the Hall, and was told that the trustees had resolved, contrary to all precedent, to charge me the same fee as they charged any travelling concert company for every night I used it. At first, I was dumbfounded. The charge was prohibitive. I went home in despair, to take counsel with my women-folks. Advice and comfort came, and from a source whence I never expected it.

Janet, who bore no particular good-will to the Frees, came to the rescue.

"Ye needna tribble yersel' about that poor ablich o' a minister bodie an' his elders. There's plenty o' room for a' the laddies in my kitchen. We'll get some o' them to gie's a haund, and we'll cairry oot the things that wad be in the wye, an' aifter the class is ower, we can easy pit them a' back again."

"But, Janet," I said, "that'll mean a lot of work twice every week."

"Never ye min' that, we're nae gaun to hae the good wark stoppit for a wee bit extra wark."

And so it was arranged. The class was summoned to a meeting in the parsonage kitchen, the new scheme was broached, and every one promised to help. One or two came half an hour earlier on class nights to get things in order; several of them always stayed behind to restore things to their wonted order; and the work went on, with more success than ever. Persecution in a good cause is always productive of good. Even some of the old folks, who at first were suspicious of anything of the nature of innovation, expressed their sympathy in no uncertain language.

Davie Paterson, the postman, on his journey round the Brae side, gave a most amusing account of the whole affair to the Brae dominie, who in turn retailed it to me.

"That free kirk futtrit thocht he was gaun to pit an end to Maister Gray's nicht schule, but, Lord, man, he got sair begowkit. The parsonage kitchie on a schule nicht is a sicht for sair e'en. I gaed roon ae evenin' to hae a word wi' the minister, an' got a luik in. Muckle Jamie Todd, that used to be either blebbin' an' drinkin' at the inn in the forenichts, or fechtin, was in the neuk, wi' the meal barrel for a dask, an' wis learnin' gigonometry, or lan' measurin', or something o' that kind, an' he wis that eident that he never saw me. The minister himsel' had a muckle blackboard set up on the dresser, an' wis giein' the lave a lesson in gography. They were a' as busy as bonnet makkers. Thae Frees may say what they like, the toon folk are maistly a' wi' Maister Gray. You would think it was Sunday on the schule nichts—the hale place is as quaiet as pussy. If he's nae daein' ony gude, he's keepin' a lot o' them oot o' mischief."

But the boycotting brought even better results than these I have indicated. A neighboring laird who had for

years been an ardent follower of Kingsley, and a strong Christian Socialist, came to the front with counsel and material help which ended in our being able to convert our disused church into a hall for classes and social gatherings. We opened it on three nights a week as a reading and recreation room; by and by it was duly enrolled as a school under the South Kensington Science and Art Department; classes in chemistry, physiography and agriculture were commenced and carried on with great success; popular lectures were given on all kinds of useful subjects, and today there are of our young men not a few in various parts of the world whose ability to perform the important work committed to them was largely due, in the first instance, to the narrow-minded policy which caused the Frees to boycott the "Gentle Persuasion."

## X. The Auld Provost

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TAMMAS BROWN, ex-provost of the ancient burgh of Drumscondie, held a most unique position in the little commonwealth. For many years he had filled the civic chair; his tenure of the office was still proudly remembered, and his opinions quoted, by the burgesses of the "toon." It was he who bore the cost of restoring the steeple which for over a century had carried the bell that rung the "curfew." The "auld provost," as he was called, was a notable man in the community. While he never now interfered openly in civic affairs, he was kept well posted as to all the doings of the "Cooncil," and it was well known that to attempt any scheme which did not have his approval was to court certain failure.

His successor was a "hairmless, haverin' bodie," not overstocked with prudence, and certainly not overburdened with wisdom; and, had there not been sometimes the unseen influence of Tammas Brown at work, things would not have gone as smoothly as they did.

Speaking of Willie Dundas, the provost in my day, I am reminded of an amusing incident that well illustrated his crass ignorance and self-conceit. He had gone to spend a day or two in his native village of Friockheim, about twenty miles from Drumscondie. On his return he was met at the railway station by a member of the "Toon Cooncil," and the two men walked home together, discussing current events. During his absence there had been a solar eclipse, which caused quite a commotion among the villagers.



“Aye, Provost, an’ did you see the eclipse?” said the Cooncillor.

The great man was amazed at the question, and replied in a tone that was meant to crush the questioner:

“Man, Donald, I wonder at ye speerin’ sic a thing; hoo cud I see the eclipse, an’ me at Friockheim?”

Nothing so uplifted Willie as to have to preside at any public meeting in the Toon Hall. For a day or two previously he would be in such a state of excitement that any work in his shop, short of a coffin to be made, was entirely out of the question. Several times a day he would have to “gang doon the toon on business,” which meant on each occasion one or two bottles of ale, with cronies, at the inn; and it generally happened that by the time he came to mount the platform, he was prepared to make a speech that would take the palm as the most amusing item on the programme. One Hallowe’en night a party of musical folks had given an entertainment in the ‘Hall,’ in aid of some contemplated local improvements. The Provost rose to thank the visitors for their kindly help. “Gentlemen an’ ladies,” he said, “A’m sure we’re a’ vera muckle obleeged to the freens that’s fushen ye here the nicht. Ye’ve gien us a concert that couldna be beaten in the big toon o’ Aiberdeen. I howp we’ll a’ gang hame like gude bairns, an’ be thankfu’ that we leeve in sic an enlichtened toon. There’s a heap mair I could say aboot it; but—but—I mean—I think we’ll draw the meetin’ to a con—con close, wi’ a verse o’ the netteral anthum. Whaur’s the precentor? Oh! ye’re there, are ye, Rob? Just strike up—“God Save the Queen.”

Tammas Brown’s remarks on his successor were more forcible than polite.

“What in a’ the worrld gars the useless, bletherin’ cratur stand up and mak’ a fule of hissel’ an’ the Toon



Cooncil? He fair bates a'. Gin I had a neep (turnip—big eneuch, I could mak' a better man oot o't wi' my knife."

Tammas was an Episcopalian of a type that is fast passing away, more's the pity. In his young days he had received his religious training under a succession of clergy who had imbibed freely of the teaching of the great Oxford Revival. Church doctrine was set forth with no uncertain sound; but, there was no attempt at anything of the nature of ceremonial. The services in St. John's were plain but reverent. There was no chanting of the Psalms—priest and people read them antiphonally, Tammas leading the people's part in clear stentorian tones. He had a perfect horror of anything that savored of ritualism.

During my first winter there the heating arrangements of the church were not of a very satisfactory kind, and on several occasions we were nearly frozen out. I had contracted a severe cold in my head, and to protect my bald pate had taken to wearing a small silk skull-cap. For several Sundays no notice was taken of this; but one day the storm burst. I was taking off my surplice in the vestry when the door opened and Tammas stood before me. His face was severe; my greeting fell unheeded. He pointed to the cap, and said sternly:

"We want nane o' thae Popish things here, Maister Gray. Thae bannets may do a' vera weel among the puir cratur's in Edinbro that ken nae better, but they'll no do here."

I assured him that our own Bishop himself wore one; but that argument was worse than useless.

"What kens he about the auld sufferin' Scottish Church? He's only an Englishman. We're no oonder the English Church, although we're in communion wi' her.

We have a history that gangs as far back as hers, an' we're no to get the fashion set by a wheen mim-moothed bits o' curates that introduce a' kinds o' trumpery to please idle weemonfolk."

Here was a storm in a teacup. I saw it was no use discussing the question, so I quietly replied:

"Well, well, Provost, I'll be very glad to follow the example of godly Bishop Jolly, who wore a full-bottomed wig. How do you think that would suit you?"

He was too serious about the matter to take a joke, so I put the cap in my pocket, and assured him that I would not permit such a trivial thing to give him any worry and here the matter ended.

For a clergyman to wear a straw hat or anything except the orthodox clerical head-gear was to him almost sacrilege; indeed, any change from the conservative fashions of his youth met with his strongest censure. It took me a considerable time to sound his depths, and understand his idiosyncrasies; but when I at last succeeded in getting into touch with him, I learnt to esteem him highly.

The first glimpse I got of his real inwardness was on the occasion of a visit which he and I paid to Glasgow to attend the annual meeting of the Church council. It was his first visit to the west, and I did my best to make it a pleasant one. I took him through the grand old Gothic cathedral and pointed out its beauties as best I could. It was a wonderful revelation to the old man. He said very little until we were just about to leave the building. One last look he must have; and, as he stood in the centre of the nave and gazed up at the finely moulded arches and the lovely tracery of the windows, he exclaimed in a voice quivering with emotion.

"No man need ever tell me that this place was biggit

for cauld Presbyterian worship. Na, na, the men that biggit this worshipped God in the beauty of holiness. Aye, Maister Gray, thae forebears o' ours had a wonnerful grip o' the Faith, an' they've left their belief in the walls, an' roof, and even in the foondation o' this grand biggin'. It's a pairfit pictur' o the speeritual temple that the Maister wants us to raise. The foondation taks the form o' the cross, to teach us that oor real life maun be based on sacrifice; there's the sacred number three—teepical o' the Trinity—in the three aisles leadin' up to the altar; an' syne, there's the nave—that's the Church Militant—an' the choir—that's the Church in Paradise—an' the sanctuary—that's the Church Triumphant. There's a heap mair, if a bodie only took time to find it oot. Lang, lang syne, I mind on the dean tellin' us aboot a' this in a sermon; but I never had ony idea before hoo it could a' be set furth. I wad na hae missed this graund sicht for onything."

How short-sighted I had been in my estimate of the "auld provost!"

I could hardly believe that the simple countryman who stood before me, his face aglow with enthusiasm, pointing out with a keenness of perception that was wonderful the beautiful teachings of Gothic art, was the man whom I had hitherto supposed to be devoid of emotion. To say that I was thunderstruck but feebly expresses my feelings. Now I knew him as I had never known him before. Now I knew that under the reserve of his cold, austere outer shell there was a depth of devotional feeling to which he rarely gave vent in words.

Had he lived in the days of the Nonjurors, when it was a crime in Scotland to be an Episcopalian, he would have been one of the staunchest of the "faithful remnant." Of his own personal religion he would have said little;

but, when necessity arose, he would have been ready with a reason for the faith that was in him.

Now I could see that the "auld provost" was one of those who kept the precious things of the spiritual life locked up in the sacred repository of his heart, and who with Lady Nairne, the poetess, felt that "religion ought to be a walking and not a talking concern."

The vestry of St. John's, in whose hands lay the management of the temporal affairs of the parish, consisted at this time of four members, with myself as chairman. All the four were men worthy of note.

The "auld provost," of whom I have been speaking, was secretary and treasurer.

The Honorable James Stewart, the laird of Strathfinlas, was of Scottish birth and upbringing, but a graduate of the English University of Cambridge. Succeeding to the estate after he had passed middle life, he had set himself to carry out the principles of Christian Socialism, which he had learned at the feet of Kingsley, Maurice and Fawcett. His neighbor lairds smiled at his enthusiasm, and looked on him as a harmless faddist; but he went on his way, and very soon gained the esteem and affection of the tenantry, as well as the retainers on his lovely demesne.

Andrew Blair had been for many years a successful railway contractor, but even in his busiest times had never ceased to maintain a warm interest in all that concerned the best welfare of the ancient Scottish Church. Now that he had taken to the quiet life of a farmer his interest in church affairs was intensified.

Adam Skene was a tradesman in the village of Dunluther, on the southern side of the cairn. His flowing beard of snowy white marked him out as one of the fathers of the congregation; but, in spite of advancing age, it was something of very grave import which would keep

him at home on the weekly day or rest. Staff in hand, he trudged the seven miles of hill road, Sunday after Sunday, in order that he might worship with the brethren of his father's faith.

Many an earnest discussion did these four worthies have in the dear old parsonage at the quarterly meetings of the vestry. Seldom was there anything of the nature of friction, although sometimes I had to exercise some tact to keep the provost and Andrew Blair from misunderstanding the somewhat novel ideas put forth by the laird.

When I proposed a weekly celebration of the Holy Communion at an early hour, Mr. Stewart warmly supported me. Adam Skene, who was always willing to be led by those better educated than himself, raised no objection. Andrew Blair had sent his sons to one of the schools of the Woodardian foundation, where they had received careful instruction in sacramental life, and so he knew somewhat of the stirring among the Church's dry bones. He was at least willing to hear all that could be said in favor of the proposed innovation.

The provost alone was in opposition. He listened while the others expressed their approval—and, then, in awe-inspiring tones, he gave his verdict:

"I'm no sayin', Maister Gray, but what ye mean weel in what ye propose, but, for my part, I think ye'd better leave things as they are. I wadna mind noo an' then, on the greater feasts, maybe, haein' what ye ca' an early celebration, but tak' ye care lest ye mak' sacred things ower common. When the auld dean was preparin' me for my first Saycrament, he spak' a heap aboot oor preparation for the ordinance, an' I would just be feared that your new plan micht lead some o's, speecially the young fowk, to gang forrit oonprepared. I dinna doot that what ye say aboot the early Chistians is true eneuch;



but, ye maun mind that there was less risk o' them dishonorin' the Lord's Body than wi' maist o' us. The very persecution they had to thole frae the heathen was eneuch to keep them richt. But nooadays we're free frae ony interference, an' can worship as oor conscience tells us; an' maybe we're juist ready eneuch to tak' things easy. For ma pairt I'll e'en be content wi' the auld way that my father had afore me."

My youthful zeal made me inclined to slight the old man's caution. I carried out my proposal, and, I feel sure that it was wisely done, even if it was the cause of a little coolness, for a time. The Auld Provost was not unreasonable, and I think he saw the good that had been effected.



## XI. The Major

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THE good folks of Drumscondie set much store by old saws and proverbs. They certainly adhered to the belief that "A green Yule maks a fat kirkyaird"—it had so often come true in their own experience. So when snow fell continuously for twelve hours on a stretch one Christmas Eve, every one heaved a big sigh of relief, as if the snow spirit had, by a touch of her wand, lifted the burden of a gloomy foreboding. Up went the spirits of old and young; the salutations of the gossips were redolent of good cheer; youngsters shouted with glee as they pelted one another with snowballs; even in the church itself the infection of joy had spread, and the church decorators sang snatches of carols as they hung up wreaths of red-berried holly on arch and pillar and window.

Then when the gloamin' came and all met in church for the first Christmas vespers, their hearts went out in happy thanksgiving for the Nativity, which had wrought such wondrous good to them and to all mankind.

Now, there's no doubt the gentle falling of the snow had not a little to do with this happy state of things. Our villagers were a very simple people, and somehow or other could not realize Christmas to be Christmas unless it was heralded by the snow. To them Christmas was more than a mere social feasting time. They had been trained in their young days to follow the course of the Church's year with reverent attention, and to meditate on the special teaching that each season inculcated.

Oh! how they enjoyed the Church's services at Christmastide! They were transported, in thought, to the holy fields of Bethlehem, where they kept watch with the humble shepherds; they heard the angelic song, "Gloria in Excelsis Deo;" they set out to seek the newly born King; and, when they found Him, they bent in lowly adoration. It did one good to note their realistic appreciation of the sweet old story of the Christchild.

The snow storm which began that year on Christmas Eve was one of the heaviest we had experienced for many winters. Towards the end of the year blowing commenced, and the light snow was piled in great drifts. Traffic on the country roads was for some time suspended and railway communication was stopped; on several lines of railway, notably those among the hills, the stoppage was of several weeks' duration.

My dear friend and neighbor, the Rev. Hugh Arnott, had gone, after Christmas, to pay a long-promised visit to a country house in the romantic Carse of Gowrie, and his home-coming was delayed on account of the storm. Meanwhile one of his parishioners had died and would have to be buried before he could possibly return. He telegraphed his difficulty to me, and I agreed to take the burial service. Mr. Arnott's church was in the county town, but the home of the dead girl was in the little fishing village of Carronmouth, a mile to the north. There was no church in the village at this time, but every soul in the place was a hereditary Episcopalian. I made my way down the hill from the railway to the seaside, where Carronmouth stood at the base of a great overhanging cliff; but, as it was my first visit to the place, I looked about in some perplexity, wondering which was the house I wanted. I was soon out of my dilemma. A cheery voice called out to me:

"This way, your reverence."

I looked, and saw approaching me a youngish man of middle stature, attired comfortably but plainly in a suit of dark blue, over which he wore a heavy reefer coat buttoned up to the chin. His whole appearance told that he was not one of the fishermen.

I followed him into one of the cottages, in which were assembled a large gathering of silent men and women, evidently waiting for the service. The coffin of the young girl was in the "ben" end of the house, and there most of the women were; I retired to the "but" end, where the men were, to put on my surplice; and as I was getting ready I could not help observing that in the horny hand of each fisherman was a well-thumbed Prayer Book, the place turned up at the Burial Office.

I noticed also that in every face there was a look of affectionate respect when my companion spoke, as he did to almost every individual. He seemed to move about, and to interest himself in the arrangements, as if the dead girl had been of his own kin; and the utmost deference was paid to him.

While the Psalm was recited, verse about, by clergyman and people, I was astonished, but delighted, to hear the whole company joining, in clear earnest tones, led by my unknown friend.

When the coffin was ready to be "lifted," one of the women put into his hands a spotless white linen sheet, which he wrapped around the plain deal coffin and on which he laid a wreath of sweet winter flowers; and, when the procession started up the hill to the peaceful resting-place on the top, it was he who walked immediately behind the coffin in the place of the chief mourner.

As soon as my duty was performed I retired to the ruins of the old church that stood in the churchyard; there I unrobed, and made ready for a smart walk back to the station, to catch my return train. One of the

fishermen came to carry my bag, and as soon as we were well on our way, I asked him the name of the gentleman who had so aroused my curiosity.

"Oh! the Major, you mean; I thocht a'body hereaboot kent the Major. He's the Laird o' Carron, and owns the hale toon o' Carronmooth. He bides in yon big hoose amo' the trees, on the tap o' the hill. He's an awfu' fine man. Aye, gin a' the lairds were like him, you wouldna hear sae muckle grumblin' frae the workin' fowk. There's no a bairn in the place he disna ken. Noo, there was wee Mirren that we've juist beeried—she was an orphan, an' the Major an' his leddy never loot her want for onything that could do her good, a' the time she was sick. Aye, there's nae mony fowk like the Major!"

"Is he a wealthy man, then?"

"Na, sir; as lairds go, he's a poor man. He disna gie himsel' a chance to grow rich. The rents frae the estate dinna come to a great deal, an' he spends the feck o' it. When he cam' here, aifter the auld laird deed, things were in a gey bad wye. He made nae fuss aboot it, but in his ain quaiet style he set himsel' to the wark o' local improvement.

"The first big job he startit was to repair a' the cottages, an' to get in a regular set o' drains. There's nae half the sick fowk noo that there used to be.

"Syne he fitted up ane o' the hooses as a schuil, and got Miss Emslie an' her twa nieces to teach the bairns. They're maybe nae sae weel trained as the toon's teachers, but they can teach readin', an' writin', an' coontin'—an' what's better than a', they see that a' oor young folk ken the Gospels, an' the Catechism, an' the Mornin' an' Evenin' Prayer.

"Weel, he fand oot that there was a when auld fowk that werena able to traivel to St. James' Church,

an' so he gaed to the Bishop, an' got a lay reader's license, an' noo we hae a service in the schuil ilka Sunday aifternoon. The Major reads the prayers, an' gies a bit simple sermon, an' his leddy plays the harmonium.

"But that's no a' he's done. He's paid the hale cost o' makin' oor fine wee harbor, an' noo oor boats are safe when they're no oot at sea.

"Aye, he's a graund man, the Major—never thinkin' about himsel', but a' the time plannin' for ither fowks' weelfare."

I was sorry when the arrival of my train cut short this interesting chat; but it was not long before I had an opportunity of coming into closer contact with the Major. We met again, one afternoon, at Glendouglas House, when we were formally introduced to one another. In the course of conversation the subject of golf as a healthful recreation came up.

"We have a capital golf course at Carronmouth, Mr. Gray; some day soon you must come and spend the afternoon with me, and I will take you over it."

His innate modesty kept him from telling me that it also was a gift from him to his people, and that the idea was a partial carrying out of a scheme which he had formulated as a counterfoil to more questionable modes of enjoyment. Needless to say, I took advantage of this kind invitation. What a glorious afternoon that was! Our game did not amount to much, but there was ample compensation in our pleasant intercourse. Simply and unassumingly he told me of the primitive manners and customs of his fisherfolks, and of their loyal devotion to the faith of their fathers. Ignorant of many of the ways of the great world beyond them, they were, nevertheless, endowed with an amount of traditional lore that many with greater pretensions could not claim. One could easily see that he was a feudal superior of a



grand type; that these homely folks were bound to him by ties of the most enduring character; that their interests were his, and his responsibility, in regard to them, a very sacred thing in his eyes.

I happened to mention that I intended having lantern services for my people during Holy Week. This at once aroused his interest. Would I come to the Carronmouth School on Good Friday evening and give his people such a service? I was only too glad to have the privilege of assisting him in his splendid work; and so, on the evening named, I was there. The school was crowded with fisher-folks, and right on the front bench sat the laird between two of the fathers of the place. With hymn, and prayer, and picture, and meditation, the evening sped; the silence was almost breathless—they had never experienced such a service before; and when I threw a beautiful reproduction of Gabriel Max's "Ecce Homo" on the canvas the effect was marvellous. I turned to give the benediction, but it was with difficulty I could utter a word. Laird and fisherman, old and young, gazed awestruck on the "Man of Sorrows," and tears were streaming down many a rugged face.

The gentle laird rose and said: "It is all too sad and yet too sweet for me to say anything. God bless you, sir, for coming here to-night; it is a night we'll remember for a long time."

The following evening saw a very different sight. All day a terrible storm had been raging, and all the boats were out at sea. The women were in awful anxiety, each fearing the worst for her "man" or her boys. Down to the village in the afternoon came the Major—in sou'wester and oilskin coat. He had a cheery word of comfort and hope for all; and he did not return home till every boat came in. He was ready to shake hands with



every man as he came ashore, and to remind him that he must give thanks to God for His mercy.

Years have passed away since that time; the Major's "sweet leddy" has gone to the rest of Paradise; he himself, in obedience to the call of the Master, has exchanged his rank in the army of Great Britain for the rank of a priest in the Church of God, and is devoting his life to mission work in a large and busy centre of the fishing industry—but in dear little Carronmouth, where he began his work for Christ, old men love to speak of "The Major."



## XII. The Burnin' o' the Kirk

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“WHEEL, man, I suppose I ought to have been wringing my hands and tearing my hair over this business, but, somehow or other, I wasna; I never breathed a mair fervent thanksgiving than I did on Sunday when I saw the flames burstin' through the auld gray slates o' the kirk.”

“Are you sure, doctor, that ye' didna happen—by accident, of course—to let fa' a burnin' match among the rubbish in the disused chancel?”

“Whisht, man, dinna speak o' sic a thing, for though I didna actually do it, I wished it wi' a' my heart. If wishing had onything to do wi't, then I doot I maun plead guilty. But, come awa' and see what's left, and I think ye'll be able to understand how I feel.”

The doctor was the minister of a Presbyterian parish a few miles from Drumscondie, and his church, which had been burnt down on the previous Sunday by an overheated stovepipe, was the most ancient ecclesiastical structure in the whole Howe o' the Mearns. He and I had been friends ever since I came into the district, and my visit on the present occasion was for the purpose of condoling with him over his loss; but, from the conversation already narrated, it will be seen that condolence was hardly needed, in so far at least as the worthy doctor was concerned.

He was in many respects a very remarkable man. Those who only knew him in a casual kind of way regarded him as an enigma. He was loyal to the vows he had

taken as a minister of the Presbyterian Establishment; but he held opinions concerning doctrine and Church order that savored rather of those of the Scotch Episcopal Church as taught by men of the type of saintly Bishop Jolly, than of the current teaching of his Presbyterian brethren.

He had been in the same parish for nearly forty years; and as he had never been over-burdened with parochial duties, he had been able to indulge his taste for Church history and ecclesiology to the fullest extent. For years he had been burrowing in local archives, and was able, to his own satisfaction, to reconstruct mentally his own parish church as it stood in the days of Archbishop David de Bernham, of St. Andrew's, by whom it was consecrated in the fourteenth century.

To me it was always a great treat to visit the old man. His scholarship was so accurate that one could not fail to be benefited by intercourse with him.

No sooner were we standing inside the blackened walls than he began to wax eloquent over the beauties of the architecture that had been disclosed by the work of the flames.

"Originally," he said, "the church was a plain oblong, with a Norman apse probably, in the east, and that peculiar octagonal turret surmounting the west gable. There was no glass in these parts then; and as the wind from the north is generally very cold, the windows were all on the south side.

"When the need arose for a larger sanctuary and choir, yonder early English arch and chancel took the place of the Norman apse.

"Then in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the feudal superior of that time erected the lady chapel

as a chantry, in which masses for the repose of his soul were to be said.

"The turret at the angle between the nave and lady chapel has in it a corkscrew stair, leading to the parvise, or priest's room, over the groined roof of the chapel. About a hundred and fifty years ago the church was in need of repairs, and it was then that Puritan vandals shut off the sanctuary with a lath and plaster wall, and transformed the nave into the hideous, gloomy barn it was before the fire.

"Can you blame me, Gray, if in my heart I longed for a fire, or some such disaster, to tear down the awful disfigurations?

"It is a positive joy to me to look on these bare walls."

"I thoroughly sympathize with you, doctor; and to me the bare walls are an object lesson of great value. Fire is a great cleanser. The conflagration which broke out here on Sunday cleared away all that belonged to the debased period, the age of Philistinism, but did no real harm to the solid and beautiful masonry of the ages of faith. Now that the vile rubbish has been removed one can see the framework of a church that was built for the service of God, and for the cultivation of the devotional spirit. That east window with its delicate stone tracery, through which the rising sun casts its glorious rays upon priest and people, reminding them of the greater sun—the sun of righteousness who arose in the east bringing healing to the nations—the altar and aumbry and piscina telling of reverence and order in the celebration of the Eucharist—in fact there is everything now to indicate a church of a truly primitive type."

"Aye, Gray, and so is it ever in regard to the spiritual life. When we look around in the Christian Church to-day we see truth disfigured and mutilated and obscured

by opinions that are entirely of human devising. When the days of trial come, as come they must—the Church of God will have to hold her own against the powers of evil; then all that is primitive and apostolic will stand scatheless amid the fierce fires of tribulation, and will come forth—like the three children from the burning fiery furnace—with no trace of the fire upon it, while all that is purely of human creation will crumble to ashes.”

“Wouldn’t it be grand, doctor, if this old church of St. Ternan could be restored as it was in pre-Reformation days, without any of the foreign accretions that roused the indignation of the truly spiritually-minded?”

“If God spares me, Gray, I mean to make this the work of my declining years.”

The old man kept his vow faithfully. He set to work at once to arouse the interest of the heritors, upon whom lay the burden of maintaining the fabric of the church; and, before two years had passed I had the pleasure of again visiting him and of seeing a beautiful restoration of a typical Scottish church of mediaeval days. The altar stood in the east—only it was not called an altar, but a communion table. The font—a lovely replica in marble of an ancient one—was in its proper place. The pulpit no longer barred the way to the sanctuary, but stood at the north side, between the chancel arch and the wall of the nave. Over the doorway leading from the chancel to the vestry there were three niches in which at one time figures of saints had stood; even these the doctor filled by three statuettes of the Blessed Saviour with St. Peter and St. Paul—copies in miniature of Thorwaldsen’s famous group.

What was of even greater importance, there was inaugurated a far more orderly and reverent worship than before; an organ was installed, and the old walls



resounded with a devotional service which, if not all that could be desired, was at all events a distinct advance towards the worship of the best days of the Christian Church.

For a long time I was unable to understand the Doctor's position. He was so thoroughly Catholic in sentiment that it was hard to see why he remained where he was. I could not believe that a man of his spotless integrity would hold to a religious body, with the majority of whom he seemed so entirely at variance, simply and solely because it gave him a comfortable living.

One day we were sitting together in his study, and in the course of conversation I managed to draw him out without in any way reflecting on him personally.

"It has always been my opinion," he said, "that all reformation should proceed from within, if it is to be effective. The reforms wrought in Scotland in the fifteenth and subsequent centuries were altogether too revolutionary and iconoclastic. If the spiritually-minded of those days had only been guided by the example of Savonarola, who reformed without breaking the unity of the Body, things would have been altogether different in Scotland to-day. There is a large and growing school of thought in the Presbyterian Established Church of Scotland, that is longing, and praying, and working for a return to primitive ideals, and to that school I belong. Were I to throw in my lot with the Historic Church—the Body that truly 'continues in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers,' I would undoubtedly gain many spiritual privileges for myself. But what about the flock committed to my care? I believe it is my duty to stay where I am, and to teach the Faith as fully as it can be taught from the formularies to which I have vowed allegiance. The

proselytising of individuals will never bring about corporate unity. I think that God will not allow my sacrifice to go unrewarded, but will in His own way make up to me what I deprive myself of by staying where I am."

The good old man was so sincere in all that he said that I felt it would be wrong to enter into an argument which probably would have done no good.

That he was fully aware of his own position I learned from a remark made by him some months later.

The lord of the manor was a hereditary Episcopalian, but for many years had never entered a church for worship. I found him an exceedingly kind man, ever ready and willing to do kind deeds, to give liberally for any good cause, and to befriend any who stood in need of help; but I could not get him to talk of spiritual things. He died, and I was asked to read the Burial Service over his body when it was laid in the vault beneath the old lady chapel. The service over, a little group stood talking in the graveyard, before setting out for their several homes. One of the old baron's comrades made the somewhat flippanant remark:

"Well, it's a long time since his lordship was in the company of so many clergy."

Quick as thought the doctor replied: "There was only one clergyman here, Colonel."

"What do you mean, doctor? I saw at least half a dozen ministers at the funeral."

"Aye—ministers—but that is a different thing altogether. Mr. Gray was the only cleric present here to-day."

It was as if a bomb had fallen in their midst.

"Well, what do you call yourself, doctor?"

The old man smiled as he replied:

"I am only an elder in the congregation—a teaching

elder doubtless, but only an elder. Mr. Gray has Apostolic orders, which I lack."

An elder he remained; but surely if ever any one outside the unity of the historic faith deserved it, he deserved to be reckoned one of the Gentle Persuasion.

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) and (2) under the assumption that the functions  $f_i(x)$  and  $g_j(x)$  are continuous and satisfy certain conditions. It is shown that under these conditions the system has a unique solution in the class of continuous functions.









