

AMONG THE HILLS.

✓
"Cosy Corner Series."

MEMORIES OF THE MANSE

Glimpses of Scottish Life and Character

✓ BY

ANNE BREADALBANE = pseud. ✓

ILLUSTRATED



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TO

E. W. B.,

OF-CONNECTICUT, U. S. A., THESE SIMPLE RECORDS
OF A QUIET CORNER OF MY FATHERLAND
ARE INSCRIBED WITH GRATEFUL LOVE.

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MEMORIES OF THE MANSE.

CHAPTER I.

GLENARRAN.

LET me recall thee, beautiful Glenarran, as last I saw thee: nestling in thy quiet bay; hills on right and left stretching far out to sea; thine islands, not unknown in story, lying blue and misty in the distance. To the north, the river Arran mingled with the ocean. Beyond it lay Arran Castle, a modern structure, but looking hoary in the distance. On the south, the hills near the town were carefully cultivated. Oats grew on slopes that were almost perpendicular, and potatoes flourished on heights that to any one but a highlander would have been

inaccessible. Even where cultivation ceased, every spot of ground was still utilized. The stunted but hardy grass of the vicinity supported a breed of sheep equally hardy and stunted. This pasture land was broken up by chasms, bottomless but for the sea, that, far down, was heard surging hoarsely ; and as the chasms were numerous, and the sheep possessed of supernatural agility, the office of the stalwart shepherd of Raeburn Head was no sinecure. Beneath the hills, opening from the spacious beach, were wonderful caves, each with its special legend, often embodied in the name, as " Samson's Banes " or the " Deil's Kail Pat ;" and among the caves was the " Mermaid's Tryst," where a stream of pure fresh water, trickling among the rocks, had hollowed out for itself a circular basin. There, according to local tradition, Lady Georgiana Clyde of the Castle had seen a mermaid combing her hair ;



A FISHER'S HUT.

and there, accordingly, the children of Glenarran were wont on summer evenings to carry sundry bits of oat-cake or barley scone, returning in the morning to see how much the mermaid had eaten. As the tide during the night covered rocks and Tryst, it will be seen how the mermaid, though a most romantic creature in herself, was regarded as possessing a most unromantic appetite. Above the cliffs was an ivy-covered ruin; and here and there the hills were dotted with a white farm-house or a shepherd's sheiling.

Glenarran was, twenty years ago, but a small fishing town. The old part of it, lying close to the river, was almost exclusively occupied by the fishermen and their families; and, with its high, quaint, stone houses overshadowing the narrow streets, its groups of brawling women, its children prematurely old, and its general air of poverty and squalor, might, but

for the sails and nets and débris of fish everywhere visible, have passed for a fragment of the old town of Edinburgh. The business streets were a connecting link between the old town and the new. In the latter were the handsome freestone residences of the professional men and richer shopkeepers. Here, too, were all the churches—Established, Free, Baptist, Congregationalist. Christ's work was not as well understood in Glenarran then as it has been since. The Church did not venture into the Fisher-Biggins for disciples; even a minister rarely went there, except when summoned to a death-bed; and it is needless to say that few from the Fisher-Biggins cared, for any church's sake, to parade their patches and rags in the fashionable quarter. The gala event of the old town was a funeral. That seemed their revenge on those whom they envied and hated as the "gentles,"—for the only churchyard of Glenarran, though

a quiet enough spot, was so situated that even those who in life would have shunned the Fisher-Biggins most, were carried to their last resting-place through the very midst of its wretchedness. So that every funeral procession, however it might be headed, was sure to be brought up by a crowd of idlers, who, not gaining admittance into the inclosure, peered through the gate or clustered on the ruined wall; and, though the awe that in Scotland invests everything connected with death generally kept them silent while the interment was going on, it was seldom that the mourners were allowed to escape without a low jibe or threat, as, "Eh, man! ye'll be a bonny corp yersel yet;" or, "Auld Luckie 'll mak braw wark wi' yer deid bairn the nicht!"

We have mentioned several churches. That with which we have to do had been originally connected with a body—the majority of whom had, some years before

our records begin, united with the Free Church. The small minority in Glenarran who had refused to accede to this change were loud in abusing those who did. Not satisfied with the temporal measures undertaken to recover the church property, they denounced their lately-revered minister as a priest of Baal, and compared the first sacramental occasion after the union to Belshazzar's impious feast. In return, the minister laughed quietly, and the more ambitious of the congregation planned a new edifice that should not only take the place of the old when fate should dispossess them of it, but that should eclipse the other Free church. Meantime, fate and the architect were alike slow. The plans had as yet no place on anything so substantial as paper even, and matters went on in the old church and manse as quietly as though no change had ever been contemplated.

These buildings, although nominally

belonging to the new town, were, locally, as closely connected with the old. They were situated on the extreme north of the town, as near the sea as it was safe for any building to be. A short walk eastward led to the aristocratic quarter; an equally short and far pleasanter walk on the beach led northward to the Fisher-Biggins. The church and manse were of moderate size and joined each other at right angles. Their material was rough stone, plastered with lime and gravel, and kept dazzlingly white. The quadrangle partially inclosed by the buildings was divided into three inclosures, known respectively as the hen-yard, the inner garden, and the outer garden. From the first of these the congregation had been in the habit of turning an honest penny by letting it to a widow who kept cows; and its present possession by the minister was justly regarded by Jean, the old servant, as a triumph of her diplomacy.

The minister's hobby—and a very excusable one, considering his narrow income—was vegetables; Jean's weakness was hens. But the hens and vegetables not agreeing, the minister had declared that Jean's pets must go. Jean, however, was a woman of resources. Capturing her favorites, she sewed on each a pair of cloth shoes, and then liberated them, with a defiant "Scratch noo, wull ye!" But it was a short-lived defiance. The hens were hens of spirit, and had made up their minds to scratch or die; and, as scratching had been rendered impossible for them, die they did. Then Jean, going about among the neighbors, raised such a hue and cry about the minister having never a fresh egg for breakfast, that the widow's cows were quietly turned out and the key of the inclosure handed over to the minister. The inner garden was devoted indiscriminately to grass, vegetables and beds of old-fashioned flowers,



SEA AND SHORE.

with narrow gravel walks between. Bees hummed through all the long summer days among the wall-flowers and pinks and daisies and columbines, and many an old woman gathered there her Sunday sprig of southern-wood or Balm-of-Gilead. The outer garden was only a grassy slope, bordered with the inevitable potatoes, and having in the far-off corner a summer-seat. The garden wall, low within, was on the outside eighteen feet high; for it was so near the sea that when the great storm-tides came even the flowers in the inner garden were covered with flakes of foam.

The manse was divided into small, irregularly-shaped rooms—the oddest the study, which was like a zigzag passage of no particular shape. Its walls were lined with books, whose exterior was generally as uninviting to the eye as was their theology to the natural man; and here and there among the book-shelves were

set wooden medallions, bearing, in tarnished gold, texts of Scripture—most of them of a denunciatory character—for in those days the terrors of the Law were wielded far more frequently than the attractions of the Gospel. The lower hall and first flight of stairs were of stone, blackened and polished. Above and below, the rooms were few and small, and plainly, some of them even poorly, furnished; and the attics enjoyed the reputation of being haunted.

As for the church—one glance at it, without or within, would have been the death of Ruskin. Gothic had evidently been Greek to its architect. The building itself was large and square, the windows and doors small and square; the main passage ran the wrong way, and a mahogany-colored gallery was supported on blue pillars. The pulpit, with its sounding-board, reached nearly to the ceiling. Under it was the precentor's box. And

still lower, yet much elevated above the body of the church, was a railed inclosure for the elders. Opposite the pulpit, the "table-seats," used for sacramental occasions, ran the whole length, or rather breadth, of the church. Raised pews, with hangings of divers colors, were distributed here and there. At first, there had been but one of these—that appropriated to the minister's family. But, in process of time, an aristocratic lawyer, the great man of the congregation, had had his pew elevated and his dignity brought into bold relief by a fiery background. Then a well-to-do grocer, who had risen from small beginnings and was proportionately ambitious, had imitated the lawyer; and the carpenter, having his hand in, had imitated the grocer. Lastly, "wee Johnnie" the dwarf, who was gardener-in-general to Glenarran, had had his pew in the back part of the gallery raised and hung; and there he sat, Sun-

day after Sunday, his great head the only part visible, looking like a huge gargoyle. The congregation had laughed in their sleeve at the grocer, and had openly expressed their indignation at the carpenter; but about the dwarf every one felt that there was nothing to be said—only, after that, no more pews were hung.

CHAPTER II.

THE MINISTER.

THE father of the Reverend Donald Douglas was a small farmer in the south of Scotland. Though tilling with his own hands the few acres that he rented, and having a constant struggle to make both ends meet, he had managed to give his three sons such advantages that each had risen far above his original position in life. John, the eldest, was an attorney in Edinburgh ; Colin, a prosperous business man in Australia ; and Donald, the cleverest and most thoroughly educated of the three, minister of Glenarran. As far as pecuniary circumstances were concerned, the last could scarcely be said to have mended his fortune. The humble abode of his father had not been more intimately acquainted with poverty than

the Manse was; and the thatched cottage, consisting of only a "but" and a "ben," had not been under the painful necessity of keeping up a genteel appearance.

Yet the minister doubtless had his compensation. I saw it stated once, in some American newspaper, that the Scottish clergy generally are not highly regarded by their people. And in a subsequent number of the same journal I saw this statement indignantly contradicted, and the assertion made that Scotland is the most "priest-ridden" country under the sun!

Now, to me, the relation between Scottish ministers and their flocks seems particularly happy. The former, undoubtedly, possess great influence, but would be the first to deprecate the extension of that influence beyond its proper sphere. And the latter, conscientiously believing that the province

of the minister is to rebuke as well as to exhort, to counsel as well as to comfort, do not easily take umbrage. Changes in the pastoral relation are thus comparatively rare. A faithful minister is looked upon as a gift from the Lord, and a congregation does not expect for the magnificent sum of a hundred and fifty pounds a year to receive an angel from heaven.

Mr. Douglas, at the time our records begin, was about fifty years of age. His portly figure was about the medium height. His head was entirely bald on the top ; but the hair, where it remained, was black, crisp and curly—though in the closely trimmed side whiskers it was quite gray. The features, though large, were clearly cut, forming a fine profile. The lower jaw was square, the mouth firm ; the keen, gray eyes could be by turns threatening and tender. The complexion was fresh and ruddy. Altogether, it was

a face one could not carelessly pass. The minister's appearance of bodily vigor was hardly lessened by a very marked lameness, the result of an injury in childhood. Indeed, so thoroughly was the "halt" of Mr. Douglas a part of himself, that those who knew him never thought of it as a defect, while to the children it was a part of their father's greatness and glory. So that, when they "played church," they generally chose for minister not the best preacher, but the one who, in walking along the imaginary aisle and climbing into the improvised pulpit, could most exactly imitate the minister's gait. The matter was settled by the little girls thus: "Kenneth can pray best, but Don can halt best; so Don can be minister, and call on Kenneth to pray."

Mr. Douglas was a man whose nature it was to rule all that came within his influence. That he governed more by fear than love, was due partially to the place

and time in which he lived. A stern father and a stern pastor, with his children and congregation he had but one rule : perfect obedience, or punishment. For the refractory child who had neglected his weekly portion of catechism, there was the rod, or rather the *tawes*; for the older offender there was church discipline. In both cases vengeance was equally certain and swift. Forgiveness, indeed, would be eventually given, and most graciously, but not till the last drop of the punishment had been wrung out. And not the least part of the minister's triumph was the fact that, no matter what feelings of rebellion and hatred had been nourished toward him during punishment, the conversation that followed was sure not only to soften the offender, but to confirm him more fully in his allegiance.

If sincerity were the test of right, no one could have questioned the wisdom of the minister's course. A doubt never en-

tered his mind. Subtle distinctions between what was right and what was expedient were to him idle sophistry. No pope ever spoke with more authority; no priest of the house of Aaron ever more fully identified his own will and the will of God. And though regulating the minutest details of domestic economy, he never seemed to lower himself, but to elevate the details. His power owed nothing to externals,—the shabby clothes and rusty black stock that he wore in the house taking nothing from the weight of his reproof, as the jet-black Sunday suit and white neckcloth added nothing to it. And, more highly favored than any pope, his utterances to those concerned were always *ex cathedra*, whether expounding some abstruse doctrinal point or settling the cat's allowance of porridge. "Eh, man!" said one poor soul who had been before the kirk session and had the worst of it, "what a Bonyparty he wad hae

made!" "The auld fule body!" said Jean, indignantly, on hearing the intended compliment, "gin he could na liken him to Cameron or ane o' the Lord's ane, could he no hae thocht o' the Juke (Duke)? I'd hae him afore the session again for misca'in' the minister!"

It may be thought that under so strict a rule no children could be happy, and that in the Manse floggings must have been the order of the day. But Mr. Douglas was as exact in explaining his requirements as in punishing breaches of them; and obedience, though difficult, was by no means impossible. Moreover, when matters went smoothly, Mr. Douglas was the most genial of men, and his best manners were for his own fireside. The thousand anxieties his poverty entailed on him, the children never knew. The old clothes were worn without a murmur; the breakfast of porridge and milk, or dinner of barley broth and oat-

cake, had a seasoning of thankfulness, and cheerfulness, and pleasant talk, that many a stalled ox would be the better for. The minister loved bright faces about him. Let a child wear a sad countenance without sufficient cause, and, though he could not justly have the ceremonious whipping, he was sure of an informal pinch or fillip. So that it was only when the children's consciences were not quite clear that they avoided Mr. Douglas. A twilight walk with papa, on the sands, when they learned a thousand things without knowing they were learning one, was one of their greatest pleasures; and a summer day on the heather with him was a delight to which they looked forward all the year.

A doleful Christian was to Mr. Douglas very little better than a child in the sulks, and fared in much the same way. At prayer-meeting, one night, after a running commentary on the 95th Psalm, he

called on a person whose petitions were generally couched in whispers, to pray, saying, "Peter Skinner will pray; and, Peter, try and make a joyful *noise*." On another occasion, an old member, whose prayers were largely made up of groans, had scarcely said *Amen*, when the minister remonstrated: "John! John! when you have ten minutes to pray in, and groan seven of them, you're just cheating God." John rather resented the reproof, and, waiting for the minister at the church door, said: "When the Maister himsel' was at the grave o' Lazarus, he groaned in speerit."

"Ay," said Mr. Douglas, falling into John's Scotch, "so he did. But gin ye canna be like the Maister in ony ither gait, ye'll jist never be like Him at a'; for ye gurgle i' the throat like a stick-it calf. Forbye, John, whaur's yer Lazarus?"

A twinkle appeared in John's honest

blue eyes, and he accepted heartily the proffered pinch of snuff.

If the minister of our memory is a little softer, a little kindlier than the minister of our real life, one figure at least, in the Manse, owes nothing to time—the tenderly remembered, the passionately beloved minister's wife.

When by our own volition we recall those whom we loved long ago, we can blend with them what associations we will ; but when, without effort of ours, they come before us, one particular association comes with them as a part of themselves. Ask me of Mrs. Douglas and I remember, as in a dream, the tall, slender figure that moved about the Manse, doing the countless things that devolved on the mother of six children, with no servant but Jean ; the blue, unclouded eyes ; the auburn hair, that had lost its gleam of gold and gained some threads of silver ; the placid face, where

many a care was legibly impressed, and the peace of God yet more legibly. I read her retiring nature, shrinking from contact with fashionable life, yet receiving with modest grace the advances of those who cared to honor her husband and herself. I look into her gentle heart, governing solely by love herself, yet, like a true wife, believing with unquestioning faith in all her husband did.

All this I can recall. But the minister's wife, who, without need of recalling, is ever before my eyes and heart, is just a shadowy figure, sitting in the wondrous twilight of a Scottish evening, singing Scottish Psalms.

CHAPTER III.

THE "SABBATH."

IN the Manse, both summer and winter, early rising was the order of the day: and Sunday, you may be sure, was no exception. "If six days are not enough for our own service," said Mr. Douglas, "one is all too little for God's." So the household was early astir; the minister spending an early hour over his sermon, and the children supposed to be doing the same for their catechism.

At eight the family assembled in the dining-room, which was also the sitting-room of the Manse. A small room it was for so many, and undeniable shabby; the carpet patched and darned, the furniture a good deal battered. Even a large bookcase, containing books with more tempting exteriors than those in the study,

showed marks of no very gentle usage. Thereby hung tales of winter nights' revelry, which Don, who had played no inglorious part therein, could recount, with sparkling eye; looking a little sheepish, however, when the little girls took up the story where he would modestly have dropped it, and told of the retribution that followed,—showing, in connection therewith, the tawes that hung in the corner. Over the tawes were the children's book-shelves, containing a goodly array of excellent volumes,—*Chambers' Miscellany* being the prime favorite. Books do a great deal for a room; but, notwithstanding the literary appearance of the Manse dining-room, it required all the brightening that summer sunshine or winter firelight could give it.

On Sunday morning, however, it looked its best. Other breakfasts could only boast those well-known blue plates whose pagodas, fond lovers, cruel parent, and

pair of doves, illustrate a touching legend (a whole world of love and pathos in a porridge-plate !), and porringers of every size and hue. But the table, on Sunday morning, had the snowiest of linen and the second-best set of china, white with delicate lavender flowers ; and the children luxuriated in boiled milk slightly tinged with coffee—Christian, who studied French, always spoke of it as *café au lait*,—wheaten rolls and butter, with boiled eggs or a smoked haddock.

Breakfast being disposed of, the Bible was placed on the table, and Jean summoned to “come ben to worship.” There was no “waling a portion with judicious care.” The psalms were sung, and the Bible was read straight through, and everybody had to bear his part. No particular order was regarded in the reading, but Mr. Douglas, always on the alert to catch some one napping, would call on the children as he pleased, and the por-

tion read might vary from one verse to a dozen. If the chapter consisted only of a list of names, or contained some passage one might think more suitable for private reading, the minister would probably remark that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." In the reading, Jean was not called upon, but she joined in the singing with a will, and, taking the precaution to pitch her voice an octave higher than the others, added much to the general effect. Jean was a privileged individual, whose twenty years of faithful service were allowed to weigh against a good many peculiarities. Once, earlier in their acquaintance, the minister had called her into his study to remonstrate about the singing. "Search your heart, Jean," said he, "and see if this is not spiritual pride." But Jean, astonished and indignant, had her answer ready: "Gin the Lord had gi'en ye a tenor skirl yersel', sir, wad ye no jist

be fleein' i' the face o' yer Maker to try an' sing wi' a bass grumph?"

Worship being over, the dishes were not washed, but stowed away in a part of the kitchen called the nook, to be joined later by those used at dinner and supper; the entire pile to be washed before breakfast on Monday morning by Jean and Davidina, the washerwoman. The minister retired to his study again. The children arrayed themselves in their best. Gentle Mrs. Douglas was everywhere; laying out her husband's best clothes in the spare bedroom, where, except on remarkable occasions, they reposed all the week; turning over the boys' snowy collars, and trying to reduce to order Kenneth's mass of yellow hair; deciding altercations between Christian and her charges, the little girls, in regard to sundry details of the gala attire of the latter; and receiving two visitors who always dropped in before morning service. These

were Mr. Home, an elder—a tall, venerable old man, with benign face and snow-white hair suggestive of a crown of glory; and Miss Grizzell McTavish, an ancient maiden lady, one of the daughters of the predecessor of Mr. Douglas.

If the Glenarran of our records strikes the reader as odd, that of Mr. McTavish's day would seem simply impossible. Mr. McTavish had begun his ministrations there when the only other church in town was that belonging to the Establishment. A harsh-featured, harsh-voiced man, disdaining the refinements of life either in speech or action, he seemed to feel himself divinely commissioned to reprove the little world of Glenarran of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. In the broadest Scotch he inveighed against the "cauld morality" of the Church of Scotland, likening it to "a clart o' cauld parritch," and adding, "but far waur; for Thou kennest, Lord, we canna gie't to

the cat, or thraw't oot to the cocks an' hens." His own household of faith was as unceremoniously dealt with. A dispute, in which two church members flatly contradicted each other, having come before the session, Mr. McTavish prayed: "Gie unto Thy kirk-session the speerit o' wisdom an' knowledge, that it may discern whether Johnnie Cooper or auld Tammas has tell't that sinfu' lee." Tradition said that Mrs. McTavish had been pretty and possessed of aspirations after fashion, and that she had been publicly admonished in the matter of a Leghorn bonnet, which, after incredible pinching and saving, she had managed to achieve; and many in the congregation could remember how the minister had paused in the middle of his sermon to reprove the giggling of his daughters. Whatever might have been in the past, the Misses McTavish of Mr. Douglas's day bore no traces of the pretty, vain mother; and it was certainly

hard to associate deaf Miss Elizabeth or cynical Miss Grizzell with any thought of giggling.

The sisters had for many years kept a small shop in the High Street of Glenarran, where might be had, if the sign spoke truth, "tea, sugar, tobacco, and snuff;" also a small stock of sweetmeats, which, however they differed in form, were one in flavor—peppermint. It was Miss Grizzell's custom to bring a small paper of lozenges to the Manse on Sunday morning. One or two were given to such children as appeared to deserve them, but the bulk was handed to Mrs. Douglas for the minister. Miss Grizzell was shrewd and not at all credulous, and prided herself on being a terror to evil-doers as well as—in the matter of the peppermint drops—a praise to such as did well: and her close questioning was particularly dreaded by the occasional invalids of the Manse.

Strange to say, indisposition was more

frequent in the Manse on Sunday than on any other day. Whatever Mr. Douglas may have thought of this, he had but one rule of action. If the child was too ill to go to church, he was too ill to eat, and must have medicine forthwith; if, on the other hand, he was well enough at breakfast hour, no sudden visitation was allowed to interfere with his church-going. It was wonderful to see how heroically even Don the scape-grace bore the test: asking a blessing, according to manse usage, over his rhubarb powder; sitting in a corner, his face expressive of mingled agony and endurance, his hand clenched on head or stomach as the case might be; turning from the offer of coffee and roll with a gesture of intense loathing; and now and then, when the family seemed growing oblivious of his suffering, uttering a deep groan. But little did Miss Grizzell believe in such symptoms. "Ay!" she would say, in answer to Mrs. Doug-

las's explanation, "it's naething i' the warl but Sunday-seekness. I mind weel when Dawvit used to hae't bad." Then to the invalid, with an emphatic nod: "Ye'll get nae sweeties the day, my man!"

David McTavish, or *Dawvit*, as his sisters called him, was that most unfortunate of beings—a "stickit minister." Never very strong, either mentally or morally, he had after his disappointment become intemperate, and was now a burden on his sisters and a constant care to them. Poor David had inherited his mother's delicate beauty, and, notwithstanding his bleared eyes and hopeless expression, had traces of it still. He had also a sweet, mellow voice, and could sing divinely.

Though Miss Elizabeth was almost stone-deaf, the thought of staying at home on Sunday never entered her mind. By the time Miss Grizzell got into church, Miss Elizabeth was already there;

David, also, if he happened to be sober,—but that was seldom. There was a world of pathos in the way Miss Grizzell would say to Mrs. Douglas: “Dawvit’s bad again.” They sat in a front pew of the gallery—the very same to which, so long, long before, they had been brought almost babies, by their fair young mother. Grim and ungainly as they looked, I doubt not there were spots of tenderness, perhaps even of romance, in their hearts. I wonder what they thought as they sat there and recalled the multitude whom the church had lost and the churchyard gained. New forms do not jar on us in new scenes; but to sit in the old familiar places, yet miss the old familiar faces,—that is to know what change means. And we never realize our own insignificance more painfully than when we learn for the first time how much more enduring are the works of our own hands than we, their makers. What can we do in such

an hour but turn from the contemplation of change and decay, and repose ourselves upon the Unchanging, the Everlasting!

At a stated hour, George Campbell, the minister's man, appeared in the Manse kitchen for the Bible, or, as he simply called it, "The Book;" and shortly afterwards the family set forth. The minister, clean shaven the night before, and now arrayed in the blackest of clothes and the whitest of neckcloths, was a grave and reverend sight to behold. On his arm leaned Mrs. Douglas, and after them came the children, with no little pride, feeling that they were forming part of a very grand procession indeed.

Sometimes there was drawn up at the church gate a handsome carriage, with coachman and footman in gorgeous array; for Lady Georgiana Clyde, though English by birth and a member of the Anglican Church, often honored the minister's pew with her presence,—Kenneth and

Don, to make room for her, occupying places in the pew of the ambitious grocer. Lady Georgiana, all rustling silks and waving plumes of lovely silver-gray and lavender, was tall and majestic; but, being somewhat asthmatic, had a habit of puffing out her cheeks and breathing audibly, that would have given any stranger in the church the impression she had walked there. When the children held their private services, Lady Georgiana was always one of their *dramatis personæ*, and the action of her cheeks was as faithfully rendered as the minister's halt.

Lady Georgiana was the daughter of an English Earl, but in the eyes of her tenantry derived her greatness mainly from being the wife of Sir Archibald—the largest landowner in several shires, representative of his county in Parliament, and a writer of no little note on certain political questions of his day. In Mr. Douglas's church might generally be

found representatives of one or two other county families of less note; but the congregation generally belonged to the humbler classes. In the table-seats were numbers of country people, many of whom walked miles across the heather to reach Glenarran; old women in hooded cloaks and close-fitting caps or mutches, and old men in coats with numerous capes and woolen night-caps of divers colors. The young Douglasses used to tell with gusto how a little cousin from Edinburgh, seeing these old people for the first time in church, had asked audibly, "Are they men-ghosts and women-ghosts?" Many of them understood Gaelic far better than English, and there were occasional services in Gaelic for them.

The perfect hush that pervades a Scottish congregation before service begins—the grave, expectant expression on every face—the reverend voice of the minister

as he says, "Let us begin the public worship of God by singing to his praise,"—have been often remarked by strangers. It is a spiritual putting off their shoes from off their feet, knowing that the place where they stand is holy ground; it is the manifestation of the universal feeling: "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Arbitrary as he was, Mr. Douglas could now and then yield his own preferences in favor of established usage. It was thus in the matter of the singing. He would have liked, years before, to do away with the habit of *lining* the psalms, which in his opinion took up valuable time only to encourage laziness. But the old people in the table-seats, though they brought their Bibles with them, and followed in them not only the text but every passage to which the minister might refer, never dreamed of finding the psalms

for themselves, but depended solely on Alan MacDonald reading each line before he sang it. On one or two occasions when this had been omitted, several of them had actually risen and left the church. To reason with them would have been in vain. Lining was to them a regular part of the service, and singing without that preliminary was to be classed with reading sermons, kneeling at prayer, and other abominations of their arch enemies—popery and prelacy. So that the minister, very wisely, never raised the question. As Alan had a tune for reading as well as for singing—a sort of iambic drawl with a minor wail at the end, the psalms occupied no little time.

At prayer, standing was, of course, the custom; but not as standing is understood now. When the minister said, "Let us pray!" half the congregation did not sit still, and, putting their faces in their hands and their hands on the

pew in front of them, take a position less adapted for devotion than for going to sleep. Every man, woman and child in the church rose; the very little children being placed on the pew-seats, with an injunction to shut their eyes, and one very old man being drawn up to a standing position by his wife, where he worshiped, like Jacob, leaning upon the top of his staff. The prayers of Mr. Douglas were full of rugged eloquence and abounded in apt and forcible figures. The greatness and holiness of God, the insignificance and sinfulness of man, were set forth in strong contrast; for Mr. Douglas believed that only when the heart was fainting under the terrors of Sinai was it ready to be laid at the foot of Calvary. He was the guide, letting you feel yourself lost on the moor before he brought you safe home; the pilot, taking you in your frail bark out of sight of land before he guided you into the goodly haven

where you would be ; the parent-bird, keeping you from building on any tree of earth, that you might "soar upward with him to the sure and immutable refuge in the cleft of the Rock."

CHAPTER IV.

THE "SABBATH" (*continued.*)

As far as attention was concerned, Mr. Douglas's congregation was entirely satisfactory. When the minister announced the text, every one found it and followed the reading. Throughout the sermon a passage was never quoted or referred to without book, chapter and verse being named by the minister and instantly found by the people. In the pause that followed the reading of the text, a good many persons prepared to take notes—even the little girls in the Manse pew producing and dividing half a sheet of paper. Doubtless there were sleepy ones and careless ones, perhaps even scoffing ones, in church; but, whatever they felt, there were few who did not manage to appear attentive.

The manner of Mr. Douglas was exceedingly animated, still solemn, but without a shadow of timidity. To the trusting hearts that beat beneath the antiquated coats and cloaks, he was the Great-Heart about to confront Apollyon on their behalf; and their own piteous plight was expressed occasionally by a sigh or a moan, though they felt very sure that in the end Great-Heart would have the best of it.

The simple faith of Cowper's cottager who "just knew, and knew no more, her Bible true," had probably more than one parallel in Mr. Douglas's congregation, but was by no means the prevailing type. The Scottish mind, even when uneducated, is largely metaphysical. The shoemaker will stop in the act of drawing out his thread to have an argument on predestination, and the joiner, as he planes off a coffin-lid, discusses the doctrine of the resurrection. With such

natures Mr. Douglas could never have held his own had he not from time to time set forth every argument that could be brought either against Calvinism in general or his own particular form of Calvinism, and then triumphantly confuted it. The minister, in the eyes of his people was "jist graun" at fighting, and able to vanquish anything in the shape of an enemy, from Beelzebub to the Kirk of Scotland or the seceders who had refused to enter the Free Church with them.

But when I say his sermons were largely doctrinal, I mean the word in a larger sense; and let the reader beware of falling into a common mistake, and confounding what is doctrinal and what is dry. Tell me what constitutes sublimity; and then say if a doctrinal sermon, far from being a dry one, should not above all others be sublime. In the character of God there is the vast, the

terrible, the solemn, the obscure ; in man, the pathos of his lost condition ; in the Redeemer, the immensity of a sacrifice such as it would never have entered into the heart of man to conceive. Into whatever schools of theology Mr. Douglas might guide his hearers the passionate command was flashed from his soul to theirs : " Repent, believe and live."

The minister's native eloquence gained something from the scenes in which he lived—Nature assisting Revelation in its teaching, and every natural object gaining some spiritual association. " As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever," did the minister say?—the eager eyes were lifted up, with a sweet sense of security, to their own blue hills. " Deep calleth unto deep : " a pause—and the waves were heard surging hoarsely on the shore. " I am the Good Shepherd : " there sat the

rough but kindly men from the moors; plaids about them, staff and bonnet in hand, their dogs waiting at the church door. Or would he show to them the Holy City that shall be builded out of heaven to God?—jasper and sapphire and chalcedony found no faint reflex in the evening sky; while, as the more glowing hues faded away, there floated down on land and sea the pale purple that was the crowning glory of the whole—"the twelfth, an amethyst."

Lady Georgiana remained in a sort of trance condition during the sermon, but roused herself at the last psalm and beat time vigorously on the book-board—vainly hoping to regulate the singing of *Bangor* or *Martyrdom*. Service over, she greeted kindly the minister's wife, shook hands with the children, and drove off as splendidly and breathlessly as she had come.

Between services, if the weather was



RETURNING FROM WORSHIP.

fine, a crowd of country-women gathered in the outer garden, and, sitting on the grass, talked over the sermon and ate their barley scone or oat-cake. The young Douglasses, who lunched quite as frugally, generally joined them there; listening to their father's praises, inquiring after the various ailments of the various people, and replacing with something fresh, the withered sprigs that had done duty all forenoon—for a bit of something sweet-smelling was brought almost as religiously as the Bible, the pocket-handkerchief, and the halfpenny to put in the plate. The minister's bairns were to these old people objects of veneration second only to the minister and his wife, and by them were petted and blessed to their hearts' content.

In the inner garden, among the flowers, there wandered unrebuked a strange, startled-looking creature; gloating over the odors and colorings, yet keeping

strict watch on the kitchen door, and ready to spring to it on the first glimpse of Mrs. Douglas. With her tall, slender form, delicate features and glowing eyes, "daft Annie" would have been beautiful, only that she had the wild look of one hopelessly insane. Poor Annie was the child of sin and shame—her father unknown; her mother a hard, cold woman, who seemed to have a positive aversion for her, heaping on her willing shoulders all the drudgery of their wretched home. Wild as she looked, Annie had been won to gentleness by the kindness of the minister's wife—the one gleam of sunshine in her miserable life. Regularly every Sunday morning, a portion of the Manse breakfast was laid aside for her—to be given, between services, by Mrs. Douglas's own hands. But to look on the face of her kind friend, to touch her dress, to lay her face caressingly on the grass where her feet had

rested, was more to Annie than even the food she needed so sorely. In a poor attempt at finery that made her far more grotesque than her week-day rags, Annie was never missing on Sundays from her place in the table-seats exactly opposite the minister—though it was on Mrs. Douglas her great black eyes were fixed with unspeakable love and longing. When the children gave her a flower, she went off with it, singing,

“There’s nae balm in Gilead, there’s nae physician there !”

The Manse dinner-hour was half-past four. This left time on week-days for getting home from school, and on Sundays for those changes in dress that family economy demanded. The minister repaired at once to the spare bedroom and took off the jet-black clothes. Mr. Douglas’s best suit was one of the Lares of the Manse—a thing having a close

connection with the Bible, Confession, Testimony and Tawes ; and when the minister, alike anxious to lighten his wife's cares and to make his children useful, had ordained that Bab and Alison should have charge of it, the little girls had felt as proud as though to them had been committed the Great Seal. But there is an art in folding the long-tailed coat of a portly man ; and woe to her who could not fold Mr. Douglas's without creasing ! Bab the beautiful failed utterly. By the time she had the tails in order, nothing could be done with the sleeves ; or if by rare luck she achieved the sleeves, the tails did not stay where she had put them, but flew wildly about the bed. So that, when plain little Alison's deft fingers were called in, they generally had to commence operations by removing the stains of Bab's bitter tears.



AN OPEN AIR SERVICE.

CHAPTER V.

THE "SABBATH"—(*continued.*)

IT is needless to say that no one stayed at home on account of dinner. Partially cooked on Saturday, it was left to simmer over a slow peat fire all Sunday afternoon, and was probably just as good as though it had received more attention. The first course was soup; the second, the beef, mutton, or chicken boiled in the soup. Mrs. Douglas alone took tea. For himself, the minister, except on rare occasions, scorned it; and for his children—they would not have been allowed it, had he been worth his weight in gold. As, on Sunday evenings, some slight refection was substituted for the usual supper of porridge and milk, everybody took the precaution to eat an unusually hearty dinner. What was left of the soup, after

Jean had reserved her share, was taken by the children to an aged cripple. The bones were equitably divided between the cat and dog. And so, the most frugal will admit, there was no waste.

How the minister came to be guilty of the extravagance of keeping a dog, must be explained. One day, when Donald was, as Jean expressed it, a "bit toddlin' wee thing," Jean, who had him in charge, was hastily summoned to the door by her brother. She left the child on a rug, playing quietly; but, on returning, found to her horror that he had raised himself to his feet, scrambled across the room, and was then in the very act of falling into the bright fire burning on the hearth. Almost before Jean had time to give the scream that brought not only the family, but the entire neighborhood, to the spot, her brother's dog had darted in, seized Don by the dress, and dragged him forth only slightly scorched. After that,

Brownie absolutely refused to leave the Manse, and Mrs. Douglas was not satisfied till her husband consented to keep him. Christian considered him a plebeian-looking animal; and even Bab and Alison lamented that he was not a noble Newfoundland or St. Bernard, or a graceful spaniel, or something to which they could have given a romantic and high-sounding name; but Don, loyal to his preserver, declared that he liked Brownie best just as he was. What he was, was a large, gaunt cur, of a yellow color and no particular breed, as great a scapegrace as his master, but with a look in his eye that was perfectly irresistible. Brownie was a born diplomatist. It sometimes happened that the milk that fell to the lot of the cat and dog was not just as sweet as it might have been, and then it was left untouched. When Mr. Douglas, anxious to have one rule of obedience for the entire household, or-

dered the pair back to their uneaten porridge, the stupid cat only looked sublimely indifferent and stretched herself out for a nap or yawned in the minister's face. Not so Brownie. With a respectful air he walked across the room and dutifully ate the unsavory mess, turning up the whites of his eyes at the children, however, in a way that would have brought upon him an instantaneous flogging had the minister seen it. But Brownie's cleverness lay in the fact that the minister never did see it. When Don was in disgrace, Brownie was at his side, wearing while under Mr. Douglas's eye a look of mingled sorrow and reproof; but the moment he was left alone with Don, casting on him one of his wicked glances. The Ettrick shepherd tells of a dog that sometimes went to church in his master's place and behaved so decorously that the good minister never knew the difference. Brownie

could have eclipsed that dog : for at the very moment his devout air was winning the minister's heart, his asides would have had half the congregation in convulsions. Jean was Brownie's sworn foe—perhaps because his great exploit could never be mentioned without recalling what might be considered her neglect. She professed to think him uncanny, and to be afraid to stay in a room alone with him ; “ Broonie by name, an' Broonie by nature ! ”

Apropos of Jean, we must mention that that ancient handmaiden's behavior on Sundays was a standing offense to Mr. Douglas. There is no disguising the fact : Jean was an exasperating Christian. Sunday was to her no feast-day, but a time for sackcloth and ashes. On week days who so spirited and lively as Jean ? On Sundays who so doleful and lachrymose ? For a time, Mr. Douglas had tried to remove her depression ; but, find-

ing it arose from a morbid desire of having her spiritual state watched and remarked upon, concluded that his wisest plan would be to let her alone. Jean, disappointed at the minister's course, went to an old elder for advice. "Hoo sall I ken," queried she, "that I'm ane o' the elec'?" "Hoo, indeed!" replied the elder; "judgin' by a' ye say o' yersel', I wad be inclined to think that ye're *no*.'" Jean flounced home, indignant, and thereafter suffered in silence, taking due care, however, to keep out of the minister's sight. Every Sunday she brought forth from the depths of a huge chest a carefully-preserved copy of the "Night Thoughts;" brooding, during her spare minutes, over those pages that describe the death-bed of the profligate, and shedding over them floods of tears. As the passage had no bearing whatever over anything connected with her own history, the reason why she had wept over it

weekly for more than twenty years will probably never be explained.

At seven o'clock the family assembled upstairs, in the parlor—a room whose north window, looking out upon the glorious panorama of shore and sea and hills and far-off islands, was the pride of the Manse and the envy of Glenarran. In the parlor was a well-used but well-preserved piano, placed so near the door opening into the study that the minister could readily detect the amount and quality of the practicing performed. There, too, were various specimens of Christian's fancy-work, that had at one time been the cause of much ill feeling between the boys and their sister, and might have continued so had not Mr. Douglas settled the matter with his usual promptness. "If the boys abuse the work," said he, "I will take the tawes to them; but if complaints are made only because they use it, I will assuredly put

the nonsense in the fire." So Christian dared say no more; but what that ambitious young person suffered in silence while Kenneth's large red hand wandered unchecked over the tidies, and Don's curls buried themselves in the silks of the patchwork cushion, none but kindred spirits can dream.

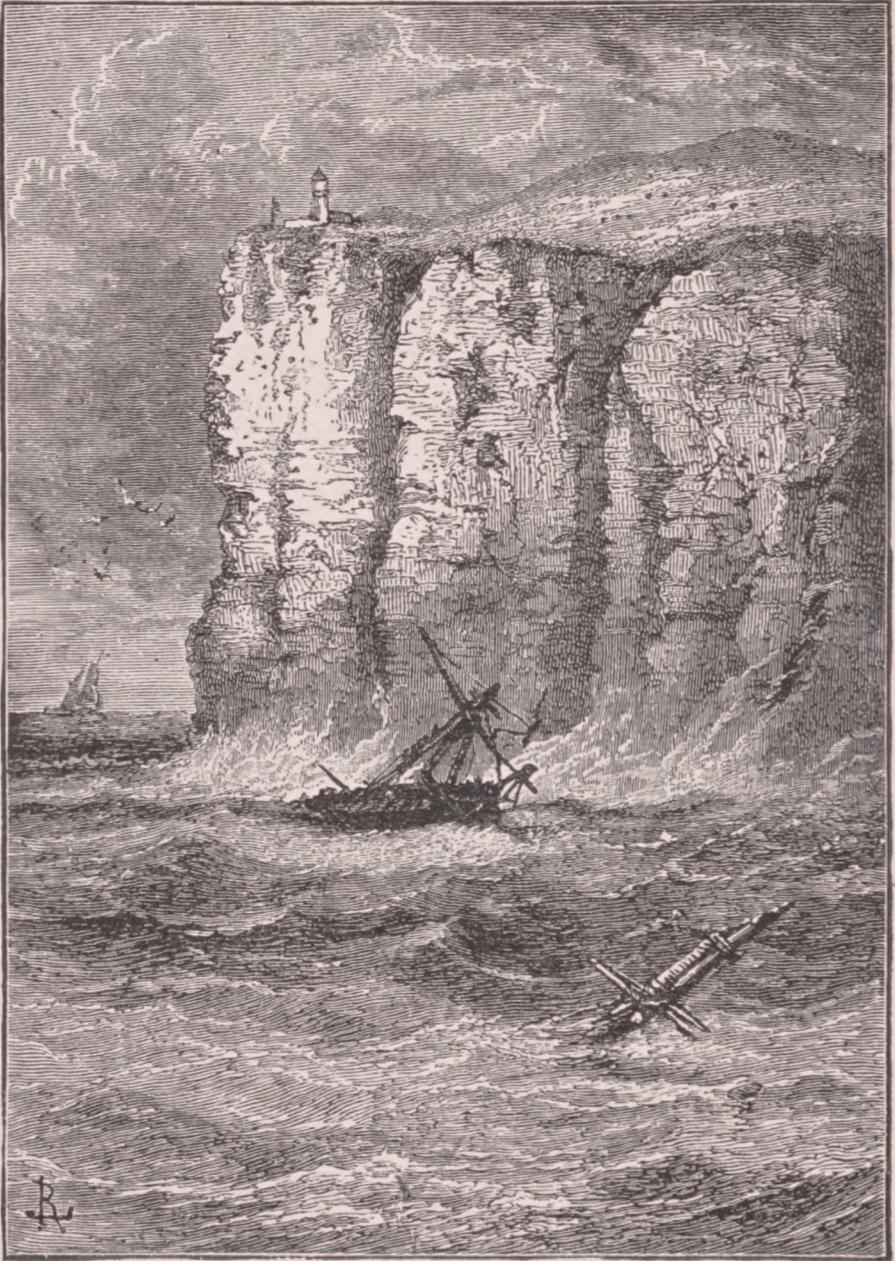
The children went at the Catechism in a way that would surprise you. "*What is the Chief End of Man?*" Mr. Douglas asked Alek, the young collegian; and Alek, answering, questioned Christian; and Christian, Kenneth; and Kenneth, Don. And although the questions soon came to an end among the younger ones, the answers did not—even Bab getting through *Effectual Calling* unscathed; and little Alison wandering through the mazes of *What is Required*, and *What is Forbidden*, and *Reasons Annexed*, in a manner wonderful to hear. Sometimes, alas! there were breaks in the perform-

ance. Too often had Don been fishing at the "Mermaid's Tryst" when he ought to have been learning his Catechism; then, on Sunday evening, instead of bearing his part with the others, he sat aside, meditating ruefully on the morrow's whipping,—Brownie by his side, looking shocked and distressed.

Catechism over, the children read from their notes or gave from memory all they could remember of the sermon. Mr. Douglas slowly walking up and down as he went over each head and particular: explaining to the younger ones the while how the heads were the hands, and the particulars the fingers, of his sermon; and then, in language that even the youngest child could perfectly understand, the bearing of the subject on their daily lives was shown. To the minister right thinking and right feeling were all very well, but right doing was the proof of these; and theories were less than noth-

ing to him unless they stood the test of practical application and made life more active and more earnest.

Then in that sweet hour that is neither night nor day, but something born of all that is loveliest in both, the evening prayer was offered, the evening psalm was sung. An hour afterwards, and Mrs. Douglas, going from room to room, had given her good-night kiss; the children were asleep; all was dark in the Manse—and silent, save for the ceaseless song of the sea.



BESIDE THE SEA.

CHAPTER VI.

WEEK DAYS.

OH, the rapture of the early summer morning among the mountains and beside the sea !

Not that the young Douglasses greeted with rapture the clarion voice that rang through the Manse. Neither nature nor grace had made them anything but healthy, hungry, sleepy children, apt to be a little cross when summoned from the pleasant world of dreams to the rude realities of a hasty toilet and a plunge into the cold sea. But when the mist had risen slowly from the water and the sunlight bathed land and sea in its happy glow, and they walked along the beach to the caves—their only bathing coaches—how the bracing air banished every frown, what vigor they found in the sparkling

depths, and how pleasantly boys and girls met at the breakfast-table, and what appetites they brought there.

“Now then,” would the minister say cheerily, as they rose from their knees after worship, “to work, my children!” Mr. Douglas fully agreed with Mr. Carlyle as to the divine appointment of labor. Work, to him, was health and happiness and worship; a sure cure for all the ills of life—above all, for a certain unreasonable discontent that even the best of children will sometimes indulge in. “Ask your mother to give you a handkerchief to hem,” would be his order if Bab or Alison looked a little doleful. If the household could not furnish the desired article in its unfinished state, a piece of rag was sent for; or, if the minister had no time to lose, to take his own handkerchief from his pocket, tear the hem off, and toss it to the little girls, was but the work of an instant. The remedy wrought

like a charm ; one handkerchief—particularly if it was what Bab disdainfully called “ a snuffy one ”—being sufficient to raise the hemmer’s spirits beyond any chance of depression for months. What hemming was to the girls, the gravel that would encroach on the flower-beds and the dandelions and nettles that would spring up in the grass were to the boys.

The children might have felt a little rebellious had their taskmaster not been the prince of workers himself. By the time they were ready for school, their father was shut up in his study for the morning, or he had gone out on business, or he was off for a visitation in the country. When Mr. Douglas made his pastoral appointments, it became the duty of the parishioner at whose house the visitation was to be held to send a horse for him ; and from many years of such rides the minister could probably, had time permitted, have written an interesting and instructive

work on that animal. In regard to the amazing variety of creatures—appearing to the uninitiated to differ in everything but the name—the word horse comprehends, even Mr. Darwin might have learned from him a thing or two. The children, on visitation mornings, watched the arrival of the animal with intense interest, greeting its coming in sight with screams of recognition or surprise – as, “Oh, papa! it’s that little gray pony that lets your feet trail;” or, “Oh, mamma! it’s that bad black horse that threw Don.” It might be stout in build, like a cart-horse—which it was; or a living skeleton, like Rosinante; or of an appearance so sinister as to draw from Jean the ejaculation: “Gude save us! this maun be the muckle white beast o’ the Revelations.”

At school the boys had a quiet, uneventful time of it. The master was an easy-going, indolent man, whose pupils

might know as much or as little as they pleased ; and it would have pleased Kenneth and Don to know but little, only that their father was apt, when they least expected it, to “ask them some questions in their accidence,” following farther the excellent rule of Sir Hugh Evans : “If you forget your kies, your kæs and your cods, you must be preeches.”

As for the girls, their progress in knowledge was by paths perilous. Glenarran boasted a *Ladies' Establishment*, where the young people of several counties were sent to have their minds gorged at so many guineas per annum ; and the strictness of Mr. Douglas faded into insignificance before the severities of Miss Dangerfield.

Miss Dangerfield was of a genus that does not flourish on this republican soil ; so I may briefly describe her—a straight figure nearly six feet high, a masculine but not ill-looking face, hair parted low

on one side and arranged in bows on the other, a many-flounced dress of black merino, for which in the afternoon silk was substituted, a knitted shawl of black and purple, a head-dress to correspond, and a fur boa twisted round head and neck promiscuously. This costume varied slightly, but only slightly, with the thermometer—being indicative less of the weather it had pleased Providence to send, than of that it was Miss Dangerfield's intention to create. The signal corps of the *Ladies' Establishment* had no difficulty in making her out. Each additional article of attire indicated additional peril for them; and the boa, being interpreted, signified, "Look out for squalls!"

The drudgery of the Establishment was performed by a governess, who presided in the schoolroom. The pupils gave it as their opinion that Miss Trotter would have been very nice, had she dared. Miss Dangerfield taught one or two ad-

vanced classes in her bedroom upstairs, but the greater part of her time was spent in a very handsome drawing-room, where she gave music lessons. Music is usually considered the science of harmony ; with Miss Dangerfield it was the science of numbers. *Con amore* and *con espressione* were signs unknown in her art ; but *one—two—three—four* resounded in her dread voice through the house, was beat with her pencil on the piano, was stamped with her foot on the floor just over poor Miss Trotter's head, and was sometimes accentuated on her pupil's fair cheek by the long white hand she had at liberty. When she had no more music lessons to give, she sailed downstairs in search of fresh victims. Sometimes she walked up to a bevy of little girls, and, speaking with sarcastic politeness, begged to know what lesson had the honor of engaging their attention, and remarked that she would have the pleasure

of hearing it. The more timid had their young souls frozen with terror by the mere glance of the cold, steel-blue eyes set in the white face, and were undone at once ; while, had any one sufficient courage to answer, she fared little better. The long white hand was swung gracefully in the air once or twice to give it impetus, and then the back of it brought violently in contact with the cheek that perhaps least expected it, with the calm remark, "you have so much assurance, my dear !"

These were punishments, so to speak, *en passant*. Graver ones were administered in the bedroom upstairs. Like most tyrants, Miss Dangerfield had a victim-in-chief. Fanny Patterson was a young lady of tallowy complexion and generally dejected appearance, the latter being sufficiently accounted for by the fact that she had a stepmother who was said to treat her cruelly, and a father to

whom any complaint would have been unavailing. Fanny, notwithstanding her melancholy air, was popular with her young friends in a certain way—that is, they liked to gather around her, and listen to the domestic experiences which she was nothing loath to relate. The most enjoyable part of their morning was when, their own lessons being over and Miss Trotter engaged with a large class, they were left free to hear the whispered details of Fanny's last whipping, getting their corner the while well impregnated with the odor of the peppermint lozenges in which Fanny largely indulged. Too often the ominous figure appeared at the schoolroom door, and a hasty disposal had to be made of the sweets. Bab and Alison, gracefully using their handkerchiefs, conveyed the lozenges away in their folds; and the luckless Fanny, totally unskilled in legerdemain, bolted hers entire. However the interview with

Miss Dangerfield might open, it was pretty sure to end with, "Miss Fanny, you will follow me upstairs, my dear." Notwithstanding the horror expressed in Fanny's backward glance, she seemed, on her reappearance, hardly less dejected than before. Perhaps to one so accustomed to whippings one more or less made little difference, or it may be that her stomach was fortified by the constant use of peppermint lozenges.

Fortunately for the young Douglasses, the *Ladies' Establishment* was in that part of the town most remote from the sea; so that the erect port and peculiar step—something between a shuffle and an amble—practiced while Miss Dangerfield's lynx eye was upon them, might be with safety abandoned as they neared home; while it was poor Fanny's crowning misfortune that the windows of what Don called the Chamber of Horrors commanded a view of the most secret recesses of her father's garden.

CHAPTER VII.

WEEK DAYS—(*continued*).

THE gray old Manse, meanwhile, was in comparative repose. Sometimes its quiet was broken in upon by Sir Archibald Clyde, who was fond of bringing his treatises, while yet in embryo, to be talked over with the minister. Sir Archibald admired Mr. Douglas, and particularly liked the hearty laugh that was sure to come in just in the right place. Now and then the Mackenzies of Oldfield—penniless dames of long pedigree, or the Hendersons of The Elms, or the Camerons of the Grange, created a sensation in the Manse parlor; more often came less stately but better-loved visitors. But most often, Mrs. Douglas's place, when her household duties were done, was by her husband's side in the quaint

old study,—her sewing or darning keeping time to the music of his rapidly-moving quill.

As for Jean, the gloom of Sunday having been locked away with the “Night Thoughts,” her tongue fairly kept pace with her fingers. If she was alone, there was store of ballad-lore to be piped out in her high key; if she had the company of Davidina, there was the gossip of the week to be rehearsed, there were Davidina’s dreams to be told and interpreted, and there were standard narrations which it was Davidina’s weekly duty to demand and Jean’s to recount. The episode of the hen-yard was one of the last; and at its conclusion, “An’ sae, as I was tellin’ ye, Dawvit, the minister has never wanted for a fresh egg sin’ syne,” it was Jean’s invariable habit to add, with conscious pride: “I think Cameron hissel’ wad hae liked weel to hear o’t.”

The strength of these damsels was kept

up on washing-days by a glass of whiskey, sent out regularly at a certain hour. The great temperance tide that had swept over much of Scotland had not yet reached Glenarran. In remote parts of the county, an invitation to a funeral was more highly esteemed than one to a wedding, on account of the superior entertainment given. "I hae kenned mony a weddin'," said one feast-hunter, "that sair needed a meeracle to mak the speerits haud oot ; but wha's gaun to mind a drap mair or less when they're jist drooned i' woe?" And the reader may have heard of a certain woman who, being slighted on a funeral occasion at a neighbor's, stood at her door, vainly hoping to be sent for, till the very last invited guest had gone into the house of mourning ; and then, turning away, said, with revengeful determination : "Weel ! weel ! I'll maybe hae a corp o' my ain yet, an' then we'll see wha'll be invited."

In no unseemly haste do the twain in the Manse kitchen partake of the spirits. To swallow it at all is evidently a painful duty, yet a duty that must be discharged with a certain ceremony. Jean as hostess opens fire :

“ Tak yer glass, Dawvit.”

“ Thank ye, Jean.”

There is no drinking of healths. Davidina tastes, shivers, and puts down the glass as one who will no more.

“ Tak it up, Dawvit !”

Davidina takes another mouthful ; her face becomes distorted, her appearance in general is of one going into strong convulsions.

“ Hoot toot, woman ! Tak it up ! For shame, Dawvit !”

Davidina protests, Jean adjures. It is a work of time. The glass is of course finally emptied ; and after the last mouthful Davidina serenely wipes her mouth with the corner of her apron, and her

moon-like face resumes its usual stupid placidity.

I have spoken of the simplicity of the Manse dinners. On great occasions, however, such as birthdays, the children were allowed to choose an additional dish. And the dish invariably chosen was pancakes.

I affirm that there is no greater delicacy in the world than a pancake properly made. But it requires the nicety of a Mrs. Douglas to compound it, the brawny arms of a Davidina to beat the eggs, the skill of a Jean to toss the delicious morsel.

“Dinna ye ever miss, Jean?” would the admiring Davidina ask, as she watched the last-named operation. “I’m nae sic gomeril!” Jean would reply, tossing her head as gallantly as the pancake.

A further birthday pleasure was a song from Jean; but this was never allowed when she had companionship in the kitchen, lest Davidina, who was ever burn-

ing to distinguish herself, might presume upon it and wish to sing too. When the singing was permitted, Jean stood half-way between the dining-room door and the table where the pancakes were being disposed of, and the child whose birthday it was, was free to choose the song. Bab admired the ballad of the man who, having a dumb wife, got a doctor to "cut her chattering-string," but before many days became so wearied of the newly-evoked gift that he applied to the doctor to make her dumb again,—which that worthy declared it was beyond his power to do. The refrain, "Dumb! dumb! dumb!" rang out bravely. Little romantic Alison loved a Jacobite lay, as "Wae's me for Prince Charlie!" while the boys affected something martial, and complimented Jean by affirming that if they did not see her they would think it was the bagpipes. As for Christian she entirely disapproved of the performance, for a

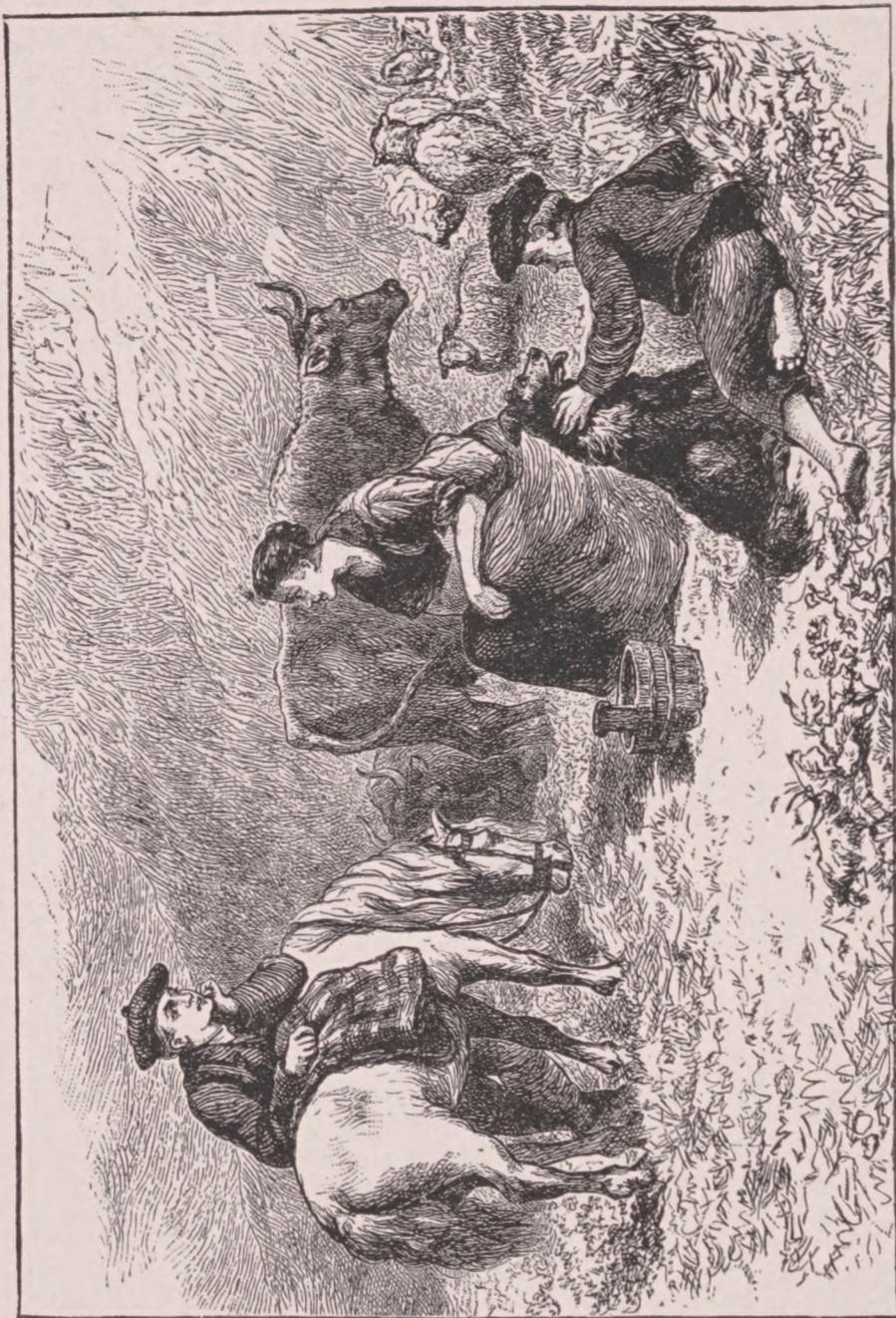
reason young ladies will be quick to appreciate. "Only think, mamma," she said, "if any one passing should think it was *I* singing!"

In truth, the Manse had many a pleasure all the year round. In the haunted attic no ghost had the heart to show itself when the young masqueraders held high revelry,—Brownie, as obliging as the immortal Bottom, ready for any part, but generally appearing as a respectable elderly female in a green cloak and the identical kiss-me-if-you-can bonnet that was said to have drawn on Mrs. McTavish her husband's ire. Then there were the long winter evenings, when, study-hours being over, they had a romping game of blind-man's-buff, or a quieter game of draughts—sometimes with the minister; or sat round the dining-room fire, telling stories or singing sweet old songs.

There was Hallow e'en, when they "ducked" for apples and burned nuts;

and now and then came an evening when, the minister and his wife having gone to dine at the castle or some equally unwonted place, they were free to gather round the kitchen hearth and hear from Jean wild tales of Covenanting times, or ghost stories—made more impressive by their narrator pausing from time to time to remove a “coffin” or a “shroud” from the dismal tallow candle, which she seemed to keep burning for that express purpose.

But what were all the pleasures of the house to the rambles among the hills or on the moors? There was not a spot for miles around that the young Douglasses did not know: banks where wild thyme grew, favorite haunts of graceful blue-bells, knolls where early primroses grew thickest, dells where violets lingered last. Every summer there was a whole day at Raeburn Head, when they lunched at the shepherd's cottage—eating curds and



THE HILLS IN SUMMER.

cream with horn spoons, or rambled about among the heather in search of eggs, or threw stones over the cliffs to make the startled sea-birds rise screaming.

And the sea, the wonderful sea, in what varied language did it speak to them! Sometimes after a wild night, in which the surf could be heard beating against the garden wall, the sun shone out bright and clear; and the children, careless of the biting air, rushed to the beach to see the rainbow-hued hills of foam and the masses of jelly-fish the storm had brought ashore; or to run out after the snow-crested, sparkling green waves, and then, just as they were curling, ready to fall again, to fly before them, often not escaping dry-shod. Not seldom some goodly ship came ashore in the night; and the population of the Fisher Biggins—men, women and children—flocked out, nominally to rescue, but really to appropriate the goods the gods had provided. Once

a real, live whale came in among the rocks and was left there by the tide, and all Glenarran rode or walked miles to see. To be sure it was not a very large one, and its head—which is, I believe, the most interesting portion of a whale—remained obstinately under water. But then it was something to have seen a living whale—rather, one that had so lately been living; for even while the family from the Manse gazed, the people, always anxious to utilize the “mercies,” were broiling slices of it on the beach, to see if it could not possibly be eaten.

“Wad ye try it, sir?” said an old fisherman to the minister.

“No, I thank you, John. How do you like it yourself?”

“Weel, sir, I’ll no deny that I hae ta’en a scunner at it. I’m feared it canna be eaten; but I’m wae to see sae muckle meat ganging to waste.”

“But oh! John,” broke in Alison,



THE HILLS IN WINTER.

“what if it should be the very whale that swallowed Jonah?”

“It wad eat nae waur for that,” said John. “But bless the lassie! Wha wad hae thocht o’ sic a thing but ane o’ the minister’s bairns?”

But, after all, the children loved the sea best in the summer evenings. Long after the sun went down, they would build stone castles on the beach and let the incoming tide surround them. Or they would walk up and down on the sand, watching sky and water slowly darkening, and the deep right royal purple of the hills growing indistinct, and the nets of the fishermen gently rising and falling far off on the silver-gray sea.

You will see that the children of the Manse owed but a small part of their education to Miss Dangerfield and the parish schoolmaster. Dear old Mother Nature is a grand instructor, and teaches unerringly all but those who will be fools;

and her very best lesson is just the same as that you learned at the knee of the mother who bore you. I have sometimes thought that I would like to take one of the popular productions of to-day—an evolution philosopher—and let him feel the vigorous argument, the keen wit, the reverent faith, the fine scorn of the minister I used to know. But I believe I could do more for him, might I but lead him far away among the mountains, and let him find himself face to face with God. Then, from the consciousness of his own utter insignificance, might be evolved a theory—not so new as his, but one that would make him a higher and happier and holier creature :

“O my God ! of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hand. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure ; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ;

as a vesture shalt Thou change them,
and they shall be changed ; but Thou
art the same, and thy years shall have
no end."

CHAPTER VIII.

“THE SACRAMENT.”

AT the time of which we are writing, “The Sacrament,” as it is simply termed in Scotland, was celebrated in each of the churches in Glenarran but once a year. From time immemorial the ministers of that place had, on such occasions, been assisted by brethren from their own section of the country. Great, then, was the excitement in town when it was announced that the great Dr. Drummond of Edinburgh would, on the next sacramental occasion, be the guest of Mr. Douglas.

As the time drew near, great was the bustle in the Manse. First of all, Bab and Alison were dispatched for Daviddina. That retainer was discovered at breakfast, consisting of tea, with oat-

cake and butter, an enviable meal, the children thought, comparing it with their own breakfast of porridge and milk. Davidina received the messengers with loud welcome ; and first ascertaining that Christian was not likely to appear, selected two pieces of crisp oat-cake, buttered them roughly with a knife, and gave them a finer finish with her thumb. This tempting refreshment being proffered to the children, Bab accepted graciously, Alison declined.

Davidina's feelings were hurt. “ Why !” said Bab, opening wide her pretty eyes, “ you love oat-cake and butter !”

“ But I do not like it spread with Davidina's thumb,” objected Alison.

Davidina tossed her head. “ Sic pride !” said she.

Bab evidently sympathized with Davidina, and ate her portion with increased relish. Whereupon the retainer took her on her lap and blessed her for an angel

bairn, and praised her eyes and hair, and heard her say, "The Lord's my shepherd," wiping her eyes with her apron when she had finished. And poor little plain Alison stood by, feeling that she had been very guilty, yet not able for the life of her to see how it was any kindness to eat cake spread with the fingers when a knife lay on the table.

"If you had no knife," she attempted to explain. But Davidina waved her hand as one who eschewed further discussion.

Davidina came to the Manse, and the house was thoroughly cleaned, a bed put up in the study and a "shake down" introduced into the attic for the boys, so that their room might be left vacant. From the wine merchant's arrived small supplies of port and sherry, and more liberal quantities of brandy and whiskey; and from the druggist's a large bottle of bitters,—for the good ministers were by

no means teetotalers. These were purchases, of course ; but there were sundry presents also. Country women crowded in with a small cheese, a few eggs, or a piece of pork ; while the fisher people promised a dish of fresh herring, a fine cod, and one generous heart brought a salmon. Arrangements were made for a daily supply of fresh rolls and cream ; an immense beef-steak pie was made, whose crust was a marvel to behold ; and Mrs. Douglas's famous recipe for bread pudding, with fruit, was brought out and conned carefully.

Laugh at this homely fare, if you will, dear reader. For me, I only sigh for the hearty appetite and perfect digestion that made it all so good.

Well, there came to the Manse Mr. Thompson and Mr. McGregor, from the adjacent islands, who were crowded together into the study ; Mr. McLean and Mr. Craig, from neighboring counties,

who found close quarters in the boys' small room; and the great Dr. Drummond, of Edinburgh, who luxuriated alone in the comparatively spacious best bedroom.

The children were in a state of subdued excitement. None of them, except Alek and Christian, sat at the table with these worthies; but then they partook of such dainties as were left. Also they knew from experience that Mr. McGregor would give each of them a shilling when he went away; and although they had too much delicacy to speak of it, there was not one who had not already planned in his heart what should be done with every penny of it. Moreover, was it not something just to gaze on the great Dr. Drummond, of Edinburgh? True, they had been somewhat disappointed on his arrival to find that he had a hooked nose and red hair. But when Christian told them how he had said, on being asked if

he would be helped to salmon, not, "If you please, sir," or "Thank you, sir," or anything they would have been likely to say; but, "Sir, I will partake of that delicacy for which your town is so famous"—when she imitated his sonorous voice and piercing glance—they felt that a man might be great notwithstanding the accidents of nose and hair. That was the pet speech at the children's table for many a day. Did Jean ask any one to have some more broth or porridge, the reply was, "Madam, I will partake of that delicacy for which your town is so famous." So that at last the old servant had to complain to her master "o' the bairns" for "makin' a fule o' her," and had the speech prohibited, though the piercing glance still fixed her.

The religious exercises of the occasion began on Wednesday night, the regular night for the weekly prayer meeting; and as the ministers had not then arrived,

members of the congregation were, as usual, called upon to pray, and not always with the most satisfactory results.

“Donald Mackay,” Mr. Douglas said, “you will engage in prayer ;” and taking no notice of a deprecating groan from Donald, stood up and shut his eyes.

A dead silence till the minister repeated the command. Then a deeper groan, a muttered declaration of being “no worthy,” and finally Donald boldly said : “Auld Jamie McPherson can pray.”

“Pray yoursel’,” auld Jamie McPherson retorted.

And so on till the stern voice of Mr. Douglas reduced Donald to obedience.

Thursday was kept as a day of fasting and prayer, with sermons morning, afternoon and evening. On Friday evening there was another prayer meeting, and on Saturday regular services in the morning. On “Sacrament Sunday” the exercises began at nine and lasted till five,

without intermission, the ministers slipping out when they could to take refreshment.

In Mr. Douglas's church, as I have said, the tables were stationary, running in front of the pulpit, the breadth of the church. The “table seats” were occupied on all other occasions by the aged and humble parishioners of both sexes, who seemed in their simple hearts to think there was some virtue in them. On “Sacrament Sunday” they remained unoccupied, however, till the invitation was given to come forward.

“We will sing a portion of the 103d Psalm,” Mr. Douglas said, “and during the singing the communicants will take their seats.”

And then they sang to some quaint tune those words so associated with that sacred season in every Scottish heart, Alan McDonald *lining* it as they went on :

“O thou my soul, bless God the Lord,
And all that in me is
Be stirrèd up, His holy name
To magnify and bless.
Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God,
And not forgetful be
Of all His gracious benefits
He hath bestowed on thee.”

Oh, the strange sweetness of that Scottish music, heard in country parishes throughout the land ! The unaccustomed ear might shrink from unequal time and interpolated notes ; but the singers would have naught changed. Was it not thus that it went up from the glens and hillsides ? Has not every unwritten cadence a story of its own ? That minor wail is the cry of the persecuted : “ All Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me.” Lower still it sinks for the martyred dead : “ The bódies of Thy saints have they given to be meat for the fowls of the air.” The minor sobs itself away. There is a burst expressing renewed, un-

conquerable confidence in God: "Oh! put thy trust in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God."

But, meantime, the children were gazing expectant, and still the communicants did not move. When they had sung five or six verses, Mr. Douglas leaned over the pulpit and touched Alan McDonald's head, as a signal to stop. And here Bab and Alison exchange glances, signifying that had they been in Alan McDonald's place, and with so bald a head, they would certainly have screamed at the critical moment.

Then came a stern rebuke to the communicants, and then more singing. By-and-by an old man or woman approached, trembling visibly and drawing back from time to time. And the seats were not filled till the minister had rebuked them more than once.

Was this timidity only a ceremony? you

may ask. I do not think it was. These trembling souls dwelt too much among the thunders and lightnings and thick clouds of Sinai, and looked not enough on Calvary and its Cross. So they sang, without understanding them, the words of their own beautiful Psalm :

“Such pity as a father hath
Unto his children dear,
Like pity shows the Lord to such
As worship Him in fear.”

At five o'clock the elders dined with the ministers, while in the Manse kitchen soup was distributed to all who came. After that there was another sermon. The religious exercises of the occasion were brought to a close on Monday morning, and by Monday night the children had their shillings, the neighboring ministers were gone, and Dr. Drummond, of Edinburgh, waiting for the weekly packet, was left alone in his glory.

Alas that aught should have occurred

to mar the pleasure of that great man's visit! But such is life. On the very last day of his stay, Jean was ill, and Davidina, whom not even the fear of Mr. Douglas could keep long in the background, insisted on supplying her place at table. Her thousand minor blunders might have passed unheeded, but that she should bring in the cheese in her hand, and so set it before Mr. Douglas on the table, was an enormity that, by Christian at least, was never either forgotten or forgiven.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MINISTER'S ELDEST SON.

WHEN Alek was but seventeen he was sent to the University, with the understanding that for the first year his father, out of his small means, would maintain him there, but after that he must shift for himself.

Alek was a clever lad, who knew thoroughly what he knew at all, and by assisting in a school during his spare day-hours, and coaching one or two slower students at night, he maintained himself with credit, and, at the end of his third year, returned to Glenarran to astonish the natives with a wonderfully clerical dress and air, an eye-glass, and a highly comfortable opinion of himself.

His father and mother talked him over. Mrs. Douglas thought her eldest son per-

fect ; her husband by no means agreed with her.

“ Understand me,” he said, “ Alek is a good boy enough. There is an ingenuousness even about his vanity, and I can say for him that I don't believe he need blush to give an account of every hour he has spent away from us. But self-conceit is a dead fly that would spoil the most precious ointment.”

“ But you won't be hard on him, Donald?”

“ Hard on him !” laughed the minister. “ That would be to make him a self-righteous prig. A good laugh at his expense will do more for him than twenty sermons.”

In truth, Mr. Douglas did not seem inclined to be hard on Alek. As a stately Newfoundland may put up with the antics of an insignificant puppy, knowing that at any moment matters can be adjusted by a tap of his huge paw, the minister

bore with the airs of Alek, studying him closely the while.

The youth, meantime, constituting himself the viceroy of his father, became obnoxious to the younger children. On his arrival he had proposed that his brothers and sisters should improve their vacation by taking a Bible lesson with him daily. This Mr. Douglas wisely left optional with the children. They, highly pleased at first, began to rebel as soon as they discovered that Alek meant to be quite as severe as their father, and a great deal more unreasonable. Christian was the first to secede, and before a fortnight had passed, Kenneth, who was too good to quarrel with anybody, was the only one left.

Not satisfied with his unpopularity in the house, Alek proceeded to make himself odious to the boys on the street. Opposite the church was a row of thatched cottages, from which issued daily a

crowd of urchins on mischief intent. Over them the Manse children exercised a sort of feudal sway, due partly to their position and partly to Don's good right hand. The minister's rule over them was absolute. Even Will-gowk, who, notwithstanding his name, was no fool, but an arrant knave, had been known to leave the dog to whose tail he was fastening a tin pail with a burning peat in it, and, obeying the signal from the window, go sheepishly into the Manse and up to the study; and perhaps the minister's children had never been so surprised in all their young lives as when they saw the culprit depart with a grin on his dirty face and two or three sweeties in his dirty hand.

It never entered into the heads of these street Arabs to say to the minister, "It is not *your* wall I am climbing;" or, "It is not *your* cat I am going to kill." But when Alek took upon himself the office of censor, it was an entirely different thing.

When, in imitation of his father, he tapped on the window and signed to Will-gowk to approach, that worthy laid his finger knowingly on the side of his nose and looked aggravatingly attentive ; and when, to enforce obedience, Alek stepped to the door and addressed the gowk as William, the latter turned half a dozen somersaults in succession to express his intense delight.

Nor did Will-gowk let the matter end with the unearthly shriek that finished off the somersaults. Passing the thatched cottages, an evening or two after, Alek was arrested by a gentle tap on a certain window, and, stopping involuntarily, heard some one say in low, stern tones, " Alexander ! Alexander, my boy, step this way ! " It was the gowk in his usual rags, but with the stiffest of pasteboard collars, gazing impressively at him through a hastily improvised eye-glass.

Alek would have dashed through the window at the gowk, but that a carriage

was approaching. So he strode on, his face crimson with rage, his mind busy with schemes of revenge on his enemy.

As he passed down the High street, a loud, shrill voice resounded in his ears. At first he hardly noticed it, he was so absorbed, but gradually it penetrated to his preoccupied senses, shaped itself into words, and this was what it said :

“Saundy ! Saundy Dooglas ! whaur got ye thae fine breeks, my man ?”

The voice proceeded from the deaf Miss McTavish, who stood just within her shop door, making a telescope of one hand, through which she surveyed Alek, while with the other she pulled back her cap from her ear, the more readily to catch his answer.

“Eh ?” she screamed, as Alek hesitated. Miss Elizabeth had the usual failing of deaf people. She thought everybody in the world deaf, and all Glenarran might have heard as she again cried :

“ I’m sayin’, Saundy ! whaur got ye thae fine breeks ? ”

Everybody who heard was laughing. Not far off were some of Christian’s friends, on whom Alek hoped the “ fine breeks ” had already made a favorable impression. For the moment he just went mad. Rushing across the street and into the shop where Miss Grizzell was weighing out half an ounce of snuff, he shook his clinched fist fiercely in Miss Elizabeth’s face and shouted, “ You are an old fool ! ”

“ Eh ? ” said Miss Elizabeth again, looking dazed. Miss Grizzell dropped her snuff and turned pale.

“ He’s gaun gyte, Leezbeth, ” she said ; “ much learnin’ has made him mad ! ”

But Alek quickly undeceived her. All the wrath he had been cherishing in his heart against his brothers and sisters, and against Will-gowk, fell, in addition to

Miss Elizabeth's own share, on the two faithful friends of his family.

Something in the faces of the two old women made him stop at last. Miss Elizabeth was wiping her eyes with her apron. Miss Grizzell looked as if she had received a blow.

“Pit doon yer apron, Leezbeth,” said Miss Grizzell, with dignity; “he's no worth the greetin' for. An' God forgie ye, laddie,” she added, turning to Alek, “that ever I should live to say that o' yer faither's son !”

The unhappy boy left the shop, turned rapidly out of the High street and gained the beach the nearest way.

His passion was spent. He was only utterly wretched. What had been the worth of his college honors? What the use of the self-denial he had practiced daily. He almost wished he had never returned to Glenarran. What an utter failure he had been !

And then self-reproach began to make itself felt. He knew Miss Elizabeth's curiosity of old ; it was great, but never meant to be unkind. And Miss Grizzell, always a welcome and honored guest in the Manse—he could not forget her look, and something began to rise in his throat as he recalled her old affection for him ; her simple gifts that had marked every birthday in his life ; her pride in all his successes. What would they think at the Manse of the way he had requited it all ? How his father's brow would darken ! And his mother—he believed it would break her heart.

He glanced up at the study window ; there was no light in it. And then he suddenly remembered that it was prayer-meeting night, and that he had been wishing that very morning that his father would call on him to pray, and planning the very words in which his petitions should be couched. On prayer-meeting

nights Miss Grizzell always dropped in before service began, and so everything must be already known at home. But no ; it was only that very day that he had heard the minister say to his mother, "David McTavish is drinking again." So the sisters were at home with the skeleton of their house, and he had chosen that night of all others to add to their misery.

The tide was out. He climbed up the rocks at the Mermaid's Tryst, and threw himself on the bank above. The full moon rose from behind the hills and lighted up the sea. He knew just how it was shining in at the study window, making the old books glisten and brightening the tarnished gold of the medallions.

He lay there long, and thought is quicker than time. Resolutions that are to decide our destiny for time and for eternity may be born in a moment, but it is a moment in which we live an age.

Once his frame shook with sobs. Poor boy! he was only a boy after all, though he had thought himself so great a man; and it was a token for good that his boy's heart was coming back to him.

When he rose, it was to fall on his knees, and none of the finished periods he had planned for prayer-meeting occurred to him. Part of his prayer was uttered and part unexpressed. It was all from the depths of his overburdened heart, and was doubtless accepted in God's sight as the evening sacrifice.

With a lighter heart he recrossed the sands, then swiftly narrowing with the incoming tide, and passing the road that led to the Manse, went straight to the little shop in the High street.

Miss Grizzell came to the door, night-cap on head, candle in hand. On seeing who her visitor was, a hard, set look came over her face. "Weel," said she, "hae ye come to feenish yer job?"

Alek did not falter. "I have come to beg your pardon, Miss Grizzell."

Miss Grizzell's look hardly changed, but she said briefly, "Come in."

They sat down together in the little shop, and Alek said what he had to say in a way that brought a wistful look into Miss Grizzell's eyes and carried conviction to her heart.

"Leezbeth's i' her bed," she said, when he had finished, "an' I winna wauk her up. She'll forgive ye fast eneugh the morn ; she wasna half sae angert as me."

There was silence between them for a while, and both hearts grew softer. "Alek," said Miss Grizzell, at last, "there is a sicht up stair that naebody but yer faither and mither,—forbye me an' Leezbeth an' the auld docter,—has ever seen. An', thinkin' o' Dawvit an' o' you, my hert has been sair this nicht.

"Ance on a time," she continued, "Dawvit was as bonnie a lad as ye wad

want to see,—no a braw scholar, like you Alek, but just sae bonnie he won a' the leddies' herts; an' fine at makin' sangs an' singin' them, and playin' on the fiddle,—that my father thocht jist like the abomination o' desolation spoken o' by Dawnel the prophet,—and thrummin' on that ither stringed instrument ye play wi' the fingers. Weel, when this trouble cam upon us it was hard to thole. It was jist about the time yer faither cam here, an' he tried to comfort me, honest man. 'Canna ye say,' says he, 'Shall I receive good at the hand of the Lord, an' shall I not also receive evil?' 'If it *was* the Lord,' says I, 'but to me it looks mair like the deil.' 'The Lord often works by ill instruments,' says he, 'but its nane the less the Lord.' Weel, to mak' a long story short, I think the minister brocht me nigher to God, an', in bringin' me nigher to God, he brocht me nigher to hissel'. An' when ye were born, laddie,

my prayer went up that the trouble that had come upon us micht never come upon them that lo'ed you. There's never been a day in yer life that I haena prayed for you; an' I think yer ain mither has ne'er ta'en mair pride i' yer weel-doin'.

“ But I didna bring ye in to preach to you, but to pit an idee i' yer heid. The claes are no' that ill, seein' yer ain hard-earned siller payed for them, though the breeks are maybe ower ticht, and the coat-tails ower long; an', if ye are near-sichtit, Alek, a guid pair o' glasses wad be mair use than that cumstairy thing ye cock i' yer ee. But that's neither here nor there. Ye're to be a minister, an' ye're gettin' learnin', an' they tell me ye hae the gift o' the gab. Noo, do ye hae to wait for the layin' on o' hauns afore ye begin an' work for God? Is't no' o' mair accoont what ye do for ither fowk's souls than what ye pit o' yer ain back?”

“Would you have me preach, Miss Grizzell?” asked Alek, in surprise.

“Do ye mean wad I hae ye git up in yer faither’s poopit, to get pulled oot by thae lang coat-tails by Geordie Cawmitt? Nae likely! But I’d hae ye gie up strivin’ an’ fechtin’ wi’ the bairns an’ Will-gowk; to strive an’ fecht,—an’ no i’ yer ain strength, laddie,—wi’ them that Satan has led captive at his will; maist o’ a’, wi’ them like puir Dawvit, up the stair.”

“But my father is not a temperance man, Miss Grizzell,” objected Alek.

“An’ gin he’s no’? nae mair was mine. But gin he had lieved to see Dawvit, he wad hae been. I’m an auld woman, an’ the youngsters laugh at the shape o’ my cloak an’ the size o’ my bannet, but the progress o’ the soul isna measured by the cut o’ the claes. What’s the use o’ lievin later, if ye’re no’ to learn mair?”

A strain of music stole softly down

stairs. The voice was tremulous but sweet, and this was what it sang :

“What time my heart is overwhelmed
And in perplexity,
Do Thou me lead unto the Rock
That higher is than I.”

“It’s Dawvit,” said Miss Grizzell, in answer to Alek’s look of inquiry. “Whenever the fever is on him, he’s aye brakin’ oot wi’ some verse frae an auld Psalm. Ance I could no bear to hear him. I used to feel as if it was blasphemy. But yer mither learned me better. ‘Is’t no’ a sign o’ grace,’ says she, ‘that when his mind is wanderin’ he does na stray off to the ale-house or what he hears there, but gangs back to what he learned i’ the auld innocent days, an’ sings a sang o’ Zion?’ I canna tell ye hoo the thocht has comforted me.”

Alek rose to go. “Good night, Miss Grizzell; I will not forget all you have said.”

“God bless ye, laddie,” said Miss Grizzell, heartily, as she shook hands with him at the shop door; “and God help us a’!” she added, as she took up her candle and went up stairs to keep her solitary watch by David’s bed.

Should the reader wander to the Glenarran of to-day and see the reforms that have been wrought there, specially in the region of the Fisher Biggins, since the days of which I write, he will be sure to hear in connection with them the name of Alek Douglas.

The very first lecture delivered by Alek in Glenarran was on behalf of the Temperance Society, a society he had been mainly instrumental in organizing; and the second was on aggressive Christian work, and in it he showed, with all his father’s vigor joined to his own enthusiasm of youth, that standing in the pulpit and calling, “Ho! every man,” is

only a part of Christ's work ; that the only way to win the lost is to seek them out in their haunts, not with the superiority of saint seeking sinner, but with the love of brother meeting brother, hand to hand and heart to heart.

Alek's father was present at both lectures, and there were many to wonder what were the minister's thoughts. I feel sure that they were in substance identical with Miss Grizzell's words, already quoted : " What's the use o' lievin' later, if ye're no' to learn mair ? "