



MRS MACCLARTY.

SCENES FROM THE "COTTAGERS OF GLENBURNIE."

IN a beautiful morning in summer, Mrs Mason, a lady who had led an active and useful life, but now was desirous of retiring for the sake of her health to a pleasant part of the country, arrived at the village of Glenburnie. Situated near the head of a glen, or romantic valley, the village was small and picturesque, but, like too many villages and hamlets in Scotland, it showed that nothing was done to make it neat, cleanly, or attractive. It consisted of about twenty or thirty thatched cottages, which, but for their chimneys, and the smoke that issued from them, might have passed for so many stables or hogsties, so little had they to distinguish them as the dwellings of man. That one horse, at least, was the inhabitant of every dwelling, there was no room to doubt, as every door could not only boast its dunghill, but had a small cart stuck up on end directly before it; which cart, though often broken, and always dirty, seemed ostentatiously displayed as a proof of wealth.

In the middle of the village stood the kirk, a humble edifice, which meekly raised its head but a few degrees above the neighbouring houses, ornamented, however, by two old ash-trees, which grew at its east end, and spread their protecting arms over its lowly roof. As the houses of the village stood separate from each other, at the distance of many yards, our traveller had time to contemplate the scene, and was particularly struck with the number of children who, as the car advanced, poured forth to look at Mrs Mason and her friends, Mr and Miss Mary Stewart,

who accompanied her in their car. Mrs Mason having previously arranged to stay for a short time in the village with the only relation she had in the world, who was married to a farmer named John Macclarty, she now asked for the house of that worthy, and after a severe jolting from the badness of the road, was set down opposite his door.

It must be confessed that the aspect of the dwelling where she was to fix her residence was by no means inviting. The walls were substantial—built of stone and lime—but they were blackened by the mud which the cart-wheels had spattered from the ruts in winter; and on one side of the door they were covered from view by the contents of a large dunghill. On the other, and directly under the window, was a squashy pool, formed by the dirty water thrown from the house, and in it about twenty young ducks were at this time dabbling.

At the threshold of the door, room had been left for a paving-stone, but it had never been laid; and consequently the place became hollow, to the great advantage of the younger ducklings, who always found in it a plentiful supply of water, in which they could swim without danger. Happily Mr Stewart was provided with boots, so that he could take a firm step in it, while he lifted Mrs Mason, and set her down in safety within the threshold. But there an unforeseen danger awaited her, for there the great whey-pot had stood since morning, when the cheese had been made, and was at the present moment filled with chickens, which were busily picking at the bits of curd which had hardened on the sides, and cruelly mocked their wishes. Over this Mr Stewart and Mrs Mason unfortunately tumbled. The pot was overturned, and the chickens, cackling with hideous din, flew about in all directions, some over their heads, and others making their way by the inner door into the house.

The accident was attended with no further bad consequences than a little hurt upon the shins; and all our party were now assembled in the kitchen; but though they found the doors of the house open, they saw no appearance of any inhabitants. At length Mrs Macclarty came in all out of breath, followed by her daughters, two big girls of eleven and thirteen years of age. She welcomed Mrs Mason and her friends with great kindness, and made many apologies for being in no better order to receive them; but said that both her gudeman and herself thought that her cousin would have stayed with Mr Stewart at Gowan-brae till after the fair, as they were too far off at Glenburnie to think of going to it, though it would, to be sure, be only natural for Mrs Mason to like to see all the grand sights that were to be seen there; for, to be sure, she would gang mony places before she saw the like. Mrs Mason smiled, and assured her she would have more pleasure in looking at the fine view from her door than in all the sights at the fair.

“Ay, it’s a bonny piece of corn, to be sure,” returned Mrs

Macclarty with great simplicity; "but then, what with the trees, and rocks, and wimplings o' the burn, we have nae room to make parks o' ony size."

"But were your trees, and rocks, and wimplings of the burn all removed," said Mr Stewart, "then your prospect would be worth the looking at, Mrs Macclarty; would it not?"

Though Mr Stewart's irony was lost upon the good woman, it produced a laugh among the young folks, which she, however, did not resent, but immediately fell to busying herself in sweeping the hearth, and adding turf to the fire, in order to make the kettle boil for tea.

"I think," said Miss Mary, "you might make your daughters save you that trouble," looking at the two girls, who stood all this time leaning against the wall.

"O poor things," said their mother, "they have not been used to it; they have enough of time for wark yet."

"Depend upon it," said Mrs Mason, "young people can never begin too soon; your eldest daughter there will soon be as tall as yourself."

"Indeed she's of a stately growth," said Mrs Macclarty, pleased with the observation; "and Jenny there is little ahint her; but what are they but bairns yet for a' that? In time, I warrant, they'll do weel enough. Meg can milk a cow as weel as I can do, when she likes."

"And does she not always like to do all she can?" said Mrs Mason.

"O, we manna complain," returned the mother; "she does weel enough."

The gawky girl now began to rub the wall up and down with her dirty fingers; but happily the wall was of too dusky a hue to be easily stained. And here let us remark the advantage which our cottages in general possess over those of our southern neighbours, theirs being so whitened up that no one can have the comfort of laying a dirty hand upon them without leaving the impression; an inconvenience which reduces people to the necessity of learning to stand upon their legs, without the assistance of their hands; whereas in our country, custom has rendered the hands in standing at a door, or in going up or down a stair, no less necessary than the feet, as may be plainly seen in the finger-marks which meet one's eye in all directions.

While Mrs Macclarty was preparing tea for her guests, Mrs Mason cast her exploring eye on the house and furniture. She soon saw that the place they were in served in the triple capacity of kitchen, parlour, and bedroom. Its furniture was suitably abundant. It consisted, on one side, of a dresser, over which were shelves filled with plates and dishes, which she supposed to be of pewter; but they had been so bedimmed by the quantities of flies that sat upon them, that she could not pronounce with certainty as to the metal they were made of. On the shelf that

projected immediately next the dresser was a number of delf and wooden bowls, of different dimensions, with horn spoons, &c. These, though arranged with apparent care, did not entirely conceal from view the dirty nightcaps and other articles that were stuffed in behind.

Opposite the fireplace were two beds, each enclosed in a sort of wooden closet, so firmly built as to exclude the entrance of a breath of air, except in front, where were small folding-doors, which were now open, and exhibited a quantity of yarn hung up in bunches—affording proof of the goodwife's industry. The portable furniture, as chairs, tables, &c. were all, though clumsy, of good materials; so that Mrs Mason thought the place wanted nothing but a little attention to neatness, and some more light, to render it tolerably comfortable.

Miss Mary Stewart took upon herself the trouble of making tea, and began the operation by rinsing all the cups and saucers through warm water; at which Mrs Macclarty was so far from being offended, that the moment she perceived her intention she stepped to a huge Dutch press, and having with some difficulty opened the leaves, took from a store of nice linen, which it presented to their view, a fine damask napkin, of which she begged her to make use.

"You have a noble stock of linen, cousin," said Mrs Mason. "Few farmers' houses in England could produce the like; but I think this is rather too fine for common use."

"For common use!" cried Mrs Macclarty; "na, na, we're no sic fools as put our napery to use! I have a dizen table-claiths in that press thirty years auld, that were never laid upon a table. They are a' o' my mother's spinning. I have nine o' my ain makin' forbye, that never saw the sun but at the bookin washing. Ye needna be telling us o' England!"

"It is no doubt a good thing," said Mrs Mason, "to have a stock of goods of any kind, provided one has a prospect of turning them to account; but I confess I think the labour unprofitably employed which, during thirty years, is to produce no advantage; and that linen of an inferior quality would be preferable, as it would certainly be more useful. A towel of nice clean huck-a-back would wipe a cup as well, and better, than a damask napkin."

"Towels!" cried Mrs Macclarty; "na, na, we manna pretend to towels; we just wipe up the things wi' what comes in the gait."

On saying this the good woman, to show how exactly she practised what she spoke, pulled out from between the seed-tub and her husband's dirty shoes (which stood beneath the bench by the fireside) a long blackened rag, and with it rubbed one of the pewter plates, with which she stepped into the closet for a roll of butter. "There," says she, "I'm sure ye'll say that ye never ate better butter in your life. There's no in a' Glenburnie

better kye than ours. I hope ye'll eat heartily, and I'm sure ye're heartily welcome."

"Look, sister," cried little William, "see, there are the marks of a thumb and two fingers! do scrape it off, it is so nasty!"

"Dear me," said Mrs Macclarty, "I didna mind that I had been stirring the fire, and my hands were a wee sooty; but it will soon scrape aff; there's a dirty knife will take it aff in a minute."

"Stop, stop," cried Miss Mary, "that knife will only make it worse; pray let me manage it myself."

She did so manage it that the boys, who were very hungry, contrived to eat it to their oat-cakes with great satisfaction; but though Mrs Mason made the attempt, the disgust with which she began was so augmented by the sight of the numerous hairs which, as the butter was spread, bristled up upon the surface, that she found it impossible to proceed.

Here, thought she, is a home in which peace and plenty seem to reign, and yet these blessings, which I thought invaluable, will not be sufficient to afford me any comfort, from the mere want of attention to the article of cleanliness. But may I not remedy this? She looked at Mrs Macclarty, and in the mild features of a face which, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of slovenly dress and four days' soil (for this was Thursday), was still handsome, she thought she perceived a candour that might be convinced, and a good nature that would not refuse to act upon conviction. Of the countenances of the two girls she could not judge so favourably. The elder appeared morose and sullen, and the younger stupid and insensible. She was confirmed in her opinion by observing that, though their mother had several times desired them to go to the field for their father, neither of them stirred a step.

"Do you not hear your mother speaking to you?" said Mr Stewart in a tone of authority. The eldest coloured, and hung down her head; the younger girl looked in his face with a stupid stare, but neither of them made any answer.

"Ye'll gang, I ken, my dear," said Mrs Macclarty, addressing herself to the younger; "oh ay, I ken ye'll gang, like a good bairn, Jean."

Jean looked at her sister; and Mrs Macclarty, ashamed of their disobedience, but still willing to palliate the faults which her own indulgence had created, said, "that indeed they never liked to leave her, poor things! they were so bashful; but that in time they would do weel enough."

"They will never do well if they disobey their mother," said Mr Stewart; "you ought to teach your children to obey you, Mrs Macclarty, for their sakes as well as for your own. Take my word for it, that if you don't, they, as well as you, will suffer from the consequences. But come, boys, we shall go to the field ourselves, and see how the farmer's work goes on."

Mrs Macclarty, glad of his proposal, went to the door to point the way. Having received her directions, Mr Stewart, pointing to the pool at the threshold, asked her how she could bear to have such dirty doors. "Why does not your husband fetch a stone from the quarry?" said he. "People who are far from stones and from gravel may have some excuse, but you have the materials within your reach, and by half a day's labour could have your door made clean and comfortable. How, then, can you have gone on so long with it in this condition?" "Indeed I kenna, sir," said Mrs Macclarty; "the gudeman just canna be fashed."

"And cannot you be fashed to go to the end of the house to throw out your dirty water? Don't you see how small a drain would from that carry it down to the river, instead of remaining here to stagnate, and to suffocate you with intolerable stench?"

"Oh, we're just used to it," said Mrs Macclarty, "and we never mind it. We couldna be fashed to gang sae far wi' a' the slaistery."

"But what," returned Mr Stewart, "will Mrs Mason think of all this dirt? She has been used to see things in a very different sort of order; and if you will be advised by her, she will put you upon such a method of doing everything about your house as will soon give it a very different appearance."

"Ay," said Mrs Macclarty, "I aye feared she would be owre nice for us. She has been sae lang amang the English, that she maun hae a hantel o' outlandish notions. But we are owre auld to learn, and we just do weel enough."

Mr Stewart shook his head, and followed his sons, who had by this time disengaged the gate from the post, to which it had been attached by an old cord of many knots.

While Mr Stewart had been engaging the farmer's wife in conversation at the door, his daughter had been earnestly exhorting Mrs Mason to return to Gowan-brae, and to give up all thoughts of remaining in a situation in which she could not probably enjoy any degree of comfort; but her arguments made no impression. Mrs Mason adhered inflexibly to her resolution of making a trial of the place; and on Mrs Macclarty's entrance, begged to see the room she was to occupy.

"That you sall," said Mrs Macclarty; "but, indeed, it's no in sic order as I could wish, for it's cram fou o' woo: it was put in there the day of the sheep-shearing, and we have never ta'en the fash to put it by; for, as I said before, we did not expect my cuisin till after the fair." She then opened the door that was placed in the middle, exactly between the two beds, the recesses of which formed the entry of the dark passage, through which they groped their way to the spens, or inner apartment, which was nearly of the same size as the kitchen. Mrs Mason was prepared for seeing the fleeces, which were piled up in the middle of the floor, but was struck with dismay at the fusty smell,

which denoted the place to be without any circulation of air. She immediately advanced to the window, with the intention of opening it for relief. But, alas! it was not made to open; and she heard for her comfort that it was the same with all the other windows in the house. The bed, which was opposite to it, was shut up on three sides, like those in the kitchen. At the foot was a dark closet, in which Mrs Mason's trunks were already placed. Between the window and the fireplace was a large chest of drawers, of mahogany; and on the other side the window an eight-day clock in a mahogany case. The backs of the chairs were of the same foreign wood, betokening no saving of expense; yet, upon the whole, all had a squalid and gloomy aspect.

Mrs Macclarty tossed down the bed to show the fineness of the ticking and the abundance of the blankets, which she took care to tell were all of her own spinning. She received the expected tribute of applause for her good housewifery, though Mrs Mason could not help observing to her what a risk she ran of having it all lost for want of air. "See the proof of what I say," said she, "in that quantity of moths! they will soon leave you little to boast of your blankets!"

"Moths!" repeated Mrs Macclarty, "there never was sic a sight o' moths as in this room; we are just eaten up wi' them; and I'm sure I kenna how they can win in, for no ae breath o' wind ever blew here!"

"That is just the thing that induces them to breed in this place," returned Mrs Mason. "Plenty of air would soon rid you of the grievance. Since the window is unfortunately fast, I must beg to have a fire kindled here as soon as your maid comes from the hay-field."

"A fire!" repeated Mrs Macclarty; "I thought you had fund it owre warm."

"It is not to increase the heat that I ask for a fire," returned Mrs Mason, "but to increase the circulation of air. If the doors are left open, the air will come sweeping in to feed the fire, and the room will by that means be ventilated, which it greatly stands in need of. I can at present breathe in it no longer."

By the help of Miss Mary's arm Mrs Mason got out into the open air, and gladly assented to her friend's proposal of taking a view of the garden, which lay at the back of the house. On going to the wicket by which it entered, they found it broken, so that they were obliged to wait until the stake which propped it was removed. Nor was this the only difficulty they had to encounter; the path, which was very narrow, was damp, by sippings from the dirty pool; and on each side of it the ground immediately rose, and the docks and nettles which covered it consequently grew so high, that they had no alternative but to walk sideways or to separate.

"Ye'll see a bonny garden if ye gang on," said Mrs Macclarty; "my son's unco proud o't."

"I wonder your son can let these weeds grow here so rank," said Miss Mary; "I think if he is proud of the garden, he should take some pains to make the entrance to it passable."

"Oh, it does weel enough for us," returned the contented mother. "But saw ye ever sic fine suthernwood, or sic a bed of thyme? We have twa rose-bushes down yonder too, but we canna get at them for the nettles. My son gets to them by speeling the wa'; but he would do onything for flowers. His father's often angry at the time he spends on them."

"Your husband, then, has not much taste for the garden, I suppose?" said Mrs Mason; "and indeed so it appears, for here is ground enough to supply a large family with fruit and vegetables all the year round; but I see scarcely anything but cabbages and weeds."

"Na, na, we have some leeks too," said Mrs Macclarty; "and green kail in winter in plenty. We dinna pretend to kickshaws; green kail's gude enough for us."

"But," said Miss Mary, "any one may pretend to what they can produce by their own labour. Were your children to dress and weed this garden, there might be a pretty walk; there you might have a plot of green peas, there another of beans; and under your window you might have a nice border of flowers to regale you with their sweet smell. They might do this, too, at very little trouble."

"Ay, but they canna be fashed," said Mrs Macclarty; "and it does just weel enough."

Mr Stewart now appeared, and with him the farmer, who saluted Mrs Mason with a hearty welcome, and pressed all the party to go in and taste his whisky, to prevent, as he said, the tea from doing them any harm. As the car was now ready, Mr Stewart begged to be excused from accepting the invitation; and after laying a kind injunction on Mrs Mason to consider no place so much her home as Gowan-brae, he set off with his family on their return homewards.

Mrs Mason, unwilling to give trouble, and anxious not to disgust her new acquaintances by the appearance of fastidiousness, gave no further directions concerning her apartment than were barely necessary towards putting it in a habitable state. This being done, she entered cheerfully into conversation with the farmer, whom she found possessed of much plain good sense, and a greater stock of information than she could have supposed within his reach. She was struck with the force and rationality of his observations on various subjects, and almost sorry when their chat was interrupted by a call to supper, which was now upon the table. It consisted, besides the family dishes of sowens and milk, of a large trencherful of new potatoes, the first of the season, and intended as a treat for the stranger.

The farmer and his three sons sat down on one side, the good-wife and her two daughters on the other, leaving the arm-chair at the head for Mrs Mason, and a stool at the foot for Grizzly, who sat with her back to the table, only turning round occasionally to help herself.

When all were seated, the farmer, taking off a large blue bonnet, which, on account of his bald crown, he seldom parted with through the day, and looking round to see that all were attentive, invited them to join in the act of devotion which preceded every meal, by saying, "Let us ask a blessing."

Mrs Mason, who had been so long accustomed to consider the standing posture as expressive of greater reverence, immediately stood up, but she was the only one that moved; all the rest of the party keeping their seats, while the farmer, with great solemnity, pronounced a short but emphatic prayer. This being finished, Mrs Mason was desired to help herself; and such was the impression made by the pious thankfulness which breathed in the devotional exercise in which she had just engaged, that viands less acceptable to her palate would at that moment have been eaten with relish. The sowens were excellent; the milk was sweet; and the fresh-raised potatoes, bursting from the coats in which they had been boiled, might have feasted a queen. It is indeed ten thousand to one that any queen ever tasted of the first of vegetables in this its highest state of perfection. Mrs Mason was liberal of her praise; and both the farmer and his wife were highly gratified by her expressions of satisfaction.

The meal concluded, as it had begun, with prayer; and Mrs Mason retired to her room under a full conviction that, in the society of people who so sincerely served and worshipped God, all the materials of happiness would be within her reach.

Her bed appeared so inviting from the delicate whiteness of the linen, that she hastened to enjoy in it the sweets of repose; but no sooner had her head reached the pillow than she became sick, and was so overcome by a feeling of suffocation, that she was obliged to sit up for air. Upon examination, she found that the smell which annoyed her proceeded from new feathers put into the pillow before they had been properly dried, and when they were consequently full of the animal oil, which, when it becomes rancid, sends forth an intolerable effluvia. Having removed the annoyance, and made of her clothes a bundle to support her head, she again composed herself to sleep; but, alas! in vain; for the enemy by whom she was now attacked she found to be sworn against sleep. The assault was made by such numbers in all quarters, and carried on with such dexterity by the merciless and agile foe, that, after a few ineffectual attempts at offensive and defensive warfare, she at length resigned herself to absolute despair. The disgusting idea of want of cleanliness which their presence excited, was yet

more insufferable than the piercing of their little fangs. But on recollecting how long the room had been filled with the fleeces, she gladly flattered herself that they were only accidental guests, and that she might soon be able to effect their banishment.

As day advanced, the enemy retired; and poor Mrs Mason, fatigued and wearied, at length sunk to rest. Happily she was undisturbed by the light; for though her window, which was exactly opposite to the bed, was not shaded by a curtain, the veil of dust which it had contracted in the eighteen years it had stood unwiped, was too thick to permit the rays of the sun to penetrate.

As the clock struck eight, she hastened out of bed, vexed at having lost so much of the day in sleep; and on perceiving, when about half-dressed, that she had in her room neither water nor hand-basin to wash in, she threw on her dimity bed-gown, and went out to the kitchen to procure a supply of these necessary articles. She there found Meg and Jean; the former standing at the table, from which the porridge dishes seemed to have been just removed; the latter killing flies at the window. Mrs Mason addressed herself to Meg, and, after a courteous good-morrow, asked her where she should find a hand-basin? "I dinna ken," said Meg, drawing her finger through the milk that had been spilled upon the table. "Where is your mother?" asked Mrs Mason. "I dinna ken," returned Meg, continuing to dabble her hands through the remaining fragments of the feast.

"If you are going to clean that table," said Mrs Mason, "you will give yourself more work than you need by daubing it all over with the porridge; bring your cloth, and I shall show you how I learned to clean our tables when I was a little girl like you."

Meg continued to make lines with her forefinger.

"Come," said Mrs Mason, "shall I teach you?"

"Na," said Meg, "I sall dight nane o't. I'm ga'an to the schule." "But that need not hinder you to wipe up the table before you go," said Mrs Mason. "You might have cleaned it up as bright as a looking-glass in the time that you have spent in spattering it and dirtying your fingers. Would it not be pleasanter for you to make it clean than to leave it dirty?"

"I'll no be at the fash," returned Meg, making off to the door as she spoke. Before she got out she was met by her mother, who, on seeing her, exclaimed, "Are ye no awa yet, bairns! I never saw the like. Sic a fight to get you to the schule! Nae wonner ye learn little when you're at it. Gae awa, like good bairns; for there's nae schulin' the morn, ye ken; it's the fair day."

Meg set off after some further parley, but Jean continued to catch the flies at the window, taking no notice of her mother's

exhortations, though again repeated in pretty nearly the same terms.

"Dear me!" said the mother, "what's the matter wi' the bairn! what for winna ye gang, when Meg's gane? Rin, and ye'll be after her or she wins to the end o' the loan."

"I'm no ga'an the day," says Jean, turning away her face. "And what for are ye no ga'an, my dear?" says her mother. "Cause I hinna gotten my questions," replied Jean.

"Oh, but ye may gang for a' that," said her mother; "the maister will no be angry. Gang, like a gude bairn."

"Na," said Jean; "but he will be angry, for I didna get them the last time either."

"And what for didna ye get them, my dear?" said Mrs Macclarty in a soothing tone. "Cause 'twas unco kittle, and I couldna be fashed," replied the hopeful girl, catching, as she spoke, another handful of flies. Her mother, finding that intreaties were of no avail, endeavoured to speak in a more peremptory accent, and even laid her commands upon her daughter to depart immediately: but she had too often permitted her commands to be disputed, to be surprised at their being now treated with disrespect. Jean repeated her determined purpose of not going to school that day; and the firmer she became in opposition, the authoritative tone of the mother gradually weakened; till at length, by saying that "if she didna gang to the schule she sudna stand there," she acknowledged herself to be defeated, and the point to be given up.

Mrs Mason, who had stood an unobserved spectator of this scene, was truly shocked at such a contempt of parental authority as she believed must inevitably produce consequences of the most deplorable nature. She came forward, and stopping the little girl as she was slinking out at the door, asked her "if she really meant to disobey her mother by staying from school?" Jean made no answer; but the indulgent mother, unwilling that any one should open her eyes to that to which she resolved to be blind, instantly made her spoilt child's apology, by observing that "the poor thing hadna gotten her questions, and didna like to gang, for fear o' the maister's anger."

"But ought she not to have got her questions, as her master enjoined, instead of idling here all the morning?" said Mrs Mason. "O ay," returned Mrs Macclarty, "she sud hae gotten her questions, nae doubt; but it was unco fashious, and ye see she hasna a turn that gait, poor woman! but in time she'll do weel eneugh."

"Those who wait till evening for sunrise," said Mrs Mason, "will find that they have lost the day. If you permit your daughter, while a child, to disobey her parent and her teacher, she will never learn to obey her God. But perhaps I interfere too far. If I do, you must forgive me; for, with the strong

impression which I have upon my mind of the consequences of a right education, I am tempted to forget that my advice may sometimes be unacceptable."

"Hoot," said Mrs Macclarty, who did not perfectly comprehend the speech, "maidens' bairns are aye weel bred, ye ken, cuisin; but I fear ye hinna sleepit weel, that ye have been sae lang o' rising. It's a lang time since the kettle has been boiling for your breakfast."

"I shall be ready for it very soon," said Mrs Mason; "but I came in search of a basin and water, which Grizzly has forgot to put in my room; and until I wash, I can proceed no further in dressing myself."

"Dear me," replied Mrs Macclarty, "I'm sure you're weel enough. Your hands hae nae need of washing, I trow. Ye ne'er do a turn to file them."

"You can't surely be in earnest," replied Mrs Mason. "Do you think I could sit down to breakfast with unwashed hands? I never heard of such a thing, and never saw it done in my life."

"I see nae gude o' sic nicety," returned her friend; "but it is easy to gie ye water eneugh, though I'm sure I dinna ken what to put it in, unless ye tak ane o' the parridge plates: or maybe the calf's luggie may do better, for it'll gie you eneugh o' room."

"Your own basin will do better than either," said Mrs Mason: "give me the loan of it for this morning, and I shall return it immediately, as you must doubtless often want it through the day." "Na, na," returned Mrs Macclarty, "I dinna fash wi' sae mony fykes. There's aye water standing in something or other for ane to ca' their hands through when they're blacket. The gudeman indeed is a wee conceity like yoursel', an' he coft a brown basin for his shaving in on Saturdays, but it's in use a' the week haddin' milk, or I'm sure ye'd be welcome to it. I shall see an' get it ready for you the morn."

Poor Mrs Mason, on whose nerves the image presented by this description of the alternate uses of the utensil in question produced a sensible effect, could scarcely command voice to thank her cousin for her civil offer. Being, however, under the necessity of choosing for the present, she without hesitation preferred the calf's bicker to the porridge plate: and indeed considered the calf as being so much the cleaner animal than his mistress, that she would in every way have preferred him for an associate.

Mrs Mason was not ill pleased to find that she was to breakfast by herself; the rest of the family having long ago finished their morning repast, were now engaged in the several occupations of the day.

The kail-pot was already on the fire to make broth for dinner, and Mrs Macclarty busied in preparing the vegetables which

were to be boiled in it, when her guest, on hearing her desire Grizzel to make haste and sit down to her wheel, thought it time to remind her that her bed was still to make, and her room to be put in order, and that Grizzly's assistance would be necessary for both.

It was not easy to persuade the good woman that it would not be time enough in the dusk of the evening; but as Mrs Mason declared it essential to her comfort, Grizzly was ordered to attend her, and to do whatever she desired. By her directions the stout girl fell to work, and hoisted out the bed and bed-clothes, which she carried to the barn-yard, the only place about the house where there was a spot of green grass. The check curtains followed, and in their removal effected the sudden ruin of many a goodly cobweb which had never before met with the smallest molestation. When the lower vallance was removed, it displayed a scene still more extraordinary; a hoard of the remains of all the old shoes that had ever been worn by any member of the family, staves of broken tubs, ends of decayed rope, and a long et cetera of useless articles, so covered with blue mould and dust, that it seemed surprising the very spiders did not quit the colony in disgust.

Mrs Mason sickened at the sight. Perceiving what an unpleasant task she should be obliged to impose on her assistant, she deemed herself in justice bound to recompense her for the trouble; and holding up a half-crown piece, told her that if she performed all she required of her on the present occasion it should be her own. No sooner was Grizzly made certain of the reward, which had till now been promised in indefinite terms, than she began in such good earnest, that Mrs Mason was glad to get out of the room. After three large bucketfuls of dirt and trumpery had been carried out, she came to Mrs Mason for fresh instructions; then proceeded to wash the bed-posts with soap and water; after which the chairs, the tables, the clock-case, the very walls of the room, as well as everything it contained, all underwent a complete cleaning.

The window, in which were nine tolerably large panes of glass, was no sooner rendered transparent, than Grizzly cried out in ecstasy, "that she cou'dna have thought it would have made sic a change. Dear me! how heartsome it looks now to what it used!" said the girl, her spirits rising in proportion to the exertion of her activity.

"And in how short a time has it been cleaned!" said Mrs Mason. "Yet, had it been regularly cleaned once a-week, as it ought to have been, it would have cost far less trouble. By the labour of a minute or two we may keep it constantly bright; and surely few days pass in which so much time may not be spared. Let us now go to the kitchen window, and make it likewise clean." Grizzly with alacrity obeyed. But before the window could be approached, it was found necessary to remove

the heap of dusty articles piled up in the window-sill, which served the purpose of family library and repository of what is known by the term *odds and ends*.

Mrs Macclarty, who had sat down to spin, did not at first seem willing to take any notice of what was going forward; but on perceiving her maid beginning to meddle with the things in the window, she could no longer remain a neutral spectator of the scene. Stopping her wheel, she, in a voice indicating the reverse of satisfaction, asked what she was about? Mrs Mason took it upon her to reply. "We are going to make your window bright and clean for you, cousin," said she. "If you step into my room, and take a look of mine, you will see what a difference there is in it; and this, if these broken panes were mended, would look every bit as well." "It does *weel eneugh*," returned Mrs Macclarty; "it wants nae cleanin'; it does just *weel eneugh*. What's the gude o' takin' up the lass's time wi' nonsense? she'll break the window too, and the bairns hae broken eneugh o' it already."

"But if these panes were mended, and the window cleaned without and within," said Mrs Mason, "you cannot think how much more cheerful the kitchen would appear."

"And how lang wad it bide clean if it were?" said Mrs Macclarty; "it would be as ill as ever or a month, and wha cou'd be at the fash o' aye cleanin' at it?"

"Even once a-month would keep it tolerable, but once a-week would keep it very nice; your little girls might rub it bright of a morning, without the least trouble in the world. They might learn, too, to whiten the window-sill, and to keep it free from rubbish, by laying the books, and all these articles, in their proper places, instead of letting them remain here covered with dust. You cannot imagine what good it would do your young people did they learn betimes to attend to such matters; for believe me, cousin, habits of neatness, and of activity, and of attention, have a greater effect upon the temper and disposition than most people are aware of."

"If my bairns do as weel as I hae done, they'll do weel eneugh," said Mrs Macclarty, turning her wheel with great speed. Mr Macclarty's voice was just at that moment heard calling on Grizzy to drive the fowls out of the corn-field, which necessarily put a stop to all farther proceedings against the window. Mrs Mason therefore returned to her own apartment; and, greatly pleased with the appearance which it now assumed, cheerfully sat down to her accustomed labours of the needle, of which she was such complete mistress, that it gave no interruption to the train of her reflections. On taking a view of her present situation, and comparing it with the past, she carefully suppressed every feeling that could lead to discontent. She saw that the more nearly people approached each other in their habits and opinions, the less would the sacrifice be felt; but

while she entertained a hope of being able to do more good in her present situation than she could in any other, she resolved to remain where she was. "Surely," said she to herself, "I must be of some use to the children of these good people. They are ill brought up, but they do not seem deficient in understanding; and if I can once convince them of the advantage they will derive from listening to my advice, I may make a lasting impression on their minds."

While engaged by these reflections as she busily pursued her work, she was startled by a sudden noise, followed by an immediate diminution of light; and on looking up, perceived her window bespattered all over with mud. A tittering laugh betrayed the aggressors, and directed her attention to the side where they stood, and from which she knew they could not retreat without being seen. She therefore continued quietly on the watch, and in a little time saw Jean and her younger brother issue from the spot, and hastily run down the bank that led to the river.

Mrs Mason had been for above twenty years employed in studying the tempers and dispositions of children; but as she had never before seen an instance of what appeared to be unprovoked malignity in the youthful mind, she was greatly shocked at the discovery, and thought it incumbent on her to inform their mother of the incident, and to give her opinion of it in the plainest terms.

Mrs Macclarty, perceiving that Mrs Mason had something extraordinary to communicate, stopped her wheel to listen; and when the window was mentioned, asked, with great anxiety, whether it was broken? "No," said Mrs Mason; "the mud they threw at it was too soft to break the glass; it is not to the injury done the window that I wish to call your attention, but to the dispositions of your children; for what must the dispositions be that lead them to take pleasure in such an act?"

"Hoot," said Mrs Macclarty, "is that it a'—ane wou'd hae thought the window had been a' to shivers by the way you spoke. If it's but a wee clarted, there's na sae muckle ill done. I tauld ye it was nonsense to be at sae muckle fash about it, for that it wou'dna get leave to bide lang clean."

"But if your children were better taught," said Mrs Mason, "it might get leave to bide clean long enough. If the same activity which they have displayed in dirtying it had been directed into proper channels, your cottage might have been kept in order by their little hands, and your garden and all about your doors made neat and beautiful. Children are naturally active; but unless their activity be early bent to useful purposes, it will only lead them into mischief. Were your children——"

"Hoot," said Mrs Macclarty peevishly, "my bairns are just like other folks'. A' laddies are fou o' mischief. I'm sure there's

no a yard i' the town where they can get a flower or apple keepit for them. I wonder what ye would hae said if ye had seen the minister's yetts the day after they were painted slaked and blacket a' owre wi' dirt by the laddies frae the schule?"

"I would have said," returned Mrs Mason, "what I said before, that all that bent to mischief in the children arises from the neglect of the parents in not directing their activity into proper channels. Do you not think that each of these boys would, if properly trained, find as much amusement in works that would tend to ornament the village, or in cultivating a few shrubs and flowers to adorn the walls of their own cottages, as they now appear to find in mischief and destruction? Do you not think that that girl of yours might have been so brought up as to have had more pleasure in cleaning a window of her father's house than in bedaubing it with mud? Allowing the pleasure of being mischievously active, and the pleasure of being usefully active, to be at present equal, do you think that the consequences will not be different? 'Train up a child in the way he should go,' says Solomon, and depend upon it that in the way you train him he will go, whether you desire it or not. If you permit a child to derive all his pleasure from doing ill to others, he will not, when he is grown up, be inclined to do much good. He will even from his youth be conscious of deserving the ill-will of his neighbours, and must of course have no good-will to them. His temper will thus be soured. If he succeed in life, he will be proud and overbearing; if he do not, he will become sulky, and morose, and obdurate."

"Weel," said the farmer, who had been listening to the latter part of the conversation, "it's a' true that ye say, but how is it to be helpit? Do you think corrupt nature can be subdued in any other way than by the grace of God?"

"If I read my Bible right," returned Mrs Mason, "the grace of God is a gift which, like all the other gifts of divine love, must be sought by the appointed means. It is the duty of a parent to put his children upon the way of thus seeking it, and, as far as it is in his power, to remove the obstacles that would prevent it."

"The minister himsel' could speak nae better," returned the farmer. "But when folks gie their bairns the best education in their power, what mair can they do?"

"In answer to your question," replied Mrs Mason, "I will put one to you. Suppose you had a field which produced only briars and thorns, what method would you take to bring it into heart?"

"I would nae doubt root out the briars and thorns as weel as I could," returned the farmer.

"And after you had opened the soil by ploughing, and enriched it by the proper manure, you would sow good seed in it,

and expect, by the blessing of Heaven, to reap in harvest the reward of your labours?" said Mrs Mason.

"To be sure I would," said the farmer.

"And do you imagine," said Mrs Mason, "that the human soul requires less care in culturing it than is necessary to your field? Is it merely by teaching them to say their questions, or even teaching them to read, that the briars and thorns of pride and self-will will be rooted up from your children's minds?"

"We maun trust a' to the grace of God," said the farmer.

"God forbid that we should put trust in aught beside," returned Mrs Mason; "but if we hope for a miraculous interposition of divine grace in favour of ourselves or of our children, without taking the means that God has appointed, our hope does not spring from faith, but from presumption. It is just as if you were neither to plough nor sow your fields, and yet expect that Providence would bless you with an abundant crop."

"But what means ought we to use that we do not use?" said the farmer. "We send our bairns to the schule, and we tak them to the kirk, and we do our best to set them a good example. I kenna what we could do mair."

"You are a good man," said Mrs Mason with complacency; "and happy will it be for your children if they follow your example. But let us drop all allusion to them in particular, and speak only of training up youth to virtue as a general principle. By what you say you think it sufficient to sow the seed; I contend for the necessity of preparing the soil to receive it; and say that, without such preparation, it will never take root nor vegetate."

"I canna contradict you," returned the farmer; "but I wish you to explain it better. If you mean that we ought to gie our bairns lessons at hame, I can tell you we hae nae time for it, nor are we book-learned enough to make fine speeches to them, as the like of you might do; and if we were, I fear it wad do little gude."

"Believe me," replied Mrs Mason, "set lessons and fine harangues make no part of my plan of preparation, which consists of nothing else than a watchful attention to the first appearances of what is in its nature evil, and, whether it comes in the shape of self-will, passion, or perverseness, nipping it in the very bud; while, on the other hand, I would tenderly cherish every kindly affection, and enforce attention to the feelings of others: by which means I would render children kind-hearted, tractable, and obedient. This is what I call the preparation of the soil: now, let us see the consequences. Supposing that, of two children, one has from infancy been accustomed to constant and cheerful obedience, while the other has never been taught to respect any will but his own; which of those two, on being instructed in the divine precept, 'honour thy father and thy mother,' will be most likely to enter into the spirit of the com-

mandment? And what doth the gospel teach? Doth it not urge us to subdue all selfish and vindictive passions, in order that we may cherish the most perfect love to God and man? Now, if we have permitted our children to indulge these passions, how do we prepare them for practising the gospel precepts? Their duty to God and man requires that they should make the best use of every power of mind and body; the activity natural to youth is a power included in this rule; and if we permit them to waste it in effecting mischief, and in destroying or disturbing the happiness of others, can we say that we are not counteracting the express will of our divine Master? How can we flatter ourselves that, with such habits, the divine precepts will make much impression on their minds?"

Before Mrs Mason had finished her speech, her voice was drowned in the noise of a violent quarrel that had taken place between the farmer's two elder sons. Perceiving that the dispute would not be easily settled, she retired to her room, but was overtaken in the passage by Mrs Macclarty, who said in a whisper, "I hope ye'll say naething o' Jenny's playing the truant frae the schule. Her father mauna ken o't, he wad be sae angry." "Alas!" said Mrs Mason, "you know not how much you are your child's enemy, but I shall be silent."

Mrs Mason enjoyed the reward of her exertions, and of Grizzel's labour, in a night of sweet and uninterrupted repose. She was awakened at early dawn by the farmer calling his sons to get up to prepare for the labours of the day; and looking up, beheld the clouds already decked in the colours of the morning, inviting her to the most glorious sight on which the eye of man can look. The invitation was not given in vain; she rose and dressed herself, and taking her staff and crutch, she sallied from her room, earnestly wishing to escape observation.

From the length of time that the outer door had been shut, the closeness of the house had become very unpleasant to her lungs. Welcome, therefore, was the reviving breeze of morning. Welcome the freshness of the coming day, which now burst upon her senses. It was not, indeed, until she had removed some paces from the house that she fully felt its influence; for while near the door, the smell of the squashy pool, and its neighbour the dunghill, was so powerful, as to subdue the fragrance of earth's fruits and flowers.

Having taken the road towards the river, she, on its first turning, found herself in full view of the waterfall, and was arrested by admiration at the many beauties of the scene. Seating herself upon a projecting rock, she contemplated the effulgent glory of the heavens as they brightened into splendour at the approach of the lord of day; and when her eyes were dazzled by the scene, turned to view the living waters pouring their crystal flood over the craggy precipice, shaded by the spreading boughs of birch and alder.

While indulging in the grateful feelings of her heart, by sending up her tribute of praise to the Almighty Giver of all good, her ears were suddenly assailed by the harsh sound of discord; and on moving a few steps, she discovered that a violent dispute had taken place between the farmer and his eldest son. In the hope of making peace, she advanced towards them; but before she turned the corner she paused, doubting whether it were not better to take no notice of having heard the fray. The voices stopped, and proceeding, she saw the farmer hastily unsaddling a horse, and the son at the same moment issuing from the door, but pulled back by his mother, who held the skirt of his coat, saying, "I tell ye, Sandy, ye mauna gang to anger your father."

"But I sall gang," cried Sandy in a sullen tone; "I winna be hindered. I sall gang, I tell ye, whether my father likes or no."

"Ye may gang, ye door loon," says the father; "but if ye do, ye sall repent it as lang as ye live."

"Hoot na," returned the mother, "ye'll forgie him; and ye had as weel let him gang, for ye see he winna be hindered!"

"Where is the young man for going to?" asked Mrs Mason.

"Where sud he be for gain' to but to the fair?" returned the mother; "it's only natural. But our gudeman's unco particular, and never lets the lads get ony daffin."

"Daffin!" cried the farmer; "is druckenness daffin? Didna he gang last year, and come hame as drunk as a beast! And ye wad hae him tak the brown mare too, without ever speering my leave! saddled and bridled too, forsooth, like ony gentleman in the land! But ye sall baith repent it: I tell ye ye'se baith repent it."

Mrs Mason endeavoured to dissuade the young man from going to the fair, but in vain; and he was left to pursue his own wilful course.

"Mistress!" hallooed the voice of Grizzel from the house, "I wish ye wad come and speak to Meg. She winna be hindered putting her fingers in the kirn, and licking the cream."

"If I were at you," cried Mrs Macclarty, "I'd gar you——"

She was as good as her word; and in order to show Mrs Mason the good effect of her advice, she ran that moment into the kitchen, and gave her daughter a hearty slap upon the back. The girl went a few steps farther off, and deliberately applied her tongue to the back of her hand, where part of the cream was still visible.

"Go! ye idle whippy!" said her mother, "and let me see how weel ye'll ca' the kirn."

"I winna kirn the day," returned Meg; "I'm gaun to milk the kye. Jean may kirn; she has naething else to do."

"I'm aye set to kirn," says Jean whimpering. "I never saw

sic wark. I tell ye I winna kirn mair than Meg. Grizzly can milk the cows hersel'. She doesna want her help."

"But, girls," said Mrs Mason, "when I was a little girl like either of you I never thought of choosing my work; I considered it my business to follow my mother's directions. Young people ought to obey, and not to dictate."

"Hear ye that?" said Mrs Macclarty. "But Jean will gang to the kirn, I ken, like a good bairn; and she sall get a dad o' butter to her bread."

"But I winna hae't frae the hairing knife," said Jean, "for the last I got stack i' my throat."

"Bless me!" cried Mrs Mason in amazement, "how does your butter come to be so full of hairs? where do they come from?"

"Oh, they are a' frae the cows," returned Mrs Macclarty. "There has been lang a hole in the milk sythe, and I have never been at the fash to get it mended; but as I tak aye care to sythe the milk through my fingers, I wonder how sae mony hairs win in."

"Ye needna wonder at that," observed Grizzel, "for the house canna be soopit but the dirt flees into the kirn."

"But do you not clean the churn before you put in the cream?" asked Mrs Mason, more and more astonished.

"Na, na," returned Mrs Macclarty, "that wadna be canny, ye ken. Naebody hereabouts would clean their kirn for ony consideration. I never heard o' sic a thing i' my life."

Mrs Mason found it difficult to conceal the disgust which this discovery excited; but resolving to be cautious of giving offence by the disclosure of her sentiments, she sat down in silence, to watch the further operations of the morning. While Jean was slowly turning the churn with unwilling hand, her mother was busily employed in making the cheese. Part of the milk destined to that purpose was already put upon the fire in the same iron pot in which the chickens had been feasting, and on which the hardened curd at which they had been picking was still visible towards the rim. The remainder of the milk was turned into a large tub, and to it that upon the fire was added as soon as it was of a proper heat. So far all was done well and cleverly. Mrs Macclarty then took down a bottle of runnet, or yearning, as she called it; and having poured in what she thought a sufficient quantity, tucked up the sleeve of her gown, and dashing in her arm, stirred the infusion with equal care and speed.

"I believe, cousin," said Mrs Mason hesitatingly, "I believe—you forgot to wash your hands."

"Hoot!" returned the goodwife, "my hands do weel enough. I canna be fashed to clean them at ilka turn."

"But you go about your work with such activity," rejoined Mrs Mason, "that I should think it would give you little trouble, if you were once accustomed to it: and by all that I

have observed, and I have had many opportunities of observation, I believe that in the management of a dairy cleanliness is the first, the last, the one art needful."

"Cleanly!" repeated Mrs Macclarty; "nae ane ever said that I wasna cleanly. There's no a mair cleanly person i' the parish. Cleanly indeed! ane wad think ye was speaking to a bairn!"

Mrs Mason offered a few words in explanation, and then retired to her own apartment, to which she saw it would be necessary to confine herself in order to enjoy any tolerable degree of comfort. She therefore began to consider how it might be rendered more airy and commodious; and after dinner, observing that the farmer's mind still brooded on his son's behaviour, she gladly introduced the subject of her projected alterations, hoping thus to divert his thoughts into another channel. The first thing she proposed was to have hinges for the frame of the window, that it might open and shut at pleasure. To this the farmer said he should have no objection, only that "he kenned it wad soon be broken to pieces blawing wi' the wund."

"Oh, but you mistake me," said Mrs Mason. "I intend that it should be fastened, when open, with an iron hook, as they constantly fasten the cottage windows in England."

"And wha do ye think wad put in the cleek?" returned he. "Is there ane, think ye, aboot this house that wad be at sic a fash?"

"Why, what trouble is there in it?" said Mrs Mason. "It is only teaching your children to pay a little attention to such things, and they will soon come to find no trouble in them. They cannot too soon learn to be neat and regular in their ways."

"Ilka place has just its ain gait," said the goodwife, "and ye needna think that we'll ever learn yours. And indeed, to be plain wi' you, cuisin, I think you have owre mony fykes. There, didna ye keep Grizzy for mair than twa hours yesterday morning soopin' and dustin' your room in every corner, and cleaning out the twa bits o' buird, that are for naething but to set your feet on after a'?"

"But did you know how dirty they were?" said Mrs Mason.

"Hoot! the chickens just got their meat on them for twa or three weeks, puir wee beasties! the buirds were a wee thought clarted wi' parritch, but it was weel dried on, and ye wadna been a bit the waur."

"But are the boards the worse for being scoured?" asked Mrs Mason; "or would they have been the worse if they had been scoured when you took them from the chickens, or while they were feeding on them?"

"Oh, to be sure it wad hae been an easy matter to hae scour't them then, if we had thought of being at the fash," returned Mrs Macclarty.

"In my opinion," rejoined Mrs Mason, "this *fear of being fashed* is the great bar to all improvement. I have seen this morning that you are not afraid of work, for you have exerted yourself with a degree of activity that no one could excel; yet you dread the small additional trouble that would make your house cheerful, clean, and comfortable. You dread the trouble of attention more than the labour of your hands; and thus, if I mistake not, you often bring upon yourself trouble which timely attention would have spared. Would it not be well to have your children taught such habits of attention and regularity as would make you more easy, and them more useful, both to themselves and you?"

"As for my bairns," returned Mrs Macclarty, "if they pleasure me, they do weel enough."

"There's a great spice o' good sense in what Mrs Mason has said, though," said the farmer; "but it's no easy for folk like us to be put out o' their ain gait."

In truth, Mrs Macclarty was one of those seemingly good-natured people who are never to be put out of their own way, for she was obstinate to a degree; and so perfectly self-satisfied that she could not bear to think it possible that she might in anything do better than she did. Thus, though she would not argue in favour of sloth or dirt in general, she nevertheless continued to be slothful and dirty, because she vindicated herself in every particular instance of either; and though she did not wish that her children should be idle, obstreperous, disobedient, and self-willed, she effectually formed them to those habits, and then took credit to herself for being one of the best of mothers!

Mrs Mason had discernment enough to see how much pride there was in that pretended contentment which constantly repelled every idea of improvement. She saw that though Mrs Macclarty took no pains to teach her children what was truly useful, she encouraged, with respect to them, an undefined sentiment of ambition, which persuaded her that her children were born to rise to something great, and that they would in time overtop their neighbours. Mrs Mason saw the unhappy effects which this would infallibly produce upon minds brought up in ignorance. She therefore resolved to do all in her power to obviate the consequences; and from the opinion she had formed of the farmer's sense and principles, had no doubt of his co-operating with her in the work of reformation.

While musing on this subject as she sat by her window in the twilight, she saw the two younger lads run hastily past, and soon heard from their mother such an exclamation of sorrow, as convinced her they had been the messengers of bad news. She therefore speedily proceeded *butt*, and there she found the poor woman wringing her hands, and lamenting herself bitterly. The farmer entered at the same moment; and on seeing him she redoubled her lamentations, still calling out, "Oh

Sandy! Sandy! oh that I should hae lived to see this day! Oh Sandy! Sandy!"

The intelligence was shortly made known that Sandy had enlisted as a soldier at the fair; which produced a general feeling of distress in the household, and a forgetfulness of ordinary duties. Evening was now far advanced. The cows, which the boys should have brought home to have milked, were still lowing in the West Croft; and when Mrs Macclarty desired Robert to go for them, she obtained no other answer than that "Grizzy might gang as weel as him." Grizzy was busy in washing up the dishes wanted for supper, and which had remained unwashed from breakfast-time till now: they had been left to the care of Meg, who had neglected them, and by this neglect made the task more difficult to Grizzy, who was therefore in very bad humour, and began loudly to complain of Meg and Rob, who in their turns raised their voices in defence and mutual accusation. The din of the squabble became insufferable. Mrs Mason retired from it with horror, and shut herself up in her room, where she meditated with deep regret on the folly of those who, having been placed by Almighty God in situations most favourable to the enjoyment of peace and the exercise of virtue, are insensible to the blessing, and by permitting their passions to reign without control, destroy at once both peace and virtue.

The distress felt by honest John Macclarty for the loss of his son induced him to attempt his recovery, and he accordingly set out for the town in which he had enlisted. This was an unfortunate journey. The farmer was knocked down and robbed, and was brought home in a state of great pain and danger. A fever ensued, which, not being checked in time by proper medical attendance, gained head, and could not afterwards be subdued. He died surrounded by his mourning though ill-instructed family.

After the solemnities of the funeral, Mrs Mason was called to witness the reading of the farmer's will. He had performed the duty of an honest man in making it while he was in perfect health; wisely thinking that if he deferred it till the hour of sickness, he might then neither have the ability nor inclination to give his mind to worldly cares.

To his wife he bequeathed a free cottage in the village, and an annuity which he considered equal to her wants. To each of his younger children he left the sum of forty pounds, and to his eldest son the farm, burdened with the above provision for the rest of the family. In case the elder son should choose to go abroad, or enter into business, the farm was to go to the second, and the elder to have only a younger child's portion. By a clause in the will, the widow was to retain possession of the farm till the Candlemas after her husband's death; so much more consideration had this humble cottager for the feelings of a wife, than is often shown in the settlements of the rich and great!

MRS MACCLARTY.

The minister, who read the will, addressed himself, in finishing it, to the friends and neighbours who were present, and proposed that they should alternately lend their assistance in managing the business of the harvest for the widow and her family. The proposal was readily agreed to by the men; while Mrs Mason, on her part, cheerfully undertook the superintendence of the household work and dairy, until her cousin should be so far recovered as to be able to resume her task.

As soon as all the strangers were dismissed, Mrs Mason informed her cousin of the arrangements that had been made, with which she appeared perfectly satisfied. Depressed by grief and sickness, she still considered her recovery as hopeless, and submitted to her fate with that species of quiescence which is often a substitute for the true spirit of resignation.

Every moment of Mrs Mason's time was now fully occupied, and the business of the family had never been so well conducted as since its mistress had been incapacitated from attending to it. By the effects of forethought, order, and regularity, the labour was so much diminished to the servant, that she willingly resigned herself to Mrs Mason's directions, and entered into all her plans. The girls, though at first refractory, and often inclined to rebel, were gradually brought to order, and finding that they had no one to make excuses for their disobedience, quietly performed their allotted tasks. They began to taste the pleasure of praise, and, encouraged by approbation, endeavoured to deserve it; so that, though their tempers had been too far spoiled to be brought at once into subjection, Mrs Mason hoped that, by steadiness, she should succeed in reforming them.

Mrs Macclarty, who was not so changed by sickness, or so absorbed in grief, as to be indifferent to the world and its concerns, fretted at the length of her confinement, which was rendered doubly grievous to her from the hints she occasionally received of the new methods of management introduced by Mrs Mason, which she could on no account believe equal to her own. Her friend and benefactress became the object of her jealousy and aversion. The neighbours, with whom she had cultivated the greatest intimacy, encouraged this dislike; and on all their visits of condolence, expressed, in feeling terms, their sense of the sad change that had taken place in the appearance of the house, which, they said, was "now sae *unco*, they wad scarcely ken it for the same place."

"Ay!" exclaimed the wife of auld John Smith, who happened to visit the widow the first evening she was able to sit up to tea; "ay, alake! it's weel seen that whar there's new lairds there's new laws. But how can your woman and your bairns put up wi' a' this fashery?"

"I kenna, truly," replied the widow; "but Mrs Mason has just sic a way wi' them, she gars them do onything she likes.

Ye may think it's an eery thing to me to see my poor bairns submitting that way to pleasure a stranger in a' her nonsense."

"An eery thing indeed!" said Mrs Smith; "gif ye had but seen how she gard your dochter Meg clean out the kirk! outside and inside! ye wad hae been wae for the poor lassie. 'I trow,' said I, 'Meg, it wad hae been lang before your mither had set you to sic a turn.' 'Ay,' says she, 'we hae new gaits now,' and she lookit up and leugh."

"New gaits, I trow!" cried Sandy Johnston's mother, who had just taken her place at the tea-table; "I ne'er kenned gude come o' new gaits a' my days. There was Tibby Bell, at the head o' the Glen, she fell to cleaning her kirk ae day, and the very first kirning after, her butter was burstet, and gude for naething. I'm sure it gangs to my heart to see your wark sae managed. It was but the day before yesterday that I cam upon Madam as she was haddin' the strainer, as she called it, to Grizzly, desiring her a' the time she poured the milk to beware of letting in ane o' the cow's hairs that were on her goon. 'Hoot!' says I, 'cow's hairs are canny, they'll never choke ye.' 'The fewer of them that are in the butter the better,' says she. 'Twa or three hairs are better than the blink o' an ill ee,' says I. 'The best charm against witchcraft is cleanliness,' says she. 'I doubt it muckle,' says I; 'auld ways are aye the best!'"

"Weel done!" cried Mrs Smith; "I trow ye gae her a screed o' your mind! But here comes Grizzly frae the market; let us hear what she says to it."

Grizzel advanced to her mistress, and with alacrity poured into her lap the money she had got for her cheese and butter; proudly at the same time observing that it was more by some shillings than they had ever got for the produce of one week before that lucky day.

"What say you?" cried the wife of auld John Smith; "are the markets sae muckle risen? That's gude news indeed."

"I didna say that the markets were risen," returned the maid; "but we never got sae muckle for our butter nor our cheese, by a penny i' the pund weight, as I got the day. A' the best folks in the town were striving for it. I could hae sold twice as muckle at the same price."

"Ye had need to be weel paid for it," said Sandy Johnston's mother, "for I fear ye had but sma' quantity to sell."

"We never had sae muckle in ae week before," said Grizzly; "for you see," continued she, "the milk used aye to sour before it had stood half its time; but noo the milk dishes are a' sae clean, that it keeps sweet to the last."

"And dinna ye think muckle o' the fash?" said Mrs Smith.

"I thought muckle o't at first," returned Grizzly; "but when I got into the way o't, I fand it nae trouble at a'."

"But how do ye find time to get through sae muckle wark?" said the widow Johnston.

"I never," answered Grizzy, "got through my wark sae easy in my life; for ye see Mrs Mason has just a set time for ilka turn; so that folk are never rinnin' in ane anither's gait; and everything is set by clean, ye see, so that it's just ready for use."

"She maun hae an unco airt," said Mrs Macclarty, "to gar ye do sae muckle, and think sae little o't. I'm sure ye ken how you used to grumble at being put to do far less. But I didna bribe ye wi' half-croon pieces as she does."

"It's no the half-croon she gae me that gars me speak," cried Grizzy; "but I sall always say that she is a most discreet and civil person, ay, and ane that taks a pleasure in doing gude. I am sure, mistress, she has done mair gude to you than ye can e'er repay, gif ye were to live this hunder year."

"I sall ne'er say that she hasna been very kind," returned Mrs Macclarty; "but thank the Lord a' body has shown kindness as weel as her. It's no lessenin' o' her to say that we hae other freends forby."

"Freends!" repeated Grizzy; "what hae a' your freends done for you in comparison wi' what she has done, and is e'now doing for you? Ay, just e'now, while I am speaking. But I forget that she charged me no to tell."

Grizzy, however, was led to explain that Sandy having deserted, was doomed to be shot, and that Mrs Mason, who was acquainted with his commanding officer, had gone to procure, if possible, a remission of his sentence.

The suspense in which poor Mrs Macclarty was now involved with respect to her son's destiny appeared more insupportable than the most dreadful certainty. The stream of consolation that was poured upon her by her loquacious friends only seemed to add to her distress. She made no answer to their observations, but, with her eyes eagerly bent towards the door, she fearfully listened to the sound of every passing footstep. At length the approach of horses was distinctly heard. Her maid hastily ran to the door for intelligence; and the old women, whose curiosity was no less eager, as hastily followed. The poor mother's heart grew faint. Her head drooped upon her hands, and a sort of stupor came over her senses. She sat motionless and silent; nor did the entrance of the minister and Mrs Mason seem to be observed. Mrs Mason, who at a glance perceived that the sickness was the sickness of the mind, kindly took her hand, and bade her be of good cheer, for that if she would recover, all her family would do well.

"Is he to live?" said Mrs Macclarty in a low and hollow voice, fixing her eyes on Mrs Mason's, as if expecting to read in them the doom of her son.

"Give thanks to God," returned the minister, who had accompanied Mrs Mason; "your son lives; God and his judges have dealt mercifully with him and you."

On hearing these blessed words the poor agitated mother

grasped Mrs Mason's hands, and burst into a flood of tears. The spectators were little less affected: a considerable time elapsed before the silence that ensued was broken. At length, in faltering accents, the widow asked whether she might hope to see her son again? It was explained to her that this was impossible, and that the farm must be conducted by Robert, her second son.

This arrangement was no improvement, as it soon appeared, on a former state of affairs. The young farmer, unrestrained by his mother, behaved so rudely to Mrs Mason, that she resolved to seek a lodging elsewhere. Disappointed in finding a home in the house of her kinswoman, she now applied to William Morison and his wife, who lived in the village, to be taken as a lodger. They were poor, and therefore the small sum she could afford to pay might to them be particularly useful. They were humble, and therefore would not refuse to be instructed in matters which they had never before had any opportunity to learn. She might, then, do good to them and to their children; and where she could do most good, there did Mrs Mason think it would be most for her happiness to go.

No sooner did she give a hint of her intention to Morison and his wife, than she perceived, from their brightened looks, that she had judged truly in imagining that her offer would be received with joy. These poor people had been sorely visited by affliction; but their good principles and good sense had taught them to make a proper use of the visitation, in checking the spirit of pride and presumption. Their resignation to the will of God was cheerful and unfeigned, and therefore led to redoubled efforts of industry; but their exertions had not as yet effectually relieved them from the extreme poverty to which they had been reduced. After gratefully acknowledging their sense of Mrs Mason's kindness in giving their house a preference, and declaring how much they deemed themselves honoured by having her beneath their roof, they looked at each other and paused, as if struck by the sudden recollection of some invincible obstacle. Mrs Mason perceived their embarrassment, and asked the cause.

There was a deficiency of furniture; but Mrs Mason obviated every difficulty by saying that she meant to furnish her own apartment; and after a little further conversation, in which everything was arranged to mutual satisfaction, she set out on her return to the farm, animated by the delightful hope of having it in her power to dispense a degree of happiness to her fellow-creatures.

After a visit of a few months to her friends at Gowan-brae, Mrs Mason returned to Glenburnie. When she arrived at Morison's cottage she was received with a cordial welcome, to the comforts of "a blazing ingle and a clean hearth-stane." On examining her own apartment, she was delighted to find that

everything was arranged to her wish, and far beyond her expectations; nor could she persuade herself that her room had not undergone some very material and expensive alteration. This striking improvement was, however, merely the result of a little labour and attention; but so great was the effect thus produced, that though the furniture was not nearly so costly as the furniture of her room at Mrs Macclarty's, it appeared in all respects superior.

Mrs Morison was highly gratified by the approbation bestowed upon her labours; and, pointing to her two little girls, told Mrs Mason how much they had done to forward the work, and that they were proud to find her pleased with it. Mrs Mason thanked them, and presented each with a ribbon, as an encouragement for good behaviour, assuring them at the same time that they would through life find happiness the reward of usefulness. "Alas!" said Mrs Morison, "they must be obliged to work; puir things, they have naething else to depend upon."

"And on what can they depend so well as on their own exertions?" replied Mrs Mason; "let them learn to excel in what they do, and look to the blessing of God upon their labours, and they may then pity the idle and the useless."

"If you could but get my poor gudeman to think in that way," said Peggy, "your coming to us would indeed be a blessing to our family."

"Fear not," said Mrs Mason; "as his health amends, his spirits will return, and in the good providence of God he will find some useful opening for his industry. Who ever saw the righteous man forsaken, or the righteous man's children either, so long as they walked in their father's steps? But now I must give some directions to my two little handmaids, whose attendance I shall take week about. I see they are willing, and they will soon be able to do all that I require."

"I'll answer for their being willing," cried their mother, looking fondly at the girls; "but ye winna tak it ill if they shouldna just fa' at ance into your ways."

"If they are willing," said Mrs Mason, "they will soon learn to do everything in the best way possible. All I want of them is to save themselves trouble, by getting into the habit of minding what they have to do. Any one who is willing, may soon become a useful servant by attending to three simple rules." "To three rules," cried Peggy, interrupting her; "that's odd, indeed. But my gudeman maun hear this. Come, William, and hear Mrs Mason tell our lassies a' the duties of a servant."

"I fear the kail will be cauld before she gets through them all," said William, smiling; "but I am ready to listen to her though it should."

"Your patience won't be long tried," said Mrs Mason; "for I have already told your girls, that in order to make good servants, they have only to attend to three simple rules."

"Well, what are they?" said the husband and wife, speaking both at once.

"They are," returned Mrs Mason, "TO DO EVERYTHING IN ITS PROPER TIME; TO KEEP EVERYTHING TO ITS PROPER USE; AND TO PUT EVERYTHING IN ITS PROPER PLACE."

"Well said!" cried William; "and as I live, these same rules would mak a weel-ordered house. My lassies shall get them by heart, and repeat them ilka morning after they say their prayers."

William kept his word; and Mrs Mason, finding that she would be supported by the parents, did not despair of being truly useful to the children, by conveying to them the fruits of her experience. Mrs Morison was a neat orderly person, and liked to see her house and children what she called *weel redd up*; but her notions of what was necessary to comfort fell far short of Mrs Mason's; neither had she been accustomed to that thorough-going cleanliness which is rather the fruit of habitual attention than of periodical labour, and which, like the pure religion that permits not the accumulation of unrepented sins upon the conscience, makes holiday of every day in the week. Mrs Morison was a stranger to the pride which scorns instruction. She did not refuse to adopt methods that were better than her own, merely because they were new; nor, though she loved her children as fondly and as dearly as any mother in the world, did she ever defend their faults. But as her children were early inspired with a desire to please, they did not often stand in need of correction, and stood more in awe of their father's frown than those who have been nurtured in self-will stand in awe of the most severe beating.

Mrs Mason had not been many weeks a resident in the family, till the peculiar neatness of William's cottage attracted the notice of the neighbours. The proud sneered at what they called the pride of the Morisons; the idle wondered how folk could find time for sic useless wark; and the lazy, while they acknowledged that they would like to live in the same comfort, drew in their chairs to the fire, and said they *couldna be fashed*.

By the interest of Mrs Mason, William Morison was appointed schoolmaster in the village, a situation for which he was well fitted, and Mrs Mason took upon herself the duty of schoolmistress to the girls. The benefit of the improved instruction now given to the children was soon perceptible, and praised by everybody but poor Mrs Macclarty. When she observed the thriving appearance of the Morisons, and how fast they were rising into notice and respect, her heart was torn between envy and regret. Far was she, however, from imputing to herself any blame; she, on the contrary, believed all the blame to rest with Mrs Mason, who was so unnatural as to leave her own relations, "and to tak up wi' strangers, who were neither kith nor kin to her;" nor did she omit any opportunity of railing

at the pride of the schoolmaster's wife and daughters, who, she said, "were now sae saucy, as to pretend that they couldna sit down in comfort in a hoose that wasna clean soopit." She for a time found many among the neighbours who readily acquiesced in her opinions, and joined in her expressions of contempt; but by degrees the strength of her party visibly declined. Those who had their children at school were so sensible of the rapid improvement that had been made in their tempers and manners, as well as in their learning, that they could not help feeling some gratitude to their instructors; and Mrs Mason, having instructed the girls in needlework, without any additional charge, added considerably to their sense of obligation. Even the old women, who, during the first summer, had most bitterly exclaimed against the pride of innovation, were by mid-winter inclined to alter their tone. How far the flannel waistcoats and petticoats distributed among them contributed to this change of sentiment, cannot be positively ascertained; but certain it is, that as the people were coming from church the first fine day of the following spring, all stopped a few moments before the school-house, to inhale the fragrance of the sweetbrier, and to admire the beauty of the crocuses, primroses, and violets which embroidered the borders of the grass-plot. Mrs Macclarty, who, in great disdain, asked auld John Smith's wife "what a' the folks were glowering at," received for answer that they were "looking at the bonniest sight in a' the town," pointing at the same time to the spot.

"Eh!" returned Mrs Macclarty, "I wonder what the warld will come to at last, since naething can serve the pride o' William Morison but to hae a flower garden whar gude Mr Brown's midden-stead stood sappy for mony a day! he's a better man than will ever stand on William Morison's shanks."

"The flowers are a hantel bonnier than the midden, though, and smell a hantel sweeter too, I trow," returned Mrs Smith.

This striking indication of a change of sentiment in the most sturdy stickler for the *gude auld gait*s, foreboded the improvements that were speedily to take place in the village of Glenburnie. These had their origin in the spirit of emulation excited among the elder schoolboys for the external appearance of their respective homes. The girls exerted themselves with no less activity to effect a reformation within doors; and so successful were they in their respective operations, that by the time the Earl of Longlands came to take possession of Hill Castle, when he, accompanied by his two sisters, came to visit Mrs Mason at Glenburnie, the village presented such a picture of neatness and comfort as excelled all that in the course of their travels they had seen. The carts which used formerly to be stuck up on end before every door were now placed in wattled sheds attached to the gable-end of the dwelling, and which were rendered ornamental from their coverings of honey-

suckle or ivy. The bright and clear glass of the windows was seen to advantage peeping through the foliage of the rose-trees and other flowering shrubs that were trimly nailed against the walls. The gardens on the other side were kept with equal care. There the pot-herb flourished. There the goodly rows of beehives evinced the effects of the additional nourishment afforded their inhabitants, and showed that the flowers were of other use besides regaling the sight or smell.

Mrs Mason, at the request of her visitors, conducted them into several of the cottages, where, merely from the attention paid to neatness, all had the air of cheerfulness and contentment. She was no less pleased than were the cottagers at the expressions of approbation which were liberally bestowed by her admiring friends, who particularly noticed the dress of the young women, which, equally removed from the slovenliness in which so many indulge on working days, as from the absurd and preposterous attempt at fashion which is on Sundays so generally assumed, was remarkable for neatness and simplicity.

Mrs Mason continued for some years to give her assistance to Morison in conducting the school, which was now increased by scholars from all parts of the country; and was amply repaid for her kindness by the undeviating gratitude of the worthy couple and their children, from whom she experienced a constant increase of friendship and affection.

The happy effects of their joint efforts in improving the hearts and dispositions of the youth of both sexes, and in confirming them in habits of industry and virtue, were so fully displayed, as to afford the greatest satisfaction to their instructors. To have been educated at the school of Glenburnie was considered as an ample recommendation to a servant, and implied a security for truth, diligence, and honesty. And fortunate was the lad pronounced whose bride could boast of the tokens of Mrs Mason's favour and approbation; for never did these fail to be followed by a conduct that insured happiness and prosperity.

The events that took place among the Macclarty family may now be briefly noticed. The first of these was Rob Macclarty's taking to wife the daughter of a smuggler, a man of notoriously bad character, who, it was said, tricked him into a marriage. Mrs Macclarty's opposition was violent, but abortive, and ended in an irreconcilable quarrel between her and her son. On being turned out of his house, she went to reside in a country town in the neighbourhood with her daughters, who were employed by a manufacturer in flowering muslin. Their gains were considerable; but as all they earned was laid out in finery, it only added to their vanity and pride. Meg's bad conduct finally obliged her to leave the place, and Jean, as I learn from an account sent to me, married a cousin, who kept an inn of the true Macclarty order on the — road.

On entering this place of entertainment, everything appears

dirty and comfortless. A passage sprinkled with sand leads you into apartments where you observe the tables to be covered with marks of liquor; and the chairs you will probably find it advisable to dust before sitting down; this will be done by the sturdy servant girl who, bare-legged, and with untied nightcap and scanty bedgown, will, soon after your arrival, hurry into the room with a shovelful of coals as a kindling for your fire. The attendance is as bad as it possibly can be. The waiters are of both sexes, and all are equally ingenious in delay. It is a rule of the house that your bell shall never be answered twice by the same person. If you dine at Mr Macclarty's, I shall not anticipate the pleasure of your meal, farther than to assure you, that you may depend on having here the largest and fattest mutton, and that though it should not be absolutely roasted to a cinder, the vegetables will not be more than half-boiled. In order to obtain a complete notion of this curiously-managed inn, you must not only dine, but sleep and breakfast there. The beds, from their dampness, are admirably calculated to give rheumatisms; and as for breakfast, you must not expect it to be on the table in less than an hour from the time of your ordering it, even although every one of the waiters should promise it in five minutes. At length one bustles in with the tea equipage, and toast swimming in butter. After a lapse of time, another appears with the tea-kettle, which he leaves on the hearth till he goes in search of the tea. And so on, everything is served in detachments, and in a manner calculated to try the temper of travellers. Damp beds, bad cookery, wretched attendance, and slovenliness in everything, are rapidly causing a general desertion of the establishment, and impending ruin threatens this last branch of the old and respectable stock of the Macclartys. A rival house has been set up by a late scholar of Mrs Mason, and as it is conducted with care for the comfort of travellers, and with the most scrupulous regard for cleanliness, it is attracting all the trade to itself—furnishing another example of the advantages of activity and prudence over that slothfulness which leaves everything to be done to-morrow, and excuses itself by that perverse and self-indulgent phrase of Mrs Macclarty—*I cannot be fashed.*

