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The Ayrshire Legatees

by John Galt

July, 1998 [Etext #?1384

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The Ayrshire Legatees

CHAPTER I—THE DEPARTURE

On New Year's day Dr. Pringle received a letter from India, informing him that his cousin, Colonel Armour, had died at Hyderabad, and left him his residuary legatee. The same post brought other letters on the same subject from the agent of the deceased in London, by which it was evident to the whole family that no time should be lost in looking after their interests in the hands of such brief and abrupt correspondents. "To say the least of it," as the Doctor himself sedately remarked, "considering the greatness of the forthcoming property, Messieurs Richard Argent and Company, of New Broad Street, might have given a notion as to the particulars of the residue." It was therefore determined that, as soon as the requisite arrangements could be made, the Doctor and Mrs. Pringle should set out for the metropolis, to obtain a speedy settlement with the agents, and, as Rachel had now, to use an expression of her mother's, "a prospect before her," that she also should accompany them: Andrew, who had just been called to the Bar, and who had come to the manse to spend a few days after attaining that distinction, modestly suggested, that, considering the various professional points which might be involved in the objects of his father's journey, and considering also the retired life which his father had led in the rural village of Garnock, it might be of importance to have the advantage of legal advice.

Mrs. Pringle interrupted this harangue, by saying, "We see what you would be at, Andrew; ye're just wanting to come with us, and on this occasion I'm no for making step-bairns, so we'll a' gang thegither."

The Doctor had been for many years the incumbent of Garnock, which is pleasantly situated between Irvine and Kilwinning, and, on account of the benevolence of his disposition, was much beloved by his parishioners. Some of the pawkie among them used indeed to say, in answer to the godly of Kilmarnock, and other admirers of the late great John Russel, of that formerly orthodox town, by whom Dr.

Pringle's powers as a preacher were held in no particular estimation,—“He kens our pu'pit's frail, and spar'st to save outlay to the heritors.” As for Mrs. Pringle, there is not such another minister's wife, both for economy and management, within the jurisdiction of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, and to this fact the following letter to Miss Mally Glencairn, a maiden lady residing in the Kirkgate of Irvine, a street that has been likened unto the Kingdom of Heaven, where

there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage, will abundantly testify.

LETTER I

Mrs. Pringle to Miss Mally Glencairn—GARNOCK MANSE.

Dear Miss Mally—The Doctor has had extraordinary news from India and London, where we are all going, as soon as me and Rachel can get ourselves in order, so I beg you will go to Bailie Delap's shop, and get swatches of his best black bombaseen, and crape, and muslin, and bring them over to the manse the morn's morning. If you cannot come yourself, and the day should be wat, send Nanny Eydent, the mantua-maker, with them; you'll be sure to send Nanny, onyhow, and I requeesht that, on this okasion, ye'll get the very best the Bailie has, and I'll tell you all about it when you come. You will get, likewise, swatches of mourning print, with the lowest prices. I'll no be so particular about them, as they are for the servan lasses, and there's no need, for all the greatness of God's gifts, that we should be wasterful. Let Mrs. Glibbans know, that the Doctor's second cousin, the colonel, that was in the East Indies, is no more;—I am sure she will sympatheese with our loss on this melancholy okasion. Tell her, as I'll no be out till our mournings are made, I would take it kind if she would come over and eate a bit of dinner on Sunday. The Doctor will no preach himself, but there's to be an excellent young man, an acquaintance of Andrew's, that has the repute of being both sound and hellaquaint. But no more at present, and looking for you and Nanny Eydent, with the swatches,—I am, dear Miss Mally, your sinsare friend, JANET PRINGLE.

The Doctor being of opinion that, until they had something in hand from the legacy, they should walk in the paths of moderation, it was resolved to proceed by the coach from Irvine to Greenock, there embark in a steam-boat for Glasgow, and, crossing the country to Edinburgh, take their passage at Leith in one of the smacks for London. But we must let the parties speak for themselves.

LETTER II

Miss Rachel Pringle to Miss Isabella Tod—GREENOCK.

My Dear Isabella—I know not why the dejection with which I parted from you still hangs upon my heart, and grows heavier as I am drawn farther and farther away. The uncertainty of the future—the dangers of the sea—all combine to sadden my too sensitive spirit.

Still, however, I will exert myself, and try to give you some account of our momentous journey.

The morning on which we bade farewell for a time—alas! it was to me as if for ever, to my native shades of Garnock—the weather was cold, bleak, and boisterous, and the waves came rolling in majestic fury towards the shore, when we arrived at the Tontine Inn of Ardrossan. What a monument has the late Earl of Eglinton left there of his public spirit! It should embalm his memory in the hearts of future ages, as I doubt not but in time Ardrossan will become a grand emporium; but the people of Saltcoats, a sordid race, complain that it will be their ruin; and the Paisley subscribers to his lordship's canal grow pale when they think of profit.

The road, after leaving Ardrossan, lies along the shore. The blast came dark from the waters, and the clouds lay piled in every form of grandeur on the lofty peaks of Arran. The view on the right hand is limited to the foot of a range of abrupt mean hills, and on the left it meets the sea—as we were obliged to keep the glasses up, our drive for several miles was objectless and dreary. When we had ascended a hill, leaving Kilbride on the left, we passed under the walls of an ancient tower. What delightful ideas are associated with the sight of such venerable remains of antiquity!

Leaving that lofty relic of our warlike ancestors, we descended again towards the shore. On the one side lay the Cumbra Islands, and Bute, dear to departed royalty. Afar beyond them, in the hoary magnificence of nature, rise the mountains of Argyllshire; the cairns, as my brother says, of a former world. On the other side of the road, we saw the cloistered ruins of the religious house of Southenan, a nunnery in those days of romantic adventure, when to live was to enjoy a poetical element. In such a sweet sequestered retreat, how much more pleasing to the soul it would have been, for you and I, like two captive birds in one cage, to have sung away our hours in innocence, than for me to be thus torn from you by fate, and all on account of that mercenary legacy, perchance the spoils of some unfortunate Hindoo Rajah!

At Largs we halted to change horses, and saw the barrows of those who fell in the great battle. We then continued our journey along the foot of stupendous precipices; and high, sublime, and darkened with the shadow of antiquity, we saw, upon its lofty station, the ancient Castle of Skelmorlie, where the Montgomeries of other days held their gorgeous banquets, and that brave knight

who fell at Chevy-Chace came pricking forth on his milk-white steed, as Sir Walter Scott would have described him. But the age of chivalry is past, and the glory of Europe departed for ever!

When we crossed the stream that divides the counties of Ayr and Renfrew, we beheld, in all the apart and consequentiality of pride, the house of Kelly overlooking the social villas of Wemyss Bay. My brother compared it to a sugar hogshead, and them to cotton-bags; for the loftythane of Kelly is but a West India planter, and the inhabitants of the villas on the shore are Glasgow manufacturers.

To this succeeded a dull drive of about two miles, and then at once we entered the pretty village of Inverkip. A slight snow-shower had given to the landscape a sort of copperplate effect, but still the forms of things, though but sketched, as it were, with China ink, were calculated to produce interesting impressions. After ascending, by a gentle acclivity, into a picturesque and romantic pass, we entered a spacious valley, and, in the course of little more than half an hour, reached this town; the largest, the most populous, and the most superb that I have yet seen. But what are all its warehouses, ships, and smell of tar, and other odoriferous circumstances of fishery and the sea, compared with the green swelling hills, the fragrant bean-fields, and the peaceful groves of my native Garnock!

The people of this town are a very busy and clever race, but much given to litigation. My brother says, that they are the greatest benefactors to the Outer House, and that their lawsuits are the most amusing and profitable before the courts, being less for the purpose of determining what is right than what is lawful. The chambermaid of the inn where we lodge pointed out to me, on the opposite side of the street, a magnificent edifice erected for balls; but the subscribers have resolved not to allow any dancing till it is determined by the Court of Session to whom the seats and chairs belong, as they were brought from another house where the assemblies were formerly held. I have heard a lawsuit compared to a country-dance, in which, after a great bustle and regular confusion, the parties stand still, all tired, just on the spot where they began; but this is the first time that the judges of the land have been called on to decide when a dance may begin.

We arrived too late for the steam-boat, and are obliged to wait till Monday morning; but to-morrow we shall go to church, where I expect to see what sort of creatures the beaux are. The Greenock ladies have a great name for beauty, but

those that I have seen are perfect frights. Such of the gentlemen as I have observed passing the windows of the inn may do, but I declare the ladies have nothing of which any woman ought to be proud. Had we known that we ran a risk of not getting a steam-boat, my mother would have provided an introductory letter or two from some of her Irvine friends; but here we are almost entire strangers: my father, however, is acquainted with one of the magistrates, and has gone to see him. I hope he will be civil enough to ask us to his house, for an inn is a shocking place to live in, and my mother is terrified at the expense. My brother, however, has great confidence in our prospects, and orders and directs with a high hand. But my paper is full, and I am compelled to conclude with scarcely room to say how affectionately I am yours,

RACHEL PRINGLE.

LETTER III

The Rev. Dr Pringle to Mr. Micklewham, Schoolmaster and Session-Clerk, Garnock—EDINBURGH.

Dear Sir—We have got this length through many difficulties, both in the travel by land to, and by sea and land from Greenock, where we were obligated, by reason of no conveyance, to stop the Sabbath, but not without edification; for we went to hear Dr. Drystour in the forenoon, who had a most weighty sermon on the tenth chapter of Nehemiah. He is surely a great orthodox divine, but rather costive in his delivery. In the afternoon we heard a correct moral lecture on good works, in another church, from Dr. Eastlight—a plain man, with a genteel congregation. The same night we took supper with a wealthy family, where we had much pleasant communion together, although the bringing in of the toddy-bowl after supper is a fashion that has a tendency to lengthen the sederunt to unseasonable hours.

On the following morning, by the break of day, we took shipping in the steam-boat for Glasgow. I had misgivings about the engine, which is really a thing of great docility; but saving my concern for the boiler, we all found the place surprising comfortable. The day was bleak and cold; but we had a good fire in a carron grate in the middle of the floor, and books to read, so that both body and mind are therein provided for.

Among the books, I fell in with a History of the Rebellion, anent the hand that an

English gentleman of the name of Waverley had in it. I was grieved that I had not time to read it through, for it was wonderful interesting, and far more particular, in many points, than any other account of that affair I have yet met with; but it's no so friendly to Protestant principles as I could have wished.

However, if I get my legacy well settled, I will buy the book, and lend it to you on my return, please God, to the manse.

We were put on shore at Glasgow by breakfast-time, and there we tarried all day, as I had a power of attorney to get from Miss Jenny Macbride, my cousin, to whom the colonel left the thousand pound legacy. Miss Jenny thought the legacy should have been more, and made some obstacle to signing the power; but both her lawyer and Andrew Pringle, my son, convinced her, that, as it was specified in the testament, she could not help it by standing out; so at long and last Miss Jenny was persuaded to put her name to the paper.

Next day we all four got into a fly coach, and, without damage or detriment, reached this city in good time for dinner in Macgregor's hotel, a remarkable decent inn, next door to one Mr. Blackwood, a civil and discreet man in the bookselling line.

Really the changes in Edinburgh since I was here, thirty years ago, are not to be told. I am confounded; for although I have both heard and read of the New Town in the Edinburgh Advertiser, and the Scots Magazine, I had no notion of what has come to pass. It's surprising to think wherein the decay of the nation is; for at Greenock I saw nothing but shipping and building; at Glasgow, streets spreading as if they were one of the branches of cotton-spinning; and here, the houses grown up as if they were sown in the seed-time with the corn, by a drill-machine, or dibbled in rigs and furrows like beans and potatoes.

To-morrow, God willing, we embark in a smack at Leith, so that you will not hear from me again till it please Him to take us in the hollow of His hand to London. In the meantime, I have only to add, that, when the Session meets, I wish you would speak to the elders, particularly to Mr. Craig, no to be overly hard on that poor donsie thing, Meg Milliken, about her bairn; and tell Tam Glen, the father o't, from me, that it would have been a sore heart to that pious woman, his mother, had she been living, to have witnessed such a thing; and therefore I hope and trust, he will yet confess a fault, and own Meg for his wife, though she is but something of a tawpie.

However, you need not diminish her to Tam. I hope Mr. Snodgrass will give as much satisfaction to the parish as can reasonably be expected in my absence; and I remain, dear sir, your friend and pastor,

ZACHARIAH PRINGLE.

Mr. Micklewham received the Doctor's letter about an hour before the Session met on the case of Tam Glen and Meg Milliken, and took it with him to the session-house, to read it to the elders before going into the investigation. Such a long and particular letter from the Doctor was, as they all justly remarked, kind and dutiful to his people, and a great pleasure to them.

Mr. Daff observed, "Truly the Doctor's a vera funny man, and wonderfu' jocose about the toddy-bowl." But Mr. Craig said, that "sic a thing on the Lord's night gi'es me no pleasure; and I am for setting my face against Waverley's History of the Rebellion, whilk I hae heard spoken of among the ungodly, both at Kilwinning and Dalry; and if it has no respect to Protestant principles, I doubt it's but another dose o' the radical poison in a new guise." Mr. Icenor, however, thought that "the observe on the great Doctor Drystour was very edifying; and that they should see about getting him to help at the summer Occasion." {1}

While they were thus reviewing, in their way, the first epistle of the Doctor, the betherel came in to say that Meg and Tam were at the door. "Oh, man," said Mr. Daff, slyly, "ye shouldna hae left them at the door by themselves." Mr. Craig looked at him austerely, and muttered something about the growing immorality of this backsliding age; but before the smoke of his indignation had kindled into eloquence, the delinquents were admitted. However, as we have nothing to do with the business, we shall leave them to their own deliberations.

CHAPTER II—THE VOYAGE

On the fourteenth day after the departure of the family from the manse, the Rev. Mr. Charles Snodgrass, who was appointed to officiate during the absence of the Doctor, received the following letter from his old chum, Mr. Andrew Pringle. It would appear that the young advocate is not so solid in the head as some of his elder brethren at the Bar; and therefore many of his flights and observations must be taken with an allowance on the score of his youth.

LETTER IV

Andrew Pringle, Esq., Advocate, to the Rev. Charles Snodgrass—

LONDON.

My Dear Friend—We have at last reached London, after a stormy passage of seven days. The accommodation in the smacks looks extremely inviting in port, and in fine weather, I doubt not, is comfortable, even at sea; but in February, and in such visitations of the powers of the air as we have endured, a balloon must be a far better vehicle than all the vessels that have been constructed for passengers since the time of Noah. In the first place, the waves of the atmosphere cannot be so dangerous as those of the ocean, being but “thin air”; and I am sure they are not so disagreeable; then the speed of the balloon is so much greater,—and it would puzzle Professor Leslie to demonstrate that its motions are more unsteady; besides, who ever heard of sea-sickness in a balloon? the consideration of which alone would, to any reasonable person actually suffering under the pains of that calamity, be deemed more than an equivalent for all the little fractional difference of danger between the two modes of travelling. I shall henceforth regard it as a fine characteristic trait of our national prudence, that, in their journies to France and Flanders, the Scottish witches always went by air on broom-sticks and benweeds, instead of venturing by water in sieves, like those of England. But the English are under the influence of a maritime genius.

When we had got as far up the Thames as Gravesend, the wind and tide came against us, so that the vessel was obliged to anchor, and I availed myself of the circumstance, to induce the family to disembark and go to London by LAND; and I esteem it a fortunate circumstance that we did so, the day, for the season, being uncommonly fine. After we had taken some refreshment, I procured places

in a stage-coach for my mother and sister, and, with the Doctor, mounted myself on the outside. My father's old-fashioned notions boggled a little at first to this arrangement, which he thought somewhat derogatory to his ministerial dignity; but his scruples were in the end overruled.

The country in this season is, of course, seen to disadvantage, but still it exhibits beauty enough to convince us what England must be when in leaf. The old gentleman's admiration of the increasing signs of what he called civilisation, as we approached London, became quite eloquent; but the first view of the city from Blackheath (which, by the bye, is a fine common, surrounded with villas and handsome houses) overpowered his faculties, and I shall never forget the impression it made on myself. The sun was declined towards the horizon; vast masses of dark low-hung clouds were mingled with the smoky canopy, and the dome of St. Paul's, like the enormous idol of some terrible deity, throned amidst the smoke of sacrifices and magnificence, darkness, and mystery, presented altogether an object of vast sublimity. I felt touched with reverence, as if I was indeed approaching the city of THE HUMAN

POWERS.

The distant view of Edinburgh is picturesque and romantic, but it affects a lower class of our associations. It is, compared to that of London, what the poem of the Seasons is with respect to Paradise Lost—the castellated descriptions of Walter Scott to the Darkness of Byron—the Sabbath of Grahame to the Robbers of Schiller. In the approach to Edinburgh, leisure and cheerfulness are on the road; large spaces of rural and pastoral nature are spread openly around, and mountains, and seas, and headlands, and vessels passing beyond them, going like those that die, we know not whither, while the sun is bright on their sails, and hope with them; but, in coming to this Babylon, there is an eager haste and a hurrying on from all quarters, towards that stupendous pile of gloom, through which no eye can penetrate; an unceasing sound, like the enginery of an earthquake at work, rolls from the heart of that profound and indefinable obscurity—sometimes a faint and yellow beam of the sun strikes here and there on the vast expanse of edifices; and churches, and holy asylums, are dimly seen lifting up their countless steeples and spires, like so many lightning rods to avert the wrath of Heaven.

The entrance to Edinburgh also awakens feelings of a more pleasing character. The rugged veteran aspect of the Old Town is agreeably contrasted with the

bright smooth forehead of the New, and there is not such an overwhelming torrent of animal life, as to make you pause before venturing to stem it; the noises are not so deafening, and the occasional sound of a ballad-singer, or a Highland piper, varies and enriches the discords; but here, a multitudinous assemblage of harsh alarms, of selfish contentions, and of furious carriages, driven by a fierce and insolent race, shatter the very hearing, till you partake of the activity with which all seem as much possessed as if a general apprehension prevailed, that the great clock of Time would strike the doom-hour before their tasks were done. But I must stop, for the postman with his bell, like the betherel of some ancient “borough’s town” summoning to a burial, is in the street, and warns me to conclude.

- Yours, ANDREW PRINGLE.

LETTER V

The Rev. Dr. Pringle to Mr. Micklewham, Schoolmaster and Session-Clerk,
Garnock

LONDON, 49 NORFOLK STREET, STRAND.

Dear Sir—On the first Sunday forthcoming after the receiving hereof, you will not fail to recollect in the remembering prayer, that we return thanks for our safe arrival in London, after a dangerous voyage. Well, indeed, is it ordained that we should pray for those who go down to the sea in ships, and do business on the great deep; for what me and mine have come through is unspeakable, and the hand of Providence was visibly manifested.

On the day of our embarkation at Leith, a fair wind took us onward at a blithe rate for some time; but in the course of that night the bridle of the tempest was slackened, and the curb of the billows loosened, and the ship reeled to and fro like a drunken man, and no one could stand therein. My wife and daughter lay at the point of death; Andrew Pringle, my son, also was prostrated with the grievous affliction; and the very soul within me was as if it would have been cast out of the body.

On the following day the storm abated, and the wind blew favourable; but towards the heel of the evening it again came vehement, and there was no help unto our distress. About midnight, however, it pleased HIM, whose breath is the tempest, to be more sparing with the whip of His displeasure on our poor bark,

as she hirpled on in her toilsome journey through the waters; and I was enabled, through His strength, to lift my head from the pillow of sickness, and ascend the deck, where I thought of Noah looking out of the window in the ark, upon the face of the desolate flood, and of Peter walking on the sea; and I said to myself, it matters not where we are, for we can be in no place where Jehovah is not there likewise, whether it be on the waves of the ocean, or the mountain tops, or in the valley and shadow of death.

The third day the wind came contrary, and in the fourth, and the fifth, and the sixth, we were also sorely buffeted; but on the night of the sixth we entered the mouth of the river Thames, and on the morning of the seventh day of our departure, we cast anchor near a town called Gravesend, where, to our exceeding great joy, it pleased Him, in whom alone there is salvation, to allow us once more to put our foot on the dry land.

When we had partaken of a repast, the first blessed with the blessing of an appetite, from the day of our leaving our native land, we got two vacancies in a stage-coach for my wife and daughter; but with Andrew Pringle, my son, I was obligated to mount aloft on the outside. I had some scruple of conscience about this, for I was afraid of my decorum. I met, however, with nothing but the height of discretion from the other outside passengers, although I jealoused that one of them was a light woman. Really I had no notion that the English were so civilised; they were so well bred, and the very duddiest of them spoke such a fine style of language, that when I looked around on the country, I thought myself in the land of Canaan. But it's extraordinary what a power of drink the coachmen drink, stopping and going into every change-house, and yet behaving themselves with the greatest sobriety. And then they are all so well dressed, which is no doubt owing to the poor rates. I am thinking, however, that for all they cry against them, the poor rates are but a small evil, since they keep the poor folk in such food and raiment, and out of the temptations to thievery; indeed, such a thing as a common beggar is not to be seen in this land, excepting here and there a sorner or a ne'er-do-weel.

When we had got to the outskirts of London, I began to be ashamed of the sin of high places, and would gladly have got into the inside of the coach, for fear of anybody knowing me; but although the multitude of by-goers was like the kirk scailing at the Sacrament, I saw not a kent face, nor one that took the least notice of my situation. At last we got to an inn, called The White Horse, Fetter-Lane, where we hired a hackney to take us to the lodgings provided for us here in

Norfolk Street, by Mr. Pawkie, the Scotch solicitor, a friend of Andrew Pringle, my son. Now it was that we began to experience the sharpers of London; for it seems that there are divers Norfolk Streets. Ours was in the Strand (mind that when you direct), not very far from Fetter-Lane; but the hackney driver took us away to one afar off, and when we knocked at the number we thought was ours, we found ourselves at a house that should not be told. I was so mortified, that I did not know what to say; and when Andrew Pringle, my son, rebuked the man for the mistake, he only gave a cunning laugh, and said we should have told him whatna Norfolk Street we wanted. Andrew stormed at this—but I discerned it was all owing to our own inexperience, and put an end to the contention, by telling the man to take us to Norfolk Street in the Strand, which was the direction we had got. But when we got to the door, the coachman was so extortionate, that another hobbleshaw arose. Mrs. Pringle had been told that, in such disputes, the best way of getting redress was to take the number of the coach; but, in trying to do so, we found it fastened on, and I thought the hackneyman would have gone by himself with laughter. Andrew, who had not observed what we were doing, when he saw us trying to take off the number, went like one demented, and paid the man, I cannot tell what, to get us out, and into the house, for fear we should have been mobbit.

I have not yet seen the colonel's agents, so can say nothing as to the business of our coming; for, landing at Gravesend, we did not bring our trunks with us, and Andrew has gone to the wharf this morning to get them, and, until we get them, we can go nowhere, which is the occasion of my writing so soon, knowing also how you and the whole parish would be anxious to hear what had become of us; and I remain, dear sir, your friend and pastor, ZACHARIAH PRINGLE.

On Saturday evening, Saunders Dickie, the Irvine postman, suspecting that this letter was from the Doctor, went with it himself, on his own feet, to Mr. Micklewham, although the distance is more than two miles, but Saunders, in addition to the customary TWAL PENNIES on the postage, had a dram for his pains. The next morning being wet, Mr. Micklewham had not an opportunity of telling any of the parishioners in the churchyard of the Doctor's safe arrival, so that when he read out the request to return thanks (for he was not only schoolmaster and session-clerk, but also precentor), there was a murmur of pleasure diffused throughout the congregation, and the greatest curiosity was excited to know what the dangers were, from which their worthy pastor and his whole family had so thankfully escaped in their voyage to London; so that, when the service was over, the elders adjourned to the session-house to hear the letter

read; and many of the heads of families, and other respectable parishioners, were admitted to the honours of the sitting, who all sympathised, with the greatest sincerity, in the sufferings which their minister and his family had endured. Mr. Daff, however, was justly chided by Mr. Craig, for rubbing his hands, and giving a sort of sniggering laugh, at the Doctor's sitting on high with a light woman. But even Mr. Snodgrass was seen to smile at the incident of taking the number off the coach, the meaning of which none but himself seemed to understand.

When the epistle had been thus duly read, Mr. Micklewham promised, for the satisfaction of some of the congregation, that he would get two or three copies made by the best writers in his school, to be handed about the parish, and Mr. Icenor remarked, that truly it was a thing to be held in remembrance, for he had not heard of greater tribulation by the waters since the shipwreck of the Apostle Paul.

CHAPTER III—THE LEGACY

Soon after the receipt of the letters which we had the pleasure of communicating in the foregoing chapter, the following was received from Mrs. Pringle, and the intelligence it contains is so interesting and important, that we hasten to lay it before our readers:-

LETTER VI

Mrs. Pringle to Miss Mally Glencairn—LONDON.

My Dear Miss Mally—You must not expect no particulars from me of our journey; but as Rachel is writing all the calamities that befell us to Bell Tod, you will, no doubt, hear of them. But all is nothing to my losses. I bought from the first hand, Mr. Treddles the manufacturer, two pieces of muslin, at Glasgow, such a thing not being to be had on any reasonable terms here, where they get all their fine muslins from Glasgow and Paisley; and in the same bocks with them I packit a small crock of our ain excellent poudered butter, with a delap cheese, for I was told that such commodities are not to be had genuine in London. I likewise had in it a pot of marmlet, which Miss Jenny Macbride gave me at Glasgow, assuring me that it was not only dentice, but a curiosity among the English, and my best new bumbeseen gown in peper. Howsomever, in the nailing of the bocks, which I did carefully with my oun hands, one of the nails gaed in ajee, and broke the pot of marmlet, which, by the jolting of the ship, ruined the muslin, rottened the peper round the gown, which the shivers cut into more than twenty great holes. Over and above all, the crock with the butter was, no one can tell how, crackit, and the pickle leaking out, and mixing with the seerip of the marmlet, spoilt the cheese. In short, at the object I beheld, when the bocks was opened, I could have ta'en to the greeting; but I behaved with more composity on the occasion, than the Doctor thought it was in the power of nature to do. Howsomever, till I get a new gown and other things, I am obliged to be a prisoner; and as the Doctor does not like to go to the counting-house of the agents without me, I know not what is yet to be the consequence of our journey. But it would need to be something; for we pay four guineas and a half a week for our dry lodgings, which is at a degree more than the Doctor's whole stipend. As yet, for the cause of these misfortunes, I can give you no account of London; but there is, as everybody kens, little thrift in their housekeeping. We just buy our tea by the quarter a pound, and our loaf sugar, broken in a peper bag, by the pound,

which would be a disgrace to a decent family in Scotland; and when we order dinner, we get no more than just serves, so that we have no cold meat if a stranger were coming by chance, which makes an unco bare house. The servan lasses I cannot abide; they dress better at their wark than ever I did on an ordinaire week-day at the manse; and this very morning I saw madam, the kitchen lass, mounted on a pair of pattens, washing the plain stenes before the door; na, for that matter, a bare foot is not to be seen within the four walls of London, at the least I have na seen no such thing.

In the way of marketing, things are very good here, and considering, not dear; but all is sold by the licht weight, only the fish are awful; half a guinea for a cod's head, and no bigger than the drouds the cadgers bring from Ayr, at a shilling and eighteenpence apiece.

Tell Miss Nanny Eydent that I have seen none of the fashions as yet; but we are going to the burial of the auld king next week, and I'll write her a particular account how the leddies are dressed; but everybody is in deep mourning. Howsomever I have seen but little, and that only in a manner from the window; but I could not miss the opportunity of a frank that Andrew has got, and as he's waiting for the pen, you must excuse haste. From your sincere friend, JANET PRINGLE.

LETTER VII

Andrew Pringle, Esq., to the Rev. Charles Snodgrass—LONDON.

My Dear Friend—It will give you pleasure to hear that my father is likely to get his business speedily settled without any equivocation; and that all those prudential considerations which brought us to London were but the phantasms of our own inexperience.

I use the plural, for I really share in the shame of having called in question the high character of the agents: it ought to have been warantry enough that everything would be fairly adjusted. But I must give you some account of what has taken place, to illustrate our provincialism, and to give you some idea of the way of doing business in London.

After having recovered from the effects, and repaired some of the accidents of our voyage, we yesterday morning sallied forth, the Doctor, my mother, and your humble servant, in a hackney coach, to Broad Street, where the agents have their

counting-house, and were ushered into a room among other legatees or clients, waiting for an audience of Mr. Argent, the principal of the house.

I know not how it is, that the little personal peculiarities, so amusing to strangers, should be painful when we see them in those whom we love and esteem; but I own to you, that there was a something in the demeanour of the old folks on this occasion, that would have been exceedingly diverting to me, had my filial reverence been less sincere for them.

The establishment of Messrs. Argent and Company is of vast extent, and has in it something even of a public magnitude; the number of the clerks, the assiduity of all, and the order that obviously prevails throughout, give at the first sight, an impression that bespeaks respect for the stability and integrity of the concern.

When we had been seated about ten minutes, and my father's name taken to Mr. Argent, an answer was brought, that he would see us as soon as possible; but we were obliged to wait at least half an hour more. Upon our being at last admitted, Mr. Argent received us standing, and in an easy gentlemanly manner said to my father, "You are the residuary legatee of the late Colonel Armour. I am sorry that you did not apprise me of this visit, that I might have been prepared to give the information you naturally desire; but if you will call here to-morrow at 12 o'clock, I shall then be able to satisfy you on the subject. Your lady, I presume?" he added, turning to my mother; "Mrs. Argent will have the honour of waiting on you; may I therefore beg the favour of your address?"

Fortunately I was provided with cards, and having given him one, we found ourselves constrained, as it were, to take our leave. The whole interview did not last two minutes, and I never was less satisfied with myself. The Doctor and my mother were in the greatest anguish; and when we were again seated in the coach, loudly expressed their apprehensions. They were convinced that some stratagem was meditated; they feared that their journey to London would prove as little satisfactory as that of the Wrongheads, and that they had been throwing away good money in building castles in the air.

It had been previously arranged, that we were to return for my sister, and afterwards visit some of the sights; but the clouded visages of her father and mother darkened the very spirit of Rachel, and she largely shared in their fears. This, however, was not the gravest part of the business; for, instead of going to St. Paul's and the Tower, as we had intended, my mother declared, that not one

farthing would they spend more till they were satisfied that the expenses already incurred were likely to be reimbursed; and a Chancery suit, with all the horrors of wig and gown, floated in spectral haziness before their imagination.

We sat down to a frugal meal, and although the remainder of a bottle of wine, saved from the preceding day, hardly afforded a glass apiece, the Doctor absolutely prohibited me from opening another.

This morning, faithful to the hour, we were again in Broad Street, with hearts knit up into the most peremptory courage; and, on being announced, were immediately admitted to Mr. Argent. He received us with the same ease as in the first interview, and, after requesting us to be seated (which, by the way, he did not do yesterday, a circumstance that was ominously remarked), he began to talk on indifferent matters. I could see that a question, big with law and fortune, was gathering in the breasts both of the Doctor and my mother, and that they were in a state far from that of the blessed.

But one of the clerks, before they had time to express their indignant suspicions, entered with a paper, and Mr. Argent, having glanced it over, said to the Doctor —“I congratulate you, sir, on the amount of the colonel’s fortune. I was not indeed aware before that he had died so rich. He has left about 120,000 pounds; seventy-five thousand of which is in the five per cents; the remainder in India bonds and other securities. The legacies appear to be inconsiderable, so that the residue to you, after paying them and the expenses of Doctors’ Commons, will exceed a hundred thousand pounds.”

My father turned his eyes upwards in thankfulness. “But,” continued Mr. Argent, “before the property can be transferred, it will be necessary for you to provide about four thousand pounds to pay the duty and other requisite expenses.” This was a thunderclap. “Where can I get such a sum?” exclaimed my father, in a tone of pathetic simplicity. Mr. Argent smiled and said, “We shall manage that for you”; and having in the same moment pulled a bell, a fine young man entered, whom he introduced to us as his son, and desired him to explain what steps it was necessary for the Doctor to take. We accordingly followed Mr. Charles Argent to his own room.

Thus, in less time than I have been in writing it, were we put in possession of all the information we required, and found those whom we feared might be interested to withhold the settlement, alert and prompt to assist us.

Mr. Charles Argent is naturally more familiar than his father. He has a little dash of pleasantry in his manner, with a shrewd good-humoured fashionable air, that renders him soon an agreeable acquaintance. He entered with singular felicity at once into the character of the Doctor and my mother, and waggishly drolled, as if he did not understand them, in order, I could perceive, to draw out the simplicity of their apprehensions. He quite won the old lady's economical heart, by offering to frank her letters, for he is in Parliament. "You have probably," said he slyly, "friends in the country, to whom you may be desirous of communicating the result of your journey to London; send your letters to me, and I will forward them, and any that you expect may also come under cover to my address, for postage is very expensive."

As we were taking our leave, after being fully instructed in all the preliminary steps to be taken before the transfers of the funded property can be made, he asked me, in a friendly manner, to dine with him this evening, and I never accepted an invitation with more pleasure. I consider his acquaintance a most agreeable acquisition, and not one of the least of those advantages which this new opulence has put it in my power to attain. The incidents, indeed, of this day, have been all highly gratifying, and the new and brighter phase in which I have seen the mercantile character, as it is connected with the greatness and glory of my country—is in itself equivalent to an accession of useful knowledge. I can no longer wonder at the vast power which the British Government wielded during the late war, when I reflect that the method and promptitude of the house of Messrs. Argent and Company is common to all the great commercial concerns from which the statesmen derived, as from so many reservoirs, those immense pecuniary supplies, which enabled them to beggar all the resources of a political despotism, the most unbounded, both in power and principle, of any tyranny that ever existed so long.—Yours, etc., ANDREW PRINGLE.

CHAPTER IV—THE TOWN

There was a great tea-drinking held in the Kirkgate of Irvine, at the house of Miss Mally Glencairn; and at that assemblage of rank, beauty, and fashion, among other delicacies of the season, several new-come-home Clyde skippers, roaring from Greenock and Port-Glasgow, were served up—but nothing contributed more to the entertainment of the evening than a proposal, on the part of Miss Mally, that those present who had received letters from the Pringles should read them for the benefit of the company. This was, no doubt, a preconcerted scheme between her and Miss Isabella Tod, to hear what Mr. Andrew Pringle had said to his friend Mr. Snodgrass, and likewise what the Doctor himself had indited to Mr. Micklewham; some rumour having spread of the wonderful escapes and adventures of the family in their journey and voyage to London. Had there not been some prethought of this kind, it was not indeed probable, that both the helper and session-clerk of Garnock could have been there together, in a party, where it was an understood thing, that not only Whist and Catch Honours were to be played, but even obstreperous Birky itself, for the diversion of such of the company as were not used to gambling games. It was in consequence of what took place at this Irvine route, that we were originally led to think of collecting the letters.

LETTER VIII

Miss Rachel Pringle to Miss Isabella Tod—LONDON.

My Dear Bell—It was my heartfelt intention to keep a regular journal of all our proceedings, from the sad day on which I bade a long adieu to my native shades—and I persevered with a constancy becoming our dear and youthful friendship, in writing down everything that I saw, either rare or beautiful, till the hour of our departure from Leith. In that faithful register of my feelings and reflections as a traveller, I described our embarkation at Greenock, on board the steam-boat,—our sailing past Port-Glasgow, an insignificant town, with a steeple;—the stupendous rock of Dumbarton Castle, that Gibraltar of antiquity;—our landing at Glasgow;—my astonishment at the magnificence of that opulent metropolis of the muslin manufacturers; my brother's remark, that the punch-bowls on the roofs of the Infirmary, the Museum, and the Trades Hall, were emblematic of the universal estimation in which that celebrated mixture is held by all ranks and degrees—learned, commercial, and even medical, of the inhabitants;—our

arrival at Edinburgh—my emotion on beholding the Castle, and the visionary lake which may be nightly seen from the windows of Princes Street, between the Old and New Town, reflecting the lights of the lofty city beyond—with a thousand other delightful and romantic circumstances, which render it no longer surprising that the Edinburgh folk should be, as they think themselves, the most accomplished people in the world. But, alas! from the moment I placed my foot on board that cruel vessel, of which the very idea is anguish, all thoughts were swallowed up in suffering—swallowed, did I say? Ah, my dear Bell, it was the odious reverse—but imagination alone can do justice to the subject. Not, however, to dwell on what is past, during the whole time of our passage from Leith, I was unable to think, far less to write; and, although there was a handsome young Hussar officer also a passenger, I could not even listen to the elegant compliments which he seemed disposed to offer by way of consolation, when he had got the better of his own sickness. Neither love nor valour can withstand the influence of that sea-demon. The interruption thus occasioned to my observations made me destroy my journal, and I have now to write to you only about London—only about London! What an expression for this human universe, as my brother calls it, as if my weak feminine pen were equal to the stupendous theme!

But, before entering on the subject, let me first satisfy the anxiety of your faithful bosom with respect to my father's legacy.

All the accounts, I am happy to tell you, are likely to be amicably settled; but the exact amount is not known as yet, only I can see, by my brother's manner, that it is not less than we expected, and my mother speaks about sending me to a boarding-school to learn accomplishments. Nothing, however, is to be done until something is actually in hand. But what does it all avail to me? Here am I, a solitary being in the midst of this wilderness of mankind, far from your sympathising affection, with the dismal prospect before me of going a second time to school, and without the prospect of enjoying, with my own sweet companions, that light and bounding gaiety we were wont to share, in skipping from tomb to tomb in the breezy churchyard of Irvine, like butterflies in spring flying from flower to flower, as a Wordsworth or a Wilson would express it.

We have got elegant lodgings at present in Norfolk Street, but my brother is trying, with all his address, to get us removed to a more fashionable part of the town, which, if the accounts were once settled, I think will take place; and he proposes to hire a carriage for a whole month. Indeed, he has given hints about

the saving that might be made by buying one of our own; but my mother shakes her head, and says, “Andrew, dinna be carri’t.” From all which it is very plain, though they don’t allow me to know their secrets, that the legacy is worth the coming for. But to return to the lodgings;-

-we have what is called a first and second floor, a drawing-room, and three handsome bedchambers. The drawing-room is very elegant; and the carpet is the exact same pattern of the one in the dress-drawing-room of Eglintoun Castle. Our landlady is indeed a lady, and I am surprised how she should think of letting lodgings, for she dresses better, and wears finer lace, than ever I saw in Irvine.

But I am interrupted. -

I now resume my pen. We have just had a call from Mrs. and Miss Argent, the wife and daughter of the colonel’s man of business.

They seem great people, and came in their own chariot, with two grand footmen behind; but they are pleasant and easy, and the object of their visit was to invite us to a family dinner to-morrow, Sunday. I hope we may become better acquainted; but the two livery servants make such a difference in our degrees, that I fear this is a vain expectation. Miss Argent was, however, very frank, and told me that she was herself only just come to London for the first time since she was a child, having been for the last seven years at a school in the country. I shall, however, be better able to say more about her in my next letter. Do not, however, be afraid that she shall ever supplant you in my heart. No, my dear friend, companion of my days of innocence,—that can never be. But this call from such persons of fashion looks as if the legacy had given us some consideration; so that I think my father and mother may as well let me know at once what my prospects are, that I might show you how disinterestedly and truly I am, my dear Bell, yours, RACHEL PRINGLE.

When Miss Isabella Tod had read the letter, there was a solemn pause for some time—all present knew something, more or less, of the fair writer; but a carriage, a carpet like the best at Eglintoun, a Hussar officer, and two footmen in livery, were phantoms of such high import, that no one could distinctly express the feelings with which the intelligence affected them. It was, however, unanimously agreed, that the Doctor’s legacy had every symptom of being equal to what it was at first expected to be, namely, twenty thousand pounds;—a sum which, by some occult or recondite moral influence of the Lottery, is the common

maximum, in popular estimation, of any extraordinary and indefinite windfall of fortune. Miss Becky Glibbans, from the purest motives of charity, devoutly wished that poor Rachel might be able to carry her full cup with a steady hand; and the Rev. Mr. Snodgrass, that so commendable an expression might not lose its edifying effect by any lighter talk, requested Mr.

Micklewham to read his letter from the Doctor.

LETTER IX

The Rev. Z. Pringle, D.D., to Mr. Micklewham, Schoolmaster and Session-Clerk of Garnock—LONDON.

Dear Sir—I have written by the post that will take this to hand, a letter to Banker M-y, at Irvine, concerning some small matters of money that I may stand in need of his opinion anent; and as there is a prospect now of a settlement of the legacy business, I wish you to take a step over to the banker, and he will give you ten pounds, which you will administer to the poor, by putting a twenty-shilling note in the plate on Sunday, as a public testimony from me of thankfulness for the hope that is before us; the other nine pounds you will quietly, and in your own canny way, divide after the following manner, letting none of the partakers thereof know from what other hand than the Lord's the help comes, for, indeed, from whom but HIS does any good befall us!

You will give to auld Mizy Eccles ten shillings. She's a careful creature, and it will go as far with her thrift as twenty will do with Effy Hopkirk; so you will give Effy twenty. Mrs. Binnacle, who lost her husband, the sailor, last winter, is, I am sure, with her two sickly bairns, very ill off; I would therefore like if you will lend her a note, and ye may put half-a-crown in the hand of each of the poor weans for a playock, for she's a proud spirit, and will bear much before she complain. Thomas Dowy has been long unable to do a turn of work, so you may give him a note too. I promised that donsie body, Willy Shachle, the betherel, that when I got my legacy, he should get a guinea, which would be more to him than if the colonel had died at home, and he had had the howking of his grave; you may therefore, in the meantime, give Willy a crown, and be sure to warn him well no to get fou with it, for I'll be very angry if he does. But what in this matter will need all your skill, is the giving of the remaining five pounds to auld Miss Betty Peerie; being a gentlewoman both by blood and education, she's a very slimmer affair to handle in a doing of this kind. But I am persuaded she's in

as great necessity as many that seem far poorer, especially since the muslin flowering has gone so down. Her bits of brats are sairly worn, though she keeps out an apparition of gentility. Now, for all this trouble, I will give you an account of what we have been doing since my last.

When we had gotten ourselves made up in order, we went, with Andrew Pringle, my son, to the counting-house, and had a satisfactory vista of the residue; but it will be some time before things can be settled—indeed, I fear, not for months to come—so that I have been thinking, if the parish was pleased with Mr. Snodgrass, it might be my duty to my people to give up to him my stipend, and let him be appointed not only helper, but successor likewise. It would not be right of me to give the manse, both because he's a young and inexperienced man, and cannot, in the course of nature, have got into the way of visiting the sick-beds of the frail, which is the main part of a pastor's duty, and likewise, because I wish to die, as I have lived, among my people. But, when all's settled, I will know better what to do.

When we had got an inkling from Mr. Argent of what the colonel has left,—and I do assure you, that money is not to be got, even in the way of legacy, without anxiety,—Mrs. Pringle and I consulted together, and resolved, that it was our first duty, as a token of our gratitude to the Giver of all Good, to make our first outlay to the poor. So, without saying a word either to Rachel, or to Andrew Pringle, my son, knowing that there was a daily worship in the Church of England, we slipped out of the house by ourselves, and, hiring a hackney conveyance, told the driver thereof to drive us to the high church of St. Paul's. This was out of no respect to the pomp and pride of prelacy, but to Him before whom both pope and presbyter are equal, as they are seen through the merits of Christ Jesus. We had taken a gold guinea in our hand, but there was no broad at the door; and, instead of a venerable elder, lending sanctity to his office by reason of his age, such as we see in the effectual institutions of our own national church—the door was kept by a young man, much more like a writer's whipper-snapper-clerk, than one qualified to fill that station, which good King David would have preferred to dwelling in tents of sin. However, we were not come to spy the nakedness of the land, so we went up the outside stairs, and I asked at him for the plate; "Plate!" says he; "why, it's on the altar!" I should have known this—the custom of old being to lay the offerings on the altar, but I had forgot; such is the force, you see, of habit, that the Church of England is not so well reformed and purged as ours is from the abominations of the leaven of idolatry. We were then stepping forward, when he said to me, as sharply as if I was going

to take an advantage, “You must pay here.” “Very well, wherever it is customary,” said I, in a meek manner, and gave him the guinea. Mrs. Pringle did the same. “I cannot give you change,” cried he, with as little decorum as if we had been paying at a playhouse. “It makes no odds,” said I; “keep it all.” Whereupon he was so converted by the mammon of iniquity, that he could not be civil enough, he thought—but conducted us in, and showed us the marble monuments, and the French colours that were taken in the war, till the time of worship—nothing could surpass his discretion.

At last the organ began to sound, and we went into the place of worship; but oh, Mr. Micklewham, yon is a thin kirk. There was not a hearer forby Mrs. Pringle and me, saving and excepting the relics of popery that assisted at the service. What was said, I must, however, in verity confess, was not far from the point. But it’s still a comfort to see that prelatical usurpations are on the downfall; no wonder that there is no broad at the door to receive the collection for the poor, when no congregation entereth in. You may, therefore, tell Mr. Craig, and it will gladden his heart to hear the tidings, that the great Babylonian madam is now, indeed, but a very little cutty.

On our return home to our lodgings, we found Andrew Pringle, my son, and Rachel, in great consternation about our absence. When we told them that we had been at worship, I saw they were both deeply affected; and I was pleased with my children, the more so, as you know I have had my doubts that Andrew Pringle’s principles have not been strengthened by the reading of the Edinburgh Review. Nothing more passed at that time, for we were disturbed by a Captain Sabre that came up with us in the smack, calling to see how we were after our journey; and as he was a civil well-bred young man, which I marvel at, considering he’s a Hussar dragoon, we took a coach, and went to see the lions, as he said; but, instead of taking us to the Tower of London, as I expected, he ordered the man to drive us round the town. In our way through the city he showed us the Temple Bar, where Lord Kilmarnock’s head was placed after the Rebellion, and pointed out the Bank of England and Royal Exchange. He said the steeple of the Exchange was taken down shortly ago—and that the late improvements at the Bank were very grand. I remembered having read in the Edinburgh Advertiser, some years past, that there was a great deal said in Parliament about the state of the Exchange, and the condition of the Bank, which I could never thoroughly understand. And, no doubt, the taking own of an old building, and the building up of a new one so near together, must, in such a crowded city as this, be not only a great detriment to business, but dangerous to

the community at large.

After we had driven about for more than two hours, and neither seen lions nor any other curiosity, but only the outside of houses, we returned home, where we found a copperplate card left by Mr. Argent, the colonel's agent, with the name of his private dwelling-house.

Both me and Mrs. Pringle were confounded at the sight of this thing, and could not but think that it prognosticated no good; for we had seen the gentleman himself in the forenoon. Andrew Pringle, my son, could give no satisfactory reason for such an extraordinary manifestation of anxiety to see us; so that, after sitting on thorns at our dinner, I thought that we should see to the bottom of the business. Accordingly, a hackney was summoned to the door, and me and Andrew Pringle, my son, got into it, and told the man to drive to second in the street where Mr. Argent lived, and which was the number of his house. The man got up, and away we went; but, after he had driven an awful time, and stopping and inquiring at different places, he said there was no such house as Second's in the street; whereupon Andrew Pringle, my son, asked him what he meant, and the man said that he supposed it was one Second's Hotel, or Coffee-house, that we wanted. Now, only think of the craftiness of the ne'er-da-weel; it was with some difficulty that I could get him to understand, that second was just as good as number two; for Andrew Pringle, my son, would not interfere, but lay back in the coach, and was like to split his sides at my confabulating with the hackney man. At long and length we got to the house, and were admitted to Mr. Argent, who was sitting by himself in his library reading, with a plate of oranges, and two decanters with wine before him. I explained to him, as well as I could, my surprise and anxiety at seeing his card, at which he smiled, and said, it was merely a sort of practice that had come into fashion of late years, and that, although we had been at his counting-house in the morning, he considered it requisite that he should call on his return from the city. I made the best excuse I could for the mistake; and the servant having placed glasses on the table, we were invited to take wine. But I was grieved to think that so respectable a man should have had the bottles before him by himself, the more especially as he said his wife and daughters had gone to a party, and that he did not much like such sort of things. But for all that, we found him a wonderful conversible man; and Andrew Pringle, my son, having read all the new books put out at Edinburgh, could speak with him on any subject. In the course of conversation they touched upon politick economy, and Andrew Pringle, my son, in speaking about cash in the Bank of England, told him what I had said concerning the alterations of the

Royal Exchange steeple, with which Mr. Argent seemed greatly pleased, and jocosely proposed as a toast,—“May the country never suffer more from the alterations in the Exchange, than the taking down of the steeple.” But as Mrs. Pringle is wanting to send a bit line under the same frank to her cousin, Miss Mally Glencairn, I must draw to a conclusion, assuring you, that I am, dear sir, your sincere friend and pastor,

ZACHARIAH PRINGLE.

The impression which this letter made on the auditors of Mr.

Micklewham was highly favourable to the Doctor—all bore testimony to his benevolence and piety; and Mrs. Glibbans expressed, in very loquacious terms, her satisfaction at the neglect to which prelacy was consigned. The only person who seemed to be affected by other than the most sedate feelings on the occasion was the Rev. Mr.

Snodgrass, who was observed to smile in a very unbecoming manner at some parts of the Doctor’s account of his reception at St. Paul’s.

Indeed, it was apparently with the utmost difficulty that the young clergyman could restrain himself from giving liberty to his risible faculties. It is really surprising how differently the same thing affects different people. “The Doctor and Mrs. Pringle giving a guinea at the door of St. Paul’s for the poor need not make folk laugh,” said Mrs. Glibbans; “for is it not written, that whosoever giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord?” “True, my dear madam,”

replied Mr. Snodgrass, “but the Lord to whom our friends in this case gave their money is the Lord Bishop of London; all the collection made at the doors of St. Paul’s Cathedral is, I understand, a perquisite of the Bishop’s.” In this the reverend gentleman was not very correctly informed, for, in the first place, it is not a collection, but an exaction; and, in the second place, it is only sanctioned by the Bishop, who allows the inferior clergy to share the gains among themselves. Mrs. Glibbans, however, on hearing his explanation, exclaimed, “Gude be about us!” and pushing back her chair with a bounce, streaking down her gown at the same time with both her hands, added, “No wonder that a judgment is upon the land, when we hear of money-changers in the temple.” Miss Mally Glencairn, to appease her gathering wrath and holy indignation, said facetiously, “Na, na, Mrs. Glibbans, ye forget, there was nae changing of money

there. The man took the whole guineas. But not to make a controversy on the subject, Mr. Snodgrass will now let us hear what Andrew Pringle, 'my son,' has said to him":- And the reverend gentleman read the following letter with due circumspection, and in his best manner:-

LETTER X

Andrew Pringle, Esq., to the Reverend Charles Snodgrass My Dear Friend—I have heard it alleged, as the observation of a great traveller, that the manners of the higher classes of society throughout Christendom are so much alike, that national peculiarities among them are scarcely perceptible. This is not correct; the differences between those of London and Edinburgh are to me very striking. It is not that they talk and perform the little etiquettes of social intercourse differently; for, in these respects, they are apparently as similar as it is possible for imitation to make them; but the difference to which I refer is an indescribable something, which can only be compared to peculiarities of accent. They both speak the same language; perhaps in classical purity of phraseology the fashionable Scotchman is even superior to the Englishman; but there is a flatness of tone in his accent—a lack of what the musicians call expression, which gives a local and provincial effect to his conversation, however, in other respects, learned and intelligent. It is so with his manners; he conducts himself with equal ease, self-possession, and discernment, but the flavour of the metropolitan style is wanting.

I have been led to make these remarks by what I noticed in the guests whom I met on Friday at young Argent's. It was a small party, only five strangers; but they seemed to be all particular friends of our host, and yet none of them appeared to be on any terms of intimacy with each other. In Edinburgh, such a party would have been at first a little cold; each of the guests would there have paused to estimate the characters of the several strangers before committing himself with any topic of conversation. But here, the circumstance of being brought together by a mutual friend, produced at once the purest gentlemanly confidence; each, as it were, took it for granted, that the persons whom he had come among were men of education and good-breeding, and, without deeming it at all necessary that he should know something of their respective political and philosophical principles, before venturing to speak on such subjects, discussed frankly, and as things unconnected with party feelings, incidental occurrences which, in Edinburgh, would have been avoided as calculated to awaken animosities.

But the most remarkable feature of the company, small as it was, consisted of the difference in the condition and character of the guests. In Edinburgh the landlord, with the scrupulous care of a herald or genealogist, would, for a party, previously unacquainted with each other, have chosen his guests as nearly as possible from the same rank of life; the London host had paid no respect to any such consideration—all the strangers were as dissimilar in fortune, profession, connections, and politics, as any four men in the class of gentlemen could well be. I never spent a more delightful evening.

The ablest, the most eloquent, and the most elegant man present, without question, was the son of a saddler. No expense had been spared on his education. His father, proud of his talents, had intended him for a seat in Parliament; but Mr. T-himself prefers the easy enjoyments of private life, and has kept himself aloof from politics and parties. Were I to form an estimate of his qualifications to excel in public speaking, by the clearness and beautiful propriety of his colloquial language, I should conclude that he was still destined to perform a distinguished part. But he is content with the liberty of a private station, as a spectator only, and, perhaps, in that he shows his wisdom; for undoubtedly such men are not cordially received among hereditary statesmen, unless they evince a certain suppleness of principle, such as we have seen in the conduct of more than one political adventurer.

The next in point of effect was young C-G-. He evidently languished under the influence of indisposition, which, while it added to the natural gentleness of his manners, diminished the impression his accomplishments would otherwise have made. I was greatly struck with the modesty with which he offered his opinions, and could scarcely credit that he was the same individual whose eloquence in Parliament is by many compared even to Mr. Canning's, and whose firmness of principle is so universally acknowledged, that no one ever suspects him of being liable to change. You may have heard of his poem "On the Restoration of Learning in the East," the most magnificent prize essay that the English Universities have produced for many years. The passage in which he describes the talents, the researches, and learning of Sir William Jones, is worthy of the imagination of Burke; and yet, with all this oriental splendour of fancy, he has the reputation of being a patient and methodical man of business. He looks, however, much more like a poet or a student, than an orator and a statesman; and were statesmen the sort of personages which the spirit of the age attempts to represent them, I, for one, should lament that a young man, possessed of so many amiable qualities, all so tinted with the bright lights of a fine enthusiasm,

should ever have been removed from the moon-lighted groves and peaceful cloisters of Magdalen College, to the lamp-smelling passages and factious debates of St.

Stephen's Chapel. Mr. G-certainly belongs to that high class of gifted men who, to the honour of the age, have redeemed the literary character from the charge of unfitness for the concerns of public business; and he has shown that talents for affairs of state, connected with literary predilections, are not limited to mere reviewers, as some of your old class-fellows would have the world to believe. When I contrast the quiet unobtrusive development of Mr.

G-'s character with that bustling and obstreperous elbowing into notice of some of those to whom the Edinburgh Review owes half its fame, and compare the pure and steady lustre of his elevation, to the rocket-like aberrations and perturbed blaze of their still uncertain course, I cannot but think that we have overrated, if not their ability, at least their wisdom in the management of public affairs.

The third of the party was a little Yorkshire baronet. He was formerly in Parliament, but left it, as he says, on account of its irregularities, and the bad hours it kept. He is a Whig, I understand, in politics, and indeed one might guess as much by looking at him; for I have always remarked, that your Whigs have something odd and particular about them. On making the same sort of remark to Argent, who, by the way, is a high ministerial man, he observed, the thing was not to be wondered at, considering that the Whigs are exceptions to the generality of mankind, which naturally accounts for their being always in the minority. Mr. T-, the saddler's son, who overheard us, said slyly, "That it might be so; but if it be true that the wise are few compared to the multitude of the foolish, things would be better managed by the minority than as they are at present."

The fourth guest was a stock-broker, a shrewd compound, with all charity be it spoken, of knavery and humour. He is by profession an epicure, but I suspect his accomplishments in that capacity are not very well founded; I would almost say, judging by the evident traces of craft and dissimulation in his physiognomy, that they have been assumed as part of the means of getting into good company, to drive the more earnest trade of money-making. Argent evidently understood his true character, though he treated him with jocular familiarity.

I thought it a fine example of the intellectual tact and superiority of T-, that he seemed to view him with dislike and contempt. But I must not give you my reasons for so thinking, as you set no value on my own particular philosophy; besides, my paper tells me, that I have only room left to say, that it would be difficult in Edinburgh to bring such a party together; and yet they affect there to have a metropolitan character. In saying this, I mean only with reference to manners; the methods of behaviour in each of the company were precisely similar—there was no eccentricity, but only that distinct and decided individuality which nature gives, and which no acquired habits can change. Each, however, was the representative of a class; and Edinburgh has no classes exactly of the same kind as those to which they belonged.—Yours truly,
ANDREW PRINGLE.

Just as Mr. Snodgrass concluded the last sentence, one of the Clyde skippers, who had fallen asleep, gave such an extravagant snore, followed by a groan, that it set the whole company a-laughing, and interrupted the critical strictures which would otherwise have been made on Mr. Andrew Pringle's epistle. "Damn it," said he, "I thought myself in a fog, and could not tell whether the land ahead was Plada or the Lady Isle." Some of the company thought the observation not inapplicable to what they had been hearing.

Miss Isabella Tod then begged that Miss Mally, their hostess, would favour the company with Mrs. Pringle's communication. To this request that considerate maiden ornament of the Kirkgate deemed it necessary, by way of preface to the letter, to say, "Ye a' ken that Mrs. Pringle's a managing woman, and ye maunna expect any metaphysical philosophy from her." In the meantime, having taken the letter from her pocket, and placed her spectacles on that functionary of the face which was destined to wear spectacles, she began as follows:-

LETTER XI

Mrs. Pringle to Miss Mally Glencairn

My Dear Miss Mally—We have been at the counting-house, and gotten a sort of a satisfaction; what the upshot may be, I canna take it upon myself to prognosticate; but when the waur comes to the worst, I think that baith Rachel and Andrew will have a nest egg, and the Doctor and me may sleep sound on their account, if the nation doesna break, as the argle-barglers in the House of Parliament have been threatening: for all the cornal's fortune is sunk at present

in the presents. Howsomever, it's our notion, when the legacies are paid off, to lift the money out of the funds, and place it at good interest on hairtable securitie. But ye will hear aften from us, before things come to that, for the delays, and the goings, and the comings in this town of London are past all expreshon.

As yet, we have been to see no fairlies, except going in a coach from one part of the toun to another; but the Doctor and me was at the he-kirk of Saint Paul's for a purpose that I need not tell you, as it was adoin' with the right hand what the left should not know.

I couldna say that I had there great pleasure, for the preacher was very cauld'rife, and read every word, and then there was such a beggary of popish prelacy, that it was compassionate to a Christian to see.

We are to dine at Mr. Argent's, the cornal's hadgint, on Sunday, and me and Rachel have been getting something for the okasion. Our landlady, Mrs. Sharkly, has recommended us to ane of the most fashionable millinders in London, who keeps a grand shop in Cranburn Alla, and she has brought us arteecles to look at; but I was surprised they were not finer, for I thought them of a very inferior quality, which she said was because they were not made for no costomer, but for the public.

The Argents seem as if they would be discreet people, which, to us who are here in the jaws of jeopardy, would be a great confort—for I am no overly satisfie'd with many things. What would ye think of buying coals by the stimpert, for anything that I know, and then setting up the poker afore the ribs, instead of blowing with the bellies to make the fire burn? I was of a pinion that the Englishers were naturally masterful; but I can ashure you this is no the case at all—and I am beginning to think that the way of leev'ing from hand to mouth is great frugality, when ye consider that all is left in the logive hands of uncercumseezed servans.

But what gives me the most concern at this time is one Captain Sabre of the Dragoon Hozars, who come up in the smak with us from Leith, and is looking more after our Rachel than I could wish, now that she might set her cap to another sort of object. But he's of a respectit family, and the young lad himself is no to be despisid; howsomever, I never likit officir-men of any description, and yet the thing that makes me look down on the captain is all owing to the cornal, who was an officer of the native poors of India, where the pay must indeed have

been extraordinary, for who ever heard either of a cornal, or any officer whomsoever, making a hundred thousand pounds in our regiments? no that I say the cornal has left so meikle to us.

Tell Mrs. Glibbans that I have not heard of no sound preacher as yet in London—the want of which is no doubt the great cause of the crying sins of the place. What would she think to hear of newspapers selling by tout of horn on the Lord's day? and on the Sabbath night, the change-houses are more throng than on the Saturday! I am told, but as yet I cannot say that I have seen the evil myself with my own eyes, that in the summer time there are tea-gardens, where the tradesmen go to smoke their pipes of tobacco, and to entertain their wives and children, which can be nothing less than a bringing of them to an untimely end. But you will be surprised to hear, that no such thing as whusky is to be had in the public-houses, where they drink only a dead sort of beer; and that a bottle of true jennyinn London porter is rarely to be seen in the whole town—all kinds of piple getting their porter in pewter cans, and a laddie calls for in the morning to take away what has been yoused over night. But what I most miss is the want of creem. The milk here is just skimm, and I doot not, likewise well watered—as for the water, a drink of clear wholesome good water is not within the bounds of London; and trully, now may I say, that I have learnt what the blessing of a cup of cold water is.

Tell Miss Nanny Eydent, that the day of the burial is now settled, when we are going to Windsor Castle to see the precession—and that, by the end of the wick, she may expect the fashions from me, with all the particulars. Till then, I am, my dear Miss Mally, your friend and well-wisher,

JANET PRINGLE.

NOTO BENY.—Give my kind compliments to Mrs. Glibbans, and let her know, that I will, after Sunday, give her an account of the state of the Gospel in London.

Miss Mally paused when she had read the letter, and it was unanimously agreed, that Mrs. Pringle gave a more full account of London than either father, son, or daughter.

By this time the night was far advanced, and Mrs. Glibbans was rising to go away, apprehensive, as she observed, that they were going to bring “the carts”

into the room. Upon Miss Mally, however, assuring her that no such transgression was meditated, but that she intended to treat them with a bit nice Highland mutton ham, and eggs, of her own laying, that worthy pillar of the Relief Kirk consented to remain.

It was past eleven o'clock when the party broke up; Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Mickleham walked home together, and as they were crossing the Red Burn Bridge, at the entrance of Eglintoun Wood,—a place well noted from ancient times for preternatural appearances, Mr.

Mickleham declared that he thought he heard something purring among the bushes; upon which Mr. Snodgrass made a jocose observation, stating, that it could be nothing but the effect of Lord North's strong ale in his head; and we should add, by way of explanation, that the Lord North here spoken of was Willy Grieve, celebrated in Irvine for the strength and flavour of his brewing, and that, in addition to a plentiful supply of his best, Miss Mally had entertained them with tamarind punch, constituting a natural cause adequate to produce all the preternatural purring that terrified the dominie.

CHAPTER V—THE ROYAL FUNERAL

Tam Glen having, in consequence of the exhortations of Mr.

Micklewham, and the earnest entreaties of Mr. Daff, backed by the pious animadversions of the rigidly righteous Mr. Craig, confessed a fault, and acknowledged an irregular marriage with Meg Milliken, their child was admitted to church privileges. But before the day of baptism, Mr. Daff, who thought Tam had given but sullen symptoms of penitence, said, to put him in better humour with his fate,—

“Noo, Tam, since ye hae beguiled us of the infare, we maun mak up for’t at the christening; so I’ll speak to Mr. Snodgrass to bid the Doctor’s friens and acquaintance to the ploy, that we may get as meikle amang us as will pay for the bairn’s baptismal frock.”

Mr. Craig, who was present, and who never lost an opportunity of testifying, as he said, his “discountenance of the crying iniquity,”

remonstrated with Mr. Daff on the unchristian nature of the proposal, stigmatising it with good emphasis “as a sinful nourishing of carnality in his day and generation.” Mr. Micklewham, however, interfered, and said, “It was a matter of weight and concernment, and therefore it behoves you to consult Mr. Snodgrass on the fitness of the thing. For if the thing itself is not fit and proper, it cannot expect his countenance; and, on that account, before we reckon on his compliance with what Mr. Daff has propounded, we should first learn whether he approves of it at all.” Whereupon the two elders and the session-clerk adjourned to the manse, in which Mr. Snodgrass, during the absence of the incumbent, had taken up his abode.

The heads of the previous conversation were recapitulated by Mr.

Micklewham, with as much brevity as was consistent with perspicuity; and the matter being duly digested by Mr. Snodgrass, that orthodox young man—as Mrs. Glibbans denominated him, on hearing him for the first time—declared that the notion of a pay-christening was a benevolent and kind thought: “For, is not the order to increase and multiply one of the first commands in the Scriptures of truth?” said Mr. Snodgrass, addressing himself to Mr. Craig. “Surely, then, when

children are brought into the world, a great law of our nature has been fulfilled, and there is cause for rejoicing and gladness! And is it not an obligation imposed upon all Christians, to welcome the stranger, and to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked; and what greater stranger can there be than a helpless babe? Who more in need of sustenance than the infant, that knows not the way even to its mother's bosom? And whom shall we clothe, if we do not the wailing innocent, that the hand of Providence places in poverty and nakedness before us, to try, as it were, the depth of our Christian principles, and to awaken the sympathy of our humane feelings?"

Mr. Craig replied, "It's a' very true and sound what Mr. Snodgrass has observed; but Tam Glen's wean is neither a stranger, nor hungry, nor naked, but a sturdy brat, that has been rinnin' its lane for mair than sax weeks." "Ah!" said Mr. Snodgrass familiarly, "I fear, Mr. Craig, ye're a Malthusian in your heart." The sanctimonious elder was thunderstruck at the word. Of many a various shade and modification of sectarianism he had heard, but the Malthusian heresy was new to his ears, and awful to his conscience, and he begged Mr.

Snodgrass to tell him in what it chiefly consisted, protesting his innocence of that, and of every erroneous doctrine.

Mr. Snodgrass happened to regard the opinions of Malthus on Population as equally contrary to religion and nature, and not at all founded in truth. "It is evident, that the reproductive principle in the earth and vegetables, and all things and animals which constitute the means of subsistence, is much more vigorous than in man. It may be therefore affirmed, that the multiplication of the means of subsistence is an effect of the multiplication of population, for the one is augmented in quantity, by the skill and care of the other," said Mr. Snodgrass, seizing with avidity this opportunity of stating what he thought on the subject, although his auditors were but the session-clerk, and two elders of a country parish. We cannot pursue the train of his argument, but we should do injustice to the philosophy of Malthus, if we suppressed the observation which Mr. Daff made at the conclusion. "Gude safe's!"

said the good-natured elder, "if it's true that we breed faster than the Lord provides for us, we maun drown the poor folks' weans like kittlings." "Na, na!" exclaimed Mr. Craig, "ye're a' out, neighbour; I see now the utility of church-censures." "True!" said Mr. Micklewham; "and the ordination of the stool of repentance, the horrors of which, in the opinion of the fifteen Lords at

Edinburgh, palliated child-murder, is doubtless a Malthusian institution.” But Mr. Snodgrass put an end to the controversy, by fixing a day for the christening, and telling he would do his best to procure a good collection, according to the benevolent suggestion of Mr. Daff. To this cause we are indebted for the next series of the Pringle correspondence; for, on the day appointed, Miss Mally Glencairn, Miss Isabella Tod, Mrs. Glibbans and her daughter Becky, with Miss Nanny Eydent, together with other friends of the minister’s family, dined at the manse, and the conversation being chiefly about the concerns of the family, the letters were produced and read.

LETTER XII

Andrew Pringle, Esq., to the Rev. Charles Snodgrass—WINDSOR, CASTLE-INN.

My Dear Friend—I have all my life been strangely susceptible of pleasing impressions from public spectacles where great crowds are assembled. This, perhaps, you will say, is but another way of confessing, that, like the common vulgar, I am fond of sights and shows. It may be so, but it is not from the pageants that I derive my enjoyment. A multitude, in fact, is to me as it were a strain of music, which, with an irresistible and magical influence, calls up from the unknown abyss of the feelings new combinations of fancy, which, though vague and obscure, as those nebulae of light that astronomers have supposed to be the rudiments of unformed stars, afterwards become distinct and brilliant acquisitions. In a crowd, I am like the somnambulist in the highest degree of the luminous crisis, when it is said a new world is unfolded to his contemplation, wherein all things have an intimate affinity with the state of man, and yet bear no resemblance to the objects that address themselves to his corporeal faculties. This delightful experience, as it may be called, I have enjoyed this evening, to an exquisite degree, at the funeral of the king; but, although the whole succession of incidents is indelibly imprinted on my recollection, I am still so much affected by the emotion excited, as to be incapable of conveying to you any intelligible description of what I saw. It was indeed a scene witnessed through the medium of the feelings, and the effect partakes of the nature of a dream.

I was within the walls of an ancient castle, “So old as if they had for ever stood,
So strong as if they would for ever stand,”

and it was almost midnight. The towers, like the vast spectres of departed ages,

raised their embattled heads to the skies, monumental witnesses of the strength and antiquity of a great monarchy. A prodigious multitude filled the courts of that venerable edifice, surrounding on all sides a dark embossed structure, the sarcophagus, as it seemed to me at the moment, of the heroism of chivalry.

“A change came o’er the spirit of my dream,” and I beheld the scene suddenly illuminated, and the blaze of torches, the glimmering of arms, and warriors and horses, while a mosaic of human faces covered like a pavement the courts. A deep low under sound pealed from a distance; in the same moment, a trumpet answered with a single mournful note from the stateliest and darkest portion of the fabric, and it was whispered in every ear, “It is coming.” Then an awful cadence of solemn music, that affected the heart like silence, was heard at intervals, and a numerous retinue of grave and venerable men,

“The fathers of their time,

Those mighty master spirits, that withstood The fall of monarchies, and high upheld Their country’s standard, glorious in the storm,”

passed slowly before me, bearing the emblems and trophies of a king.

They were as a series of great historical events, and I beheld behind them, following and followed, an awful and indistinct image, like the vision of Job. It moved on, and I could not discern the form thereof, but there were honours and heraldries, and sorrow, and silence, and I heard the stir of a profound homage performing within the breasts of all the witnesses. But I must not indulge myself farther on this subject. I cannot hope to excite in you the emotions with which I was so profoundly affected. In the visible objects of the funeral of George the Third there was but little magnificence; all its sublimity was derived from the trains of thought and currents of feeling, which the sight of so many illustrious characters, surrounded by circumstances associated with the greatness and antiquity of the kingdom, was necessarily calculated to call forth. In this respect, however, it was perhaps the sublimest spectacle ever witnessed in this island; and I am sure, that I cannot live so long as ever again to behold another, that will equally interest me to the same depth and extent.— Yours, ANDREW PRINGLE.

We should ill perform the part of faithful historians, did we omit to record the sentiments expressed by the company on this occasion.

Mrs. Glibbans, whose knowledge of the points of orthodoxy had not their equal in the three adjacent parishes, roundly declared, that Mr. Andrew Pringle's letter was nothing but a peesemeal of clishmaclavers; that there was no sense in it; and that it was just like the writer, a canary idiot, a touch here and a touch there, without anything in the shape of cordiality or satisfaction.

Miss Isabella Tod answered this objection with that sweetness of manner and virgin diffidence, which so well becomes a youthful member of the establishment, controverting the dogmas of a stoop of the Relief persuasion, by saying, that she thought Mr. Andrew had shown a fine sensibility. "What is sensibility without judgment,"

cried her adversary, "but a thrashing in the water, and a raising of bells? Couldna the fallow, without a' his parleyvoos, have said, that such and such was the case, and that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away?—but his clouds, and his spectres, and his visions of Job!—Oh, an he could but think like Job!—Oh, an he would but think like the patient man!—and was obliged to claut his flesh with a bit of a broken crock, we might have some hope of repentance unto life. But Andrew Pringle, he's a gone dick; I never had comfort or expectation of the free-thinker, since I heard that he was infected with the blue and yellow calamity of the Edinburgh Review; in which, I am credibly told, it is set forth, that women have nae souls, but only a gut, and a gaw, and a gizzard, like a pigeon-dove, or a raven-crow, or any other outcast and abominated quadruped."

Here Miss Mally Glencairn interposed her effectual mediation, and said, "It is very true that Andrew deals in the diplomatics of obscurity; but it's well known that he has a nerve for genius, and that, in his own way, he kens the loan from the crown of the causeway, as well as the duck does the midden from the adle dib."

To this proverb, which we never heard before, a learned friend, whom we consulted on the subject, has enabled us to state, that middens were formerly of great magnitude, and often of no less antiquity in the west of Scotland; in so much, that the Trongate of Glasgow owes all its spacious grandeur to them. It being within the recollection of persons yet living, that the said magnificent street was at one time an open road, or highway, leading to the Trone, or market-cross, with thatched houses on each side, such as may still be seen in the pure and immaculate royal borough of Rutherglen; and that before each house stood a luxuriant midden, by the removal of which, in the progress of modern

degeneracy, the stately architecture of Argyle Street was formed. But not to insist at too great a length on such topics of antiquarian lore, we shall now insert Dr.

Pringle's account of the funeral, and which, patly enough, follows our digression concerning the middens and magnificence of Glasgow, as it contains an authentic anecdote of a manufacturer from that city, drinking champaign at the king's dirgie.

LETTER XIII

The Rev. Z. Pringle, D.D., to Mr. Mickleham, Schoolmaster and Session-Clerk of Garnock—LONDON.

Dear Sir—I have received your letter, and it is a great pleasure to me to hear that my people were all so much concerned at our distress in the Leith smack; but what gave me the most contentment was the repentance of Tam Glen. I hope, poor fellow, he will prove a good husband; but I have my doubts; for the wife has really but a small share of common sense, and no married man can do well unless his wife will let him. I am, however, not overly pleased with Mr. Craig on the occasion, for he should have considered frail human nature, and accepted of poor Tam's confession of a fault, and allowed the bairn to be baptized without any more ado. I think honest Mr. Daff has acted like himself, and I trust and hope there will be a great gathering at the christening, and, that my mite may not be wanting, you will slip in a guinea note when the dish goes round, but in such a manner, that it may not be jealoused from whose hand it comes.

Since my last letter, we have been very thrang in the way of seeing the curiosities of London; but I must go on regular, and tell you all, which, I think, it is my duty to do, that you may let my people know. First, then, we have been at Windsor Castle, to see the king lying in state, and, afterwards, his interment; and sorry am I to say, it was not a sight that could satisfy any godly mind on such an occasion. We went in a coach of our own, by ourselves, and found the town of Windsor like a cried fair. We were then directed to the Castle gate, where a terrible crowd was gathered together; and we had not been long in that crowd, till a pocket-picker, as I thought, cutted off the tail of my coat, with my pocket-book in my pocket, which I never missed at the time. But it seems the coat tail was found, and a policeman got it, and held it up on the end of his stick, and cried, whose pocket is this? showing the book that was therein in his hand. I was

confounded to see my pocket-book there, and could scarcely believe my own eyes; but Mrs. Pringle knew it at the first glance, and said, “It’s my gudeman’s”; at the which, there was a great shout of derision among the multitude, and we would baith have then been glad to disown the pocket-book, but it was returned to us, I may almost say, against our will; but the scornors, when they saw our confusion, behaved with great civility towards us, so that we got into the Castle-yard with no other damage than the loss of the flap of my coat tail.

Being in the Castle-yard, we followed the crowd into another gate, and up a stair, and saw the king lying in state, which was a very dismal sight—and I thought of Solomon in all his glory, when I saw the coffin, and the mutes, and the mourners; and reflecting on the long infirmity of mind of the good old king, I said to myself, in the words of the book of Job, “Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die even without wisdom!”

When we had seen the sight, we came out of the Castle, and went to an inn to get a chack of dinner; but there was such a crowd, that no resting-place could for a time be found for us. Gentle and semple were there, all mingled, and no respect of persons; only there was, at a table nigh unto ours, a fat Glasgow manufacturer, who ordered a bottle of champaign wine, and did all he could in the drinking of it by himself, to show that he was a man in well-doing circumstances.

While he was talking over his wine, a great peer of the realm, with a star on his breast, came into the room, and ordered a glass of brandy and water; and I could see, when he saw the Glasgow manufacturer drinking champaign wine on that occasion, that he greatly marvelled thereat.

When we had taken our dinner, we went out to walk and see the town of Windsor; but there was such a mob of coaches going and coming, and men and horses, that we left the streets, and went to inspect the king’s policy, which is of great compass, but in a careless order, though it costs a world of money to keep it up. Afterwards, we went back to the inns, to get tea for Mrs. Pringle and her daughter, while Andrew Pringle, my son, was seeing if he could get tickets to buy, to let us into the inside of the Castle, to see the burial—but he came back without luck, and I went out myself, being more experienced in the world, and I saw a gentleman’s servant with a ticket in his hand, and I asked him to sell it to me, which the man did with thankfulness, for five shillings, although the price was said to be golden guineas. But as this ticket admitted only one person, it was hard to say what should be done with it when I got back to my family. However,

as by this time we were all very much fatigued, I gave it to Andrew Pringle, my son, and Mrs. Pringle, and her daughter Rachel, agreed to bide with me in the inns.

Andrew Pringle, my son, having got the ticket, left us sitting, when shortly after in came a nobleman, high in the cabinet, as I think he must have been, and he having politely asked leave to take his tea at our table, because of the great throng in the house, we fell into a conversation together, and he, understanding thereby that I was a minister of the Church of Scotland, said he thought he could help us into a place to see the funeral; so, after he had drank his tea, he took us with him, and got us into the Castle-yard, where we had an excellent place, near to the Glasgow manufacturer that drank the champaign. The drink by this time, however, had got into that poor man's head, and he talked so loud, and so little to the purpose, that the soldiers who were guarding were obliged to make him hold his peace, at which he was not a little nettled, and told the soldiers that he had himself been a soldier, and served the king without pay, having been a volunteer officer. But this had no more effect than to make the soldiers laugh at him, which was not a decent thing at the interment of their master, our most gracious Sovereign that was.

However, in this situation we saw all; and I can assure you it was a very edifying sight; and the people demeaned themselves with so much propriety, that there was no need for any guards at all; indeed, for that matter, of the two, the guards, who had eaten the king's bread, were the only ones there, saving and excepting the Glasgow manufacturer, that manifested an irreverent spirit towards the royal obsequies. But they are men familiar with the king of terrors on the field of battle, and it was not to be expected that their hearts would be daunted like those of others by a doing of a civil character.

When all was over, we returned to the inns, to get our chaise, to go back to London that night, for beds were not to be had for love or money at Windsor, and we reached our temporary home in Norfolk Street about four o'clock in the morning, well satisfied with what we had seen,—but all the meantime I had forgotten the loss of the flap of my coat, which caused no little sport when I came to recollect what a pookit like body I must have been, walking about in the king's policy like a peacock without my tail. But I must conclude, for Mrs. Pringle has a letter to put in the frank for Miss Nanny Eydent, which you will send to her by one of your scholars, as it contains information that may be serviceable to Miss Nanny in her business, both as a mantua-maker and a

superintendent of the genteeler sort of burials at Irvine and our vicinity. So that this is all from your friend and pastor,

ZACHARIAH PRINGLE.

“I think,” said Miss Isabella Tod, as Mr. Micklewham finished the reading of the Doctor’s epistle, “that my friend Rachel might have given me some account of the ceremony; but Captain Sabre seems to have been a much more interesting object to her than the pride and pomp to her brother, or even the Glasgow manufacturer to her father.” In saying these words, the young lady took the following letter from her pocket, and was on the point of beginning to read it, when Miss Becky Glibbans exclaimed, “I had aye my fears that Rachel was but light-headed, and I’ll no be surprised to hear more about her and the dragoon or a’s done.” Mr. Snodgrass looked at Becky, as if he had been afflicted at the moment with unpleasant ideas; and perhaps he would have rebuked the spitefulness of her insinuations, had not her mother sharply snubbed the uncongenial maiden, in terms at least as pungent as any which the reverend gentleman would have employed. “I’m sure,” replied Miss Becky, pertly, “I meant no ill; but if Rachel Pringle can write about nothing but this Captain Sabre, she might as well let it alone, and her letter canna be worth the hearing.” “Upon that,” said the clergyman, “we can form a judgment when we have heard it, and I beg that Miss Isabella may proceed,”—which she did accordingly.

LETTER XIV

Miss Rachel Pringle to Miss Isabella Tod—LONDON.

My Dear Bell—I take up my pen with a feeling of disappointment such as I never felt before. Yesterday was the day appointed for the funeral of the good old king, and it was agreed that we should go to Windsor, to pour the tribute of our tears upon the royal hearse.

Captain Sabre promised to go with us, as he is well acquainted with the town, and the interesting objects around the Castle, so dear to chivalry, and embalmed by the genius of Shakespeare and many a minor bard, and I promised myself a day of unclouded felicity—but the captain was ordered to be on duty,—and the crowd was so rude and riotous, that I had no enjoyment whatever; but, pining with chagrin at the little respect paid by the rabble to the virtues of the departed monarch, I would fainly have retired into some solemn and sequestered grove,

and breathed my sorrows to the listening waste.

Nor was the loss of the captain, to explain and illuminate the different baronial circumstances around the Castle, the only thing I had to regret in this ever-memorable excursion—my tender and affectionate mother was so desirous to see everything in the most particular manner, in order that she might give an account of the funeral to Nanny Eydent, that she had no mercy either upon me or my father, but obliged us to go with her to the most difficult and inaccessible places. How vain was all this meritorious assiduity!

for of what avail can the ceremonies of a royal funeral be to Miss Nanny, at Irvine, where kings never die, and where, if they did, it is not at all probable that Miss Nanny would be employed to direct their solemn obsequies? As for my brother, he was so entranced with his own enthusiasm, that he paid but little attention to us, which made me the more sensible of the want we suffered from the absence of Captain Sabre. In a word, my dear Bell, never did I pass a more unsatisfactory day, and I wish it blotted for ever from my remembrance. Let it therefore be consigned to the abysses of oblivion, while I recall the more pleasing incidents that have happened since I wrote you last.

On Sunday, according to invitation, as I told you, we dined with the Argents—and were entertained by them in a style at once most splendid, and on the most easy footing. I shall not attempt to describe the consumable materials of the table, but call your attention, my dear friend, to the intellectual portion of the entertainment, a subject much more congenial to your delicate and refined character.

Mrs. Argent is a lady of considerable personal magnitude, of an open and affable disposition. In this respect, indeed, she bears a striking resemblance to her nephew, Captain Sabre, with whose relationship to her we were unacquainted before that day. She received us as friends in whom she felt a peculiar interest; for when she heard that my mother had got her dress and mine from Cranbury Alley, she expressed the greatest astonishment, and told us, that it was not at all a place where persons of fashion could expect to be properly served. Nor can I disguise the fact, that the flounced and gorgeous garniture of our dresses was in shocking contrast to the amiable simplicity of hers and the fair Arabella, her daughter, a charming girl, who, notwithstanding the fashionable splendour in which she has been educated, displays a delightful sprightliness of manner, that, I have some notion, has not been altogether lost on the heart of my brother.

When we returned upstairs to the drawing-room, after dinner, Miss Arabella took her harp, and was on the point of favouring us with a Mozart; but her mother, recollecting that we were Presbyterians, thought it might not be agreeable, and she desisted, which I was sinful enough to regret; but my mother was so evidently alarmed at the idea of playing on the harp on a Sunday night, that I suppressed my own wishes, in filial veneration for those of that respected parent. Indeed, fortunate it was that the music was not performed; for, when we returned home, my father remarked with great solemnity, that such a way of passing the Lord's night as we had passed it, would have been a great sin in Scotland.

Captain Sabre, who called on us next morning, was so delighted when he understood that we were acquainted with his aunt, that he lamented he had not happened to know it before, as he would, in that case, have met us there. He is indeed very attentive, but I assure you that I feel no particular interest about him; for although he is certainly a very handsome young man, he is not such a genius as my brother, and has no literary partialities. But literary accomplishments are, you know, foreign to the military profession, and if the captain has not distinguished himself by cutting up authors in the reviews, he has acquired an honourable medal, by overcoming the enemies of the civilised world at Waterloo.

To-night the playhouses open again, and we are going to the Oratorio, and the captain goes with us, a circumstance which I am the more pleased at, as we are strangers, and he will tell us the names of the performers. My father made some scruple of consenting to be of the party; but when he heard that an Oratorio was a concert of sacred music, he thought it would be only a sinless deviation if he did, so he goes likewise. The captain, therefore, takes an early dinner with us at five o'clock. Alas! to what changes am I doomed,-

-that was the tea hour at the manse of Garnock. Oh, when shall I revisit the primitive simplicities of my native scenes again! But neither time nor distance, my dear Bell, can change the affection with which I subscribe myself, ever affectionately, yours, RACHEL PRINGLE.

At the conclusion of this letter, the countenance of Mrs. Glibbans was evidently so darkened, that it daunted the company, like an eclipse of the sun, when all nature is saddened. "What think you, Mr. Snodgrass," said that spirit-stricken lady,—“what think you of this dining on the Lord's day,—this playing on the harp; the carnal Mozarting of that ungodly family, with whom the corrupt human

nature of our friends has been chambering?" Mr. Snodgrass was at some loss for an answer, and hesitated, but Miss Mally Glencairn relieved him from his embarrassment, by remarking, that "the harp was a holy instrument," which somewhat troubled the settled orthodoxy of Mrs.

Glibbans's visage. "Had it been an organ," said Mr. Snodgrass, dryly, "there might have been, perhaps, more reason to doubt; but, as Miss Mally justly remarks, the harp has been used from the days of King David in the performances of sacred music, together with the psalter, the timbrel, the sackbut, and the cymbal." The wrath of the polemical Deborah of the Relief-Kirk was somewhat appeased by this explanation, and she inquired in a more diffident tone, whether a Mozart was not a metrical paraphrase of the song of Moses after the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea; "in which case, I must own," she observed, "that the sin and guilt of the thing is less grievous in the sight of HIM before whom all the actions of men are abominations." Miss Isabella Tod, availing herself of this break in the conversation, turned round to Miss Nanny Eydent, and begged that she would read her letter from Mrs. Pringle. We should do injustice, however, to honest worth and patient industry were we, in thus introducing Miss Nanny to our readers, not to give them some account of her lowly and virtuous character.

Miss Nanny was the eldest of three sisters, the daughters of a shipmaster, who was lost at sea when they were very young; and his all having perished with him, they were indeed, as their mother said, the children of Poverty and Sorrow. By the help of a little credit, the widow contrived, in a small shop, to eke out her days till Nanny was able to assist her. It was the intention of the poor woman to take up a girl's school for reading and knitting, and Nanny was destined to instruct the pupils in that higher branch of accomplishment—the different stitches of the sampler. But about the time that Nanny was advancing to the requisite degree of perfection in chain-steek and pie-holes—indeed had made some progress in the Lord's prayer between two yew trees—tambouring was introduced at Irvine, and Nanny was sent to acquire a competent knowledge of that classic art, honoured by the fair hands of the beautiful Helen and the chaste and domestic Andromache. In this she instructed her sisters; and such was the fruit of their application and constant industry, that her mother abandoned the design of keeping school, and continued to ply her little huxtry in more easy circumstances. The fluctuations of trade in time taught them that it would not be wise to trust to the loom, and accordingly Nanny was at some pains to learn mantua-making; and it was fortunate that she did so—for the tambouring

gradually went out of fashion, and the flowering which followed suited less the infirm constitution of poor Nanny. The making of gowns for ordinary occasions led to the making of mournings, and the making of mournings naturally often caused Nanny to be called in at deaths, which, in process of time, promoted her to have the management of burials; and in this line of business she has now a large proportion of the genteelest in Irvine and its vicinity; and in all her various engagements her behaviour has been as blameless and obliging as her assiduity has been uniform; insomuch, that the numerous ladies to whom she is known take a particular pleasure in supplying her with the newest patterns, and earliest information, respecting the varieties and changes of fashions; and to the influence of the same good feelings in the breast of Mrs. Pringle, Nanny was indebted for the following letter.

How far the information which it contains may be deemed exactly suitable to the circumstances in which Miss Nanny's lot is cast, our readers may judge for themselves; but we are happy to state, that it has proved of no small advantage to her: for since it has been known that she had received a full, true, and particular account, of all manner of London fashions, from so managing and notable a woman as the minister's wife of Garnock, her consideration has been so augmented in the opinion of the neighbouring gentlewomen, that she is not only consulted as to funerals, but is often called in to assist in the decoration and arrangement of wedding-dinners, and other occasions of sumptuous banqueting; by which she is enabled, during the suspension of the flowering trade, to earn a lowly but a respected livelihood.

LETTER XV

Mrs. Pringle to Miss Nanny Eydent, Mantua-maker, Seagate Head, Irvine—
LONDON.

Dear Miss Nanny—Miss Mally Glencairn would tell you all how it happent that I was disabled, by our misfortunes in the ship, from riting to you konserning the London fashons as I promist; for I wantit to be partikylor, and to say nothing but what I saw with my own eyes, that it might be servisable to you in your bizness—so now I will begin with the old king's burial, as you have sometimes okashon to lend a helping hand in that way at Irvine, and nothing could be more genteeler of the kind than a royal obsakew for a patron; but no living sole can give a distink account of this matter, for you know the old king was the father of his piple, and the croud was so great. Howsomever we got into our oun hired shaze

at daylight; and when we were let out at the castel yett of Windsor, we went into the mob, and by and by we got within the castel walls, when great was the lamentation for the purdition of shawls and shoos, and the Doctor's coat pouch was clippit off by a pocket-picker. We then ran to a wicket-gate, and up an old timber-stair with a rope ravel, and then we got to a great pentit chamber called King George's Hall: After that we were allowt to go into another room full of guns and guards, that told us all to be silent: so then we all went like sawlies, holding our tongues in an awful manner, into a dysmal room hung with black cloth, and lighted with dum wax-candles in silver skonses, and men in a row all in mulancholic posters. At length and at last we came to the coffin; but although I was as partikylar as possoble, I could see nothing that I would recommend. As for the interment, there was nothing but even-down wastrie—wax-candles blowing away in the wind, and flunkies as fou as pipers, and an unreverent mob that scarsely could demean themselves with decency as the body was going by; only the Duke of York, who carrit the head, had on no hat, which I think was the newest identical thing in the affair: but really there was nothing that could be recommended. Howsomever I understood that there was no draigie, which was a saving; for the bread and wine for such a multitude would have been a destruction to a lord's living: and this is the only point that the fashon set in the king's feunoral may be follot in Irvine.

Since the burial, we have been to see the play, where the leddies were all in deep murning; but excepting that some had black gum-floors on their heads, I saw leetil for admiration—only that bugles, I can ashure you, are not worn at all this season; and surely this murning must be a vast detrimint to bizness—for where there is no verietie, there can be but leetil to do in your line.

But one thing I should not forget, and that is, that in the vera best houses, after tea and coffee after dinner, a cordial dram is handed about; but likewise I could observe, that the fruit is not set on with the cheese, as in our part of the country, but comes, after the cloth is drawn, with the wine; and no such a thing as a punch-bowl is to be heard of within the four walls of London.

Howsomever, what I principally notised was, that the tea and coffee is not made by the lady of the house, but out of the room, and brought in without sugar or milk, on servors, every one helping himself, and only plain flimsy loaf and butter is served—no such thing as shortbread, seed-cake, bun, marmlet, or jeelly to be seen, which is an okonomical plan, and well worthy of adaptation in ginteel families with narrow incomes, in Irvine or elsewhere.

But when I tell you what I am now going to say, you will not be surprizt at the great wealth in London. I paid for a bumbeseen gown, not a bit better than the one that was made by you that the sore calamity befell, and no so fine neither, more than three times the price; so you see, Miss Nanny, if you were going to pouse your fortune, you could not do better than pack up your ends and your awls and come to London. But ye're far better at home—for this is not a town for any creditable young woman like you, to live in by herself, and I am wearying to be back, though it's hard to say when the Doctor will get his counts settlet. I wish you, howsomever, to mind the patches for the bed-cover that I was going to patch, for a licht afternoon seam, as the murning for the king will no be so general with you, and the spring fashons will be coming on to help my gathering—so no more at present from your friend and well-wisher, JANET PRINGLE.

CHAPTER VI—PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

On Sunday morning, before going to church, Mr. Micklewham called at the manse, and said that he wished particularly to speak to Mr.

Snodgrass. Upon being admitted, he found the young helper engaged at breakfast, with a book lying on his table, very like a volume of a new novel called *Ivanhoe*, in its appearance, but of course it must have been sermons done up in that manner to attract fashionable readers. As soon, however, as Mr. Snodgrass saw his visitor, he hastily removed the book, and put it into the table-drawer.

The precentor having taken a seat at the opposite side of the fire, began somewhat diffidently to mention, that he had received a letter from the Doctor, that made him at a loss whether or not he ought to read it to the elders, as usual, after worship, and therefore was desirous of consulting Mr. Snodgrass on the subject, for it recorded, among other things, that the Doctor had been at the playhouse, and Mr. Micklewham was quite sure that Mr. Craig would be neither to bind nor to hold when he heard that, although the transgression was certainly mollified by the nature of the performance. As the clergyman, however, could offer no opinion until he saw the letter, the precentor took it out of his pocket, and Mr. Snodgrass found the contents as follows:-

LETTER XVI

The Rev. Z. Pringle, D.D., to Mr. Micklewham, Schoolmaster and Session-Clerk, Garnock—LONDON.

Dear Sir—You will recollect that, about twenty years ago, there was a great sound throughout all the West that a playhouse in Glasgow had been converted into a tabernacle of religion. I remember it was glad tidings to our ears in the parish of Garnock; and that Mr.

Craig, who had just been ta'en on for an elder that fall, was for having a thanksgiving-day on the account thereof, holding it to be a signal manifestation of a new birth in the of-old-godly town of Glasgow, which had become slack in the way of well-doing, and the church therein lukewarm, like that of Laodicea. It was then said, as I well remember, that when the Tabernacle was opened, there

had not been seen, since the Kaimslang wark, such a congregation as was there assembled, which was a great proof that it's the matter handled, and not the place, that maketh pure; so that when you and the elders hear that I have been at the theatre of Drury Lane, in London, you must not think that I was there to see a carnal stage play, whether tragical or comical, or that I would so far demean myself and my cloth, as to be a witness to the chambering and wantonness of ne'er-du-weel play-actors. No, Mr. Micklewham, what I went to see was an Oratorio, a most edifying exercise of psalmody and prayer, under the management of a pious gentleman, of the name of Sir George Smart, who is, as I am informed, at the greatest pains to instruct the exhibitioners, they being, for the most part, before they get into his hands, poor uncultivated creatures, from Italy, France, and Germany, and other atheistical and popish countries.

They first sung a hymn together very decently, and really with as much civilised harmony as could be expected from novices; indeed so well, that I thought them almost as melodious as your own singing class of the trades lads from Kilwinning. Then there was one Mr.

Braham, a Jewish proselyte, that was set forth to show us a specimen of his proficiency. In the praying part, what he said was no objectionable as to the matter; but he drawled in his manner to such a pitch, that I thought he would have broken out into an even-down song, as I sometimes think of yourself when you spin out the last word in reading out the line in a warm summer afternoon. In the hymn by himself, he did better; he was, however, sometimes like to lose the tune, but the people gave him great encouragement when he got back again. Upon the whole, I had no notion that there was any such Christianity in practice among the Londoners, and I am happy to tell you, that the house was very well filled, and the congregation wonderful attentive. No doubt that excellent man, Mr. W-, has a hand in these public strainings after grace, but he was not there that night; for I have seen him; and surely at the sight I could not but say to myself, that it's beyond the compass of the understanding of man to see what great things Providence worketh with small means, for Mr. W-is a small creature. When I beheld his diminutive stature, and thought of what he had achieved for the poor negroes and others in the house of bondage, I said to myself, that here the hand of Wisdom is visible, for the load of perishable mortality is laid lightly on his spirit, by which it is enabled to clap its wings and crow so crouslly on the dunghill top of this world; yea even in the House of Parliament.

I was taken last Thursday morning to breakfast with him his house at Kensington, by an East India man, who is likewise surely a great saint. It was a heart-healing meeting of many of the godly, which he holds weekly in the season; and we had such a warsle of the spirit among us that the like cannot be told. I was called upon to pray, and a worthy gentleman said, when I was done, that he never had met with more apostolic simplicity—indeed, I could see with the tail of my eye, while I was praying, that the chief saint himself was listening with a curious pleasant satisfaction.

As for our doings here anent the legacy, things are going forward in the regular manner; but the expense is terrible, and I have been obliged to take up money on account; but, as it was freely given by the agents, I am in hopes all will end well; for, considering that we are but strangers to them, they would not have assisted us in this matter had they not been sure of the means of payment in their own hands.

The people of London are surprising kind to us; we need not, if we thought proper ourselves, eat a dinner in our own lodgings; but it would ill become me, at my time of life, and with the character for sobriety that I have maintained, to show an example in my latter days of riotous living; therefore, Mrs. Pringle, and her daughter, and me, have made a point of going nowhere three times in the week; but as for Andrew Pringle, my son, he has forgathered with some acquaintance, and I fancy we will be obliged to let him take the length of his tether for a while. But not altogether without a curb neither, for the agent's son, young Mr. Argent, had almost persuaded him to become a member of Parliament, which he said he could get him made, for more than a thousand pounds less than the common price—

the state of the new king's health having lowered the commodity of seats. But this I would by no means hear of; he is not yet come to years of discretion enough to sit in council; and, moreover, he has not been tried; and no man, till he has out of doors shown something of what he is, should be entitled to power and honour within. Mrs.

Pringle, however, thought he might do as well as young Dunure; but Andrew Pringle, my son, has not the solidity of head that Mr. K-dy has, and is over free and outspoken, and cannot take such pains to make his little go a great way, like that well-behaved young gentleman. But you will be grieved to hear that Mr. K-dy is in opposition to the government; and truly I am at a loss to understand how

a man of Whig principles can be an adversary to the House of Hanover. But I never meddled much in politick affairs, except at this time, when I prohibited Andrew Pringle, my son, from offering to be a member of Parliament, notwithstanding the great bargain that he would have had of the place.

And since we are on public concerns, I should tell you, that I was minded to send you a newspaper at the second-hand, every day when we were done with it. But when we came to inquire, we found that we could get the newspaper for a shilling a week every morning but Sunday, to our breakfast, which was so much cheaper than buying a whole paper, that Mrs. Pringle thought it would be a great extravagance; and, indeed, when I came to think of the loss of time a newspaper every day would occasion to my people, I considered it would be very wrong of me to send you any at all. For I do think that honest folks in a far-off country parish should not make or meddle with the things that pertain to government,—the more especially, as it is well known, that there is as much falsehood as truth in newspapers, and they have not the means of testing their statements. Not, however, that I am an advocate for passive obedience; God forbid. On the contrary, if ever the time should come, in my day, of a saint-slaying tyrant attempting to bind the burden of prelatie abominations on our backs, such a blast of the gospel trumpet would be heard in Garnock, as it does not become me to say, but I leave it to you and others, who have experienced my capacity as a soldier of the word so long, to think what it would then be. Meanwhile, I remain, my dear sir, your friend and pastor, Z. PRINGLE.

When Mr. Snodgrass had perused this epistle, he paused some time, seemingly in doubt, and then he said to Mr. Micklewham, that, considering the view which the Doctor had taken of the matter, and that he had not gone to the playhouse for the motives which usually take bad people to such places, he thought there could be no possible harm in reading the letter to the elders, and that Mr.

Craig, so far from being displeased, would doubtless be exceedingly rejoiced to learn that the playhouses of London were occasionally so well employed as on the night when the Doctor was there.

Mr. Micklewham then inquired if Mr. Snodgrass had heard from Mr.

Andrew, and was answered in the affirmative; but the letter was not read. Why it was withheld our readers must guess for themselves; but we have been fortunate enough to obtain the following copy.

LETTER XVII

Andrew Pringle, Esq., to the Rev. Mr. Charles Snodgrass—LONDON.

My Dear Friend—As the season advances, London gradually unfolds, like Nature, all the variety of her powers and pleasures. By the Argents we have been introduced effectually into society, and have now only to choose our acquaintance among those whom we like best.

I should employ another word than choose, for I am convinced that there is no choice in the matter. In his friendships and affections, man is subject to some inscrutable moral law, similar in its effects to what the chemists call affinity. While under the blind influence of this sympathy, we, forsooth, suppose ourselves free agents! But a truce with philosophy.

The amount of the legacy is now ascertained. The stock, however, in which a great part of the money is vested being shut, the transfer to my father cannot be made for some time; and till this is done, my mother cannot be persuaded that we have yet got anything to trust to—an unfortunate notion which renders her very unhappy. The old gentleman himself takes no interest now in the business. He has got his mind at ease by the payment of all the legacies; and having fallen in with some of the members of that political junto, the Saints, who are worldly enough to link, as often as they can, into their association, the powerful by wealth or talent, his whole time is occupied in assisting to promote their humbug; and he has absolutely taken it into his head, that the attention he receives from them for his subscriptions is on account of his eloquence as a preacher, and that hitherto he has been altogether in an error with respect to his own abilities. The effect of this is abundantly amusing; but the source of it is very evident. Like most people who pass a sequestered life, he had formed an exaggerated opinion of public characters; and on seeing them in reality so little superior to the generality of mankind, he imagines that he was all the time nearer to their level than he had ventured to suppose; and the discovery has placed him on the happiest terms with himself. It is impossible that I can respect his manifold excellent qualities and goodness of heart more than I do; but there is an innocency in this simplicity, which, while it often compels me to smile, makes me feel towards him a degree of tenderness, somewhat too familiar for that filial reverence that is due from a son.

Perhaps, however, you will think me scarcely less under the influence of a

similar delusion when I tell you, that I have been somehow or other drawn also into an association, not indeed so public or potent as that of the Saints, but equally persevering in the objects for which it has been formed. The drift of the Saints, as far as I can comprehend the matter, is to procure the advancement to political power of men distinguished for the purity of their lives, and the integrity of their conduct; and in that way, I presume, they expect to effect the accomplishment of that blessed epoch, the Millennium, when the Saints are to rule the whole earth.

I do not mean to say that this is their decided and determined object; I only infer, that it is the necessary tendency of their proceedings; and I say it with all possible respect and sincerity, that, as a public party, the Saints are not only perhaps the most powerful, but the party which, at present, best deserves power.

The association, however, with which I have happened to become connected, is of a very different description. Their object is, to pass through life with as much pleasure as they can obtain, without doing anything unbecoming the rank of gentlemen, and the character of men of honour. We do not assemble such numerous meetings as the Saints, the Whigs, or the Radicals, nor are our speeches delivered with so much vehemence. We even, I think, tacitly exclude oratory.

In a word, our meetings seldom exceed the perfect number of the muses; and our object on these occasions is not so much to deliberate on plans of prospective benefits to mankind, as to enjoy the present time for ourselves, under the temperate inspiration of a well-cooked dinner, flavoured with elegant wine, and just so much of mind as suits the fleeting topics of the day. T-, whom I formerly mentioned, introduced me to this delightful society. The members consist of about fifty gentlemen, who dine occasionally at each other's houses; the company being chiefly selected from the brotherhood, if that term can be applied to a circle of acquaintance, who, without any formal institution of rules, have gradually acquired a consistency that approximates to organisation.

But the universe of this vast city contains a plurality of systems; and the one into which I have been attracted may be described as that of the idle intellects. In general society, the members of our party are looked up to as men of taste and refinement, and are received with a degree of deference that bears some resemblance to the respect paid to the hereditary endowment of rank. They consist either of young men who have acquired distinction at college, or

gentlemen of fortune who have a relish for intellectual pleasures, free from the acerbities of politics, or the dull formalities which so many of the pious think essential to their religious pretensions.

The wealthy furnish the entertainments, which are always in a superior style, and the ingredient of birth is not requisite in the qualifications of a member, although some jealousy is entertained of professional men, and not a little of merchants. T-, to whom I am also indebted for this view of that circle of which he is the brightest ornament, gives a felicitous explanation of the reason.

He says, professional men, who are worth anything at all, are always ambitious, and endeavour to make their acquaintance subservient to their own advancement; while merchants are liable to such casualties, that their friends are constantly exposed to the risk of being obliged to sink them below their wonted equality, by granting them favours in times of difficulty, or, what is worse, by refusing to grant them.

I am much indebted to you for the introduction to your friend G-.

He is one of us; or rather, he moves in an eccentric sphere of his own, which crosses, I believe, almost all the orbits of all the classed and classifiable systems of London. I found him exactly what you described; and we were on the frankest footing of old friends in the course of the first quarter of an hour. He did me the honour to fancy that I belonged, as a matter of course, to some one of the literary fraternities of Edinburgh, and that I would be curious to see the associations of the learned here. What he said respecting them was highly characteristic of the man. "They are,"

said he, "the dullest things possible. On my return from abroad, I visited them all, expecting to find something of that easy disengaged mind which constitutes the charm of those of France and Italy. But in London, among those who have a character to keep up, there is such a vigilant circumspection, that I should as soon expect to find nature in the ballets of the Opera-house, as genius at the established haunts of authors, artists, and men of science.

Bankes gives, I suppose officially, a public breakfast weekly, and opens his house for conversations on the Sundays. I found at his breakfasts, tea and coffee, with hot rolls, and men of celebrity afraid to speak. At the conversations, there was something even worse. A few plausible talking fellows created a buzz in the

room, and the merits of some paltry nick-nack of mechanism or science was discussed. The party consisted undoubtedly of the most eminent men of their respective lines in the world; but they were each and all so apprehensive of having their ideas purloined, that they took the most guarded care never to speak of anything that they deemed of the slightest consequence, or to hazard an opinion that might be called in question. The man who either wishes to augment his knowledge, or to pass his time agreeably, will never expose himself to a repetition of the fastidious exhibitions of engineers and artists who have their talents at market. But such things are among the curiosities of London; and if you have any inclination to undergo the initiating mortification of being treated as a young man who may be likely to interfere with their professional interests, I can easily get you introduced."

I do not know whether to ascribe these strictures of your friend to humour or misanthropy; but they were said without bitterness; indeed so much as matters of course, that, at the moment, I could not but feel persuaded they were just. I spoke of them to T-, who says, that undoubtedly G-'s account of the exhibitions is true in substance, but that it is his own sharp-sightedness which causes him to see them so offensively; for that ninety-nine out of the hundred in the world would deem an evening spent at the conversations of Sir Joseph Banks a very high intellectual treat.

G-has invited me to dinner, and I expect some amusement; for T-, who is acquainted with him, says, that it is his fault to employ his mind too much on all occasions; and that, in all probability, there will be something, either in the fare or the company, that I shall remember as long as I live. However, you shall hear all about it in my next.—Yours,

ANDREW PRINGLE.

On the same Sunday on which Mr. Micklewham consulted Mr. Snodgrass as to the propriety of reading the Doctor's letter to the elders, the following epistle reached the post-office of Irvine, and was delivered by Saunders Dickie himself, at the door of Mrs. Glibbans to her servan lassie, who, as her mistress had gone to the Relief Church, told him, that he would have to come for the postage the morn's morning. "Oh," said Saunders, "there's naething to pay but my ain trouble, for it's frankit; but aiblins the mistress will gie me a bit drappie, and so I'll come betimes i' the morning."

LETTER XVIII

Mrs. Pringle to Mrs. Glibbans—LONDON.

My Dear Mrs. Glibbans—The breking up of the old Parlament has been the cause why I did not right you before, it having taken it out of my poor to get a frank for my letter till yesterday; and I do ashure you, that I was most extraordinar uneasy at the great delay, wishing much to let you know the decayt state of the Gospel in thir perts, which is the pleasure of your life to study by day, and meditate on in the watches of the night.

There is no want of going to church, and, if that was a sign of grease and peese in the kingdom of Christ, the toun of London might hold a high head in the tabernacles of the faithful and true witnesses. But saving Dr. Nichol of Swallo-Street, and Dr. Manuel of London-Wall, there is nothing sound in the way of preaching here; and when I tell you that Mr. John Gant, your friend, and some other flea-lugged fallows, have set up a Heelon congregation, and got a young man to preach Erse to the English, ye maun think in what a state sinful souls are left in London. But what I have been the most consarned about is the state of the dead. I am no meaning those who are dead in trespasses and sins, but the true dead. Ye will hardly think, that they are buried in a popish-like manner, with prayers, and white gowns, and ministers, and spadefuls of yerd cast upon them, and laid in vaults, like kists of orangers in a grocery seller—and I am told that, after a time, they are taken out when the vault is shurfeeted, and their bones brunt, if they are no made into lamp-black by a secret wark—which is a clean proof to me that a right doctrine cannot be established in this land—there being so little respec shone to the dead.

The worst point, howsomever, of all is, what is done with the prayers—and I have heard you say, that although there was nothing more to objec to the wonderful Doctor Chammers of Glasgou, that his reading of his sermons was testimony against him in the great controversy of sound doctrine; but what will you say to reading of prayers, and no only reading of prayers, but printed prayers, as if the contreet heart of the sinner had no more to say to the Lord in the hour of fasting and humiliation, than what a bishop can indite, and a bookseller make profit o'. "Verily," as I may say, in a word of scripiter, I doobt if the glad tidings of salvation have yet been preeched in this land of London; but the ministers have good stipends, and where the ground is well manured, it may in time bring forth fruit meet for repentance.

There is another thing that behoves me to mention, and that is, that an elder is not to be seen in the churches of London, which is a sore signal that the piple are left to themselves; and in what state the morality can be, you may guess with an eye of pity. But on the Sabbath nights, there is such a going and coming, that it's more like a cried fair than the Lord's night—all sorts of poor people, instead of meditating on their bygane toil and misery of the week, making the Sunday their own day, as if they had not a greater Master to serve on that day, than the earthly man whom they served in the week-days. It is, howsomever, past the poor of nature to tell you of the sinfulness of London; and you may we think what is to be the end of all things, when I ashure you, that there is a newspaper sold every Sabbath morning, and read by those that never look at their Bibles. Our landlady asked us if we would take one; but I thought the Doctor would have fired the house, and you know it is not a small thing that kindles his passion. In short, London is not a place to come to hear the tidings of salvation preeched,—no that I mean to deny that there is not herine more than five righteous persons in it, and I trust the cornal's hagent is one; for if he is not, we are undone, having been obligated to take on already more than a hundred pounds of debt, to the account of our living, and the legacy yet in the dead thraws. But as I mean this for a spiritual letter, I will say no more about the root of all evil, as it is called in the words of truth and holiness; so referring you to what I have told Miss Mally Glencairn about the legacy and other things nearest my heart, I remain, my dear Mrs. Glibbans, your fellou Christian and sinner, JANET PRINGLE.

Mrs. Glibbans received this letter between the preachings, and it was observed by all her acquaintance during the afternoon service, that she was a laden woman. Instead of standing up at the prayers, as her wont was, she kept her seat, sitting with downcast eyes, and ever and anon her left hand, which was laid over her book on the reading-board of the pew, was raised and allowed to drop with a particular moral emphasis, bespeaking the mournful cogitations of her spirit. On leaving the church, somebody whispered to the minister, that surely Mrs. Glibbans had heard some sore news; upon which that meek, mild, and modest good soul hastened towards her, and inquired, with more than his usual kindness, How she was? Her answer was brief and mysterious; and she shook her head in such a manner that showed him all was not right. "Have you heard lately of your friends the Pringles?" said he, in his sedate manner—"when do they think of leaving London?"

"I wish they may ever get out o't," was the agitated reply of the afflicted lady.

“I am very sorry to hear you say so,” responded the minister. “I thought all was in a fair way to an issue of the settlement. I’m very sorry to hear this.”

“Oh, sir,” said the mourner, “don’t think that I am grieved for them and their legacy—filthy lucre—no, sir; but I have had a letter that has made my hair stand on end. Be none surprised if you hear of the earth opening, and London swallowed up, and a voice crying in the wilderness, ‘Woe, woe.’”

The gentle priest was much surprised by this information; it was evident that Mrs. Glibbans had received a terrible account of the wickedness of London; and that the weight upon her pious spirit was owing to that cause. He, therefore, accompanied her home, and administered all the consolation he was able to give; assuring her, that it was in the power of Omnipotence to convert the stony heart into one of flesh and tenderness, and to raise the British metropolis out of the miry clay, and place it on a hill, as a city that could not be hid; which Mrs. Glibbans was so thankful to hear, that, as soon as he had left her, she took her tea in a satisfactory frame of mind, and went the same night to Miss Mally Glencairn to hear what Mrs. Pringle had said to her. No visit ever happened more opportunely; for just as Mrs. Glibbans knocked at the door, Miss Isabella Tod made her appearance. She had also received a letter from Rachel, in which it will be seen that reference was made likewise to Mrs. Pringle’s epistle to Miss Mally.

LETTER XIX

Miss Rachel Pringle to Miss Isabella Tod—LONDON.

My Dear Bell—How delusive are the flatteries of fortune! The wealth that has been showered upon us, beyond all our hopes, has brought no pleasure to my heart, and I pour my unavailing sighs for your absence, when I would communicate the cause of my unhappiness.

Captain Sabre has been most assiduous in his attentions, and I must confess to your sympathising bosom, that I do begin to find that he has an interest in mine. But my mother will not listen to his proposals, nor allow me to give him any encouragement, till the fatal legacy is settled. What can be her motive for this, I am unable to divine; for the captain’s fortune is far beyond what I could ever have expected without the legacy, and equal to all I could hope for with it. If, therefore, there is any doubt of the legacy being paid, she should allow me to accept him; and if there is none, what can I do better? In the meantime, we are

going about seeing the sights; but the general mourning is a great drawback on the splendour of gaiety. It ends, however, next Sunday; and then the ladies, like the spring flowers, will be all in full blossom. I was with the Argents at the opera on Saturday last, and it far surpassed my ideas of grandeur. But the singing was not good—I never could make out the end or the beginning of a song, and it was drowned with the violins; the scenery, however, was lovely; but I must not say a word about the dancers, only that the females behaved in a manner so shocking, that I could scarcely believe it was possible for the delicacy of our sex to do. They are, however, all foreigners, who are, you know, naturally of a licentious character, especially the French women.

We have taken an elegant house in Baker Street, where we go on Monday next, and our own new carriage is to be home in the course of the week. All this, which has been done by the advice of Mrs.

Argent, gives my mother great uneasiness, in case anything should yet happen to the legacy. My brother, however, who knows the law better than her, only laughs at her fears, and my father has found such a wonderful deal to do in religion here, that he is quite delighted, and is busy from morning to night in writing letters, and giving charitable donations. I am soon to be no less busy, but in another manner. Mrs. Argent has advised us to get in accomplished masters for me, so that, as soon as we are removed into our own local habitation, I am to begin with drawing and music, and the foreign languages. I am not, however, to learn much of the piano; Mrs. A. thinks it would take up more time than I can now afford; but I am to be cultivated in my singing, and she is to try if the master that taught Miss Stephens has an hour to spare—and to use her influence to persuade him to give it to me, although he only receives pupils for perfectioning, except they belong to families of distinction.

My brother had a hankering to be made a member of Parliament, and got Mr. Charles Argent to speak to my father about it, but neither he nor my mother would hear of such a thing, which I was very sorry for, as it would have been so convenient to me for getting franks; and I wonder my mother did not think of that, as she grudges nothing so much as the price of postage. But nothing do I grudge so little, especially when it is a letter from you. Why do you not write me oftener, and tell me what is saying about us, particularly by that spiteful toad, Becky Glibbans, who never could hear of any good happening to her acquaintance, without being as angry as if it was obtained at her own expense?

I do not like Miss Argent so well on acquaintance as I did at first; not that she is not a very fine lassie, but she gives herself such airs at the harp and piano—because she can play every sort of music at the first sight, and sing, by looking at the notes, any song, although she never heard it, which may be very well in a play-actor, or a governess, that has to win her bread by music; but I think the education of a modest young lady might have been better conducted.

Through the civility of the Argents, we have been introduced to a great number of families, and been much invited; but all the parties are so ceremonious, that I am never at my ease, which my brother says is owing to my rustic education, which I cannot understand; for, although the people are finer dressed, and the dinners and rooms grander than what I have seen, either at Irvine or Kilmarnock, the company are no wiser; and I have not met with a single literary character among them. And what are ladies and gentlemen without mind, but a well-dressed mob! It is to mind alone that I am at all disposed to pay the homage of diffidence.

The acquaintance of the Argents are all of the first circle, and we have got an invitation to a route from the Countess of J-y, in consequence of meeting her with them. She is a charming woman, and I anticipate great pleasure. Miss Argent says, however, she is ignorant and presuming; but how is it possible that she can be so, as she was an earl's daughter, and bred up for distinction? Miss Argent may be presuming, but a countess is necessarily above that, at least it would only become a duchess or marchioness to say so.

This, however, is not the only occasion in which I have seen the detractive disposition of that young lady, who, with all her simplicity of manners and great accomplishments, is, you will perceive, just like ourselves, rustic as she doubtless thinks our breeding has been.

I have observed that nobody in London inquires about who another is; and that in company everyone is treated on an equality, unless when there is some remarkable personal peculiarity, so that one really knows nothing of those whom one meets. But my paper is full, and I must not take another sheet, as my mother has a letter to send in the same frank to Miss Mally Glencairn. Believe me, ever affectionately yours, RACHEL PRINGLE.

The three ladies knew not very well what to make of this letter.

They thought there was a change in Rachel's ideas, and that it was not for the better; and Miss Isabella expressed, with a sentiment of sincere sorrow, that the acquisition of fortune seemed to have brought out some unamiable traits in her character, which, perhaps, had she not been exposed to the companions and temptations of the great world, would have slumbered, unfelt by herself, and unknown to her friends.

Mrs. Glibbans declared, that it was a waking of original sin, which the iniquity of London was bringing forth, as the heat of summer causes the rosin and sap to issue from the bark of the tree. In the meantime, Miss Mally had opened her letter, of which we subjoin a copy.

LETTER XX

Mrs Pringle to Miss Mally Glencairn—LONDON.

Dear Miss Mally—I greatly stand in need of your advise and counsel at this time. The Doctor's affair comes on at a fearful slow rate, and the money goes like snow off a dyke. It is not to be told what has been paid for legacy-duty, and no legacy yet in hand; and we have been obligated to lift a whole hundred pounds out of the residue, and what that is to be the Lord only knows. But Miss Jenny Macbride, she has got her thousand pound, all in one bank bill, sent to her; Thomas Bowie, the doctor in Ayr, he has got his five hundred pounds; and auld Nanse Sorrel, that was nurse to the cornal, she has got the first year of her twenty pounds a year; but we have gotten nothing, and I jealouse, that if things go on at this rate, there will be nothing to get; and what will become of us then, after all the trubble and outlay that we have been pot too by this coming to London?

Howsomever, this is the black side of the story; for Mr. Charles Argent, in a jocose way, proposed to get Andrew made a Parliament member for three thousand pounds, which he said was cheap; and surely he would not have thought of such a thing, had he not known that Andrew would have the money to pay for't; and, over and above this, Mrs. Argent has been recommending Captain Sabre to me for Rachel, and she says he is a stated gentleman, with two thousand pounds rental, and her nephew; and surely she would not think Rachel a match for him, unless she had an inkling from her gudeman of what Rachel's to get. But I have told her that we would think of nothing of the sort till the counts war settled, which she may tell to her gudeman, and if he approves the match, it will make him hasten on the settlement, for really I am growing tired of this London,

whar I am just like a fish out of the water. The Englishers are sae obstinate in their own way, that I can get them to do nothing like Christians; and, what is most provoking of all, their ways are very good when you know them; but they have no instink to teach a body how to learn them. Just this very morning, I told the lass to get a jiggot of mutton for the morn's dinner, and she said there was not such a thing to be had in London, and threepit it till I couldna stand her; and, had it not been that Mr. Argent's French servan' man happened to come with a cart, inviting us to a ball, and who understood what a jiggot was, I might have reasoned till the day of doom without redress. As for the Doctor, I declare he's like an enchantit person, for he has falling in with a party of the elect here, as he says, and they have a kilfud yoking every Thursday at the house of Mr. W-, where the Doctor has been, and was asked to pray, and did it with great effec, which has made him so up in the buckle, that he does nothing but go to Bible soceeyetis, and mishonary meetings, and cherity sarmons, which cost a poor of money.

But what consarns me more than all is, that the temptations of this vanity fair have turnt the head of Andrew, and he has bought two horses, with an English man-servan', which you know is an eating moth. But how he payt for them, and whar he is to keep them, is past the compass of my understanding. In short, if the legacy does not cast up soon, I see nothing left for us but to leave the world as a legacy to you all, for my heart will be broken—and I often wish that the cornel hadna made us his residees, but only given us a clean scorn, like Miss Jenny Macbride, although it had been no more; for, my dear Miss Mally, it does not doo for a woman of my time of life to be taken out of her element, and, instead of looking after her family with a thrifty eye, to be sitting dressed all day seeing the money fleeing like sclate stanes. But what I have to tell is worse than all this; we have been persuaded to take a furnisht house, where we go on Monday; and we are to pay for it, for three months, no less than a hundred and fifty pounds, which is more than the half of the Doctor's whole stipend is, when the meal is twenty-pence the peck; and we are to have three servan' lassies, besides Andrew's man, and the coachman that we have hired altogether for ourselves, having been persuaded to trist a new carriage of our own by the Argents, which I trust the Argents will find money to pay for; and masters are to come in to teach Rachel the fasionable accomplishments, Mrs. Argent thinking she was rather old now to be sent to a boarding-school. But what I am to get to do for so many vorashous servants, is dreadful to think, there being no such thing as a wheel within the four walls of London; and, if there was, the Englishers no nothing about spinning. In short, Miss Mally, I am driven dimentit, and I wish I could get

the Doctor to come home with me to our manse, and leave all to Andrew and Rachel, with kuraators; but, as I said, he's as mickle bye himself as onybody, and says that his candle has been hidden under a bushel at Garnock more than thirty years, which looks as if the poor man was fey; howsomever, he's happy in his delooshon, for if he was afflictit with that forethought and wisdom that I have, I know not what would be the upshot of all this calamity. But we maun hope for the best; and, happen what will, I am, dear Miss Mally, your sincere friend,
JANET

PRINGLE.

Miss Mally sighed as she concluded, and said, "Riches do not always bring happiness, and poor Mrs. Pringle would have been far better looking after her cows and her butter, and keeping her lassies at their wark, than with all this galravitching and grandeur." "Ah!"

added Mrs. Glibbans, "she's now a testifyer to the truth—she's now a testifyer; happy it will be for her if she's enabled to make a sanctified use of the dispensation."

CHAPTER VII—DISCOVERIES AND REBELLIONS

One evening as Mr. Snodgrass was taking a solitary walk towards Irvine, for the purpose of calling on Miss Mally Glencairn, to inquire what had been her latest accounts from their mutual friends in London, and to read to her a letter, which he had received two days before, from Mr. Andrew Pringle, he met, near Eglintoun Gates, that pious woman, Mrs. Glibbans, coming to Garnock, brimful of some most extraordinary intelligence. The air was raw and humid, and the ways were deep and foul; she was, however, protected without, and tempered within, against the dangers of both. Over her venerable satin mantle, lined with cat-skin, she wore a scarlet duffle Bath cloak, with which she was wont to attend the tent sermons of the Kilwinning and Dreghorn preachings in cold and inclement weather.

Her black silk petticoat was pinned up, that it might not receive injury from the nimble paddling of her short steps in the mire; and she carried her best shoes and stockings in a handkerchief to be changed at the manse, and had fortified her feet for the road in coarse worsted hose, and thick plain-soled leather shoes.

Mr. Snodgrass proposed to turn back with her, but she would not permit him. “No, sir,” said she, “what I am about you cannot meddle in. You are here but a stranger—come to-day, and gane to-morrow;—

and it does not pertain to you to sift into the doings that have been done before your time. Oh dear; but this is a sad thing—

nothing like it since the silencing of M’Auly of Greenock. What will the worthy Doctor say when he hears tell o’t? Had it fa’n out with that neighering body, James Daff, I wouldna hae car’t a snuff of tobacco, but wi’ Mr. Craig, a man so gifted wi’ the power of the Spirit, as I hae often had a delightful experience! Ay, ay, Mr.

Snodgrass, take heed lest ye fall; we maun all lay it to heart; but I hope the trooper is still within the jurisdiction of church censures. She shouldna be spairt. Nae doubt, the fault lies with her, and it is that I am going to search; yea, as with a lighted candle.”

Mr. Snodgrass expressed his inability to understand to what Mrs.

Glibbans alluded, and a very long and interesting disclosure took place, the substance of which may be gathered from the following letter; the immediate and instigating cause of the lady's journey to Garnock being the alarming intelligence which she had that day received of Mr. Craig's servant-damsel Betty having, by the style and title of Mrs. Craig, sent for Nanse Swaddle, the midwife, to come to her in her own case, which seemed to Mrs. Glibbans nothing short of a miracle, Betty having, the very Sunday before, helped the kettle when she drank tea with Mr. Craig, and sat at the room door, on a buffet-stool brought from the kitchen, while he performed family worship, to the great solace and edification of his visitor.

LETTER XXI

The Rev. Z. Pringle, D.D., to Mr. Mickleham, Schoolmaster and Session-Clerk, Garnock

Dear Sir—I have received your letter of the 24th, which has given me a great surprise to hear, that Mr. Craig was married as far back as Christmas, to his own servant lass Betty, and me to know nothing of it, nor you neither, until it was time to be speaking to the midwife. To be sure, Mr. Craig, who is an elder, and a very rigid man, in his animadversions on the immoralities that come before the session, must have had his own good reasons for keeping his marriage so long a secret. Tell him, however, from me, that I wish both him and Mrs. Craig much joy and felicity; but he should be milder for the future on the thoughtlessness of youth and headstrong passions.

Not that I insinuate that there has been any occasion in the conduct of such a godly man to cause a suspicion; but it's wonderful how he was married in December, and I cannot say that I am altogether so proud to hear it as I am at all times of the well-doing of my people. Really the way that Mr. Daff has comported himself in this matter is greatly to his credit; and I doubt if the thing had happened with him, that Mr. Craig would have sifted with a sharp eye how he came to be married in December, and without bridal and banquet. For my part, I could not have thought it of Mr. Craig, but it's done now, and the less we say about it the better; so I think with Mr. Daff, that it must be looked over; but when I return, I will speak both to the husband and wife, and not without letting them have an inkling of what I think about their being married in December,

which was a great shame, even if there was no sin in it.

But I will say no more; for truly, Mr. Micklewham, the longer we live in this world, and the farther we go, and the better we know ourselves, the less reason have we to think slightly of our neighbours; but the more to convince our hearts and understandings, that we are all prone to evil, and desperately wicked. For where does hypocrisy not abound? and I have had my own experience here, that what a man is to the world, and to his own heart, is a very different thing.

In my last letter, I gave you a pleasing notification of the growth, as I thought, of spirituality in this Babylon of deceitfulness, thinking that you and my people would be gladdened with the tidings of the repute and estimation in which your minister was held, and I have dealt largely in the way of public charity. But I doubt that I have been governed by a spirit of ostentation, and not with that lowly-mindedness, without which all almsgiving is but a serving of the altars of Belzebub; for the chastening hand has been laid upon me, but with the kindness and pity which a tender father hath for his dear children.

I was requested by those who come so cordially to me with their subscription papers, for schools and suffering worth, to preach a sermon to get a collection. I have no occasion to tell you, that when I exert myself, what effect I can produce; and I never made so great an exertion before, which in itself was a proof that it was with the two bladders, pomp and vanity, that I had committed myself to swim on the uncertain waters of London; for surely my best exertions were due to my people. But when the Sabbath came upon which I was to hold forth, how were my hopes withered, and my expectations frustrated. Oh, Mr. Micklewham, what an inattentive congregation was yonder! many slumbered and slept, and I sowed the words of truth and holiness in vain upon their barren and stoney hearts. There is no true grace among some that I shall not name, for I saw them whispering and smiling like the scorers, and altogether heedless unto the precious things of my discourse, which could not have been the case had they been sincere in their professions, for I never preached more to my own satisfaction on any occasion whatsoever—and, when I return to my own parish, you shall hear what I said, as I will preach the same sermon over again, for I am not going now to print it, as I did once think of doing, and to have dedicated it to Mr. W-.

We are going about in an easy way, seeing what is to be seen in the shape of curiosities; but the whole town is in a state of ferment with the election of

members to Parliament. I have been to see't, both in the Guildhall and at Covent Garden, and it's a frightful thing to see how the Radicals roar like bulls of Bashan, and put down the speakers in behalf of the government. I hope no harm will come of yon, but I must say, that I prefer our own quiet canny Scotch way at Irvine. Well do I remember, for it happened in the year I was licensed, that the town council, the Lord Eglinton that was shot being then provost, took in the late Thomas Bowet to be a counsellor; and Thomas, not being versed in election matters, yet minding to please his lordship (for, like the rest of the council, he had always a proper veneration for those in power), he, as I was saying, consulted Joseph Boyd the weaver, who was then Dean of Guild, as to the way of voting; whereupon Joseph, who was a discreet man, said to him, "Ye'll just say as I say, and I'll say what Bailie Shaw says, for he will do what my lord bids him"; which was as peaceful a way of sending up a member to Parliament as could well be devised.

But you know that politics are far from my hand—they belong to the temporalities of the community; and the ministers of peace and goodwill to man should neither make nor meddle with them. I wish, however, that these tumultuous elections were well over, for they have had an effect on the per cents, where our bit legacy is funded; and it would terrify you to hear what we have thereby already lost.

We have not, however, lost so much but that I can spare a little to the poor among my people; so you will, in the dry weather, after the seed-time, hire two-three thackers to mend the thack on the roofs of such of the cottars' houses as stand in need of mending, and banker M-y will pay the expense; and I beg you to go to him on receipt hereof, for he has a line for yourself, which you will be sure to accept as a testimony from me for the great trouble that my absence from the parish has given to you among my people, and I am, dear sir, your friend and pastor, Z. PRINGLE.

As Mrs. Glibbans would not permit Mr. Snodgrass to return with her to the manse, he pursued his journey alone to the Kirkgate of Irvine, where he found Miss Mally Glencairn on the eve of sitting down to her solitary tea. On seeing her visitor enter, after the first compliments on the state of health and weather were over, she expressed her hopes that he had not drank tea; and, on receiving a negative, which she did not quite expect, as she thought he had been perhaps invited by some of her neighbours, she put in an additional spoonful on his account; and brought from her corner cupboard with the glass door, an ancient

French pickle-bottle, in which she had preserved, since the great tea-drinking formerly mentioned, the remainder of the two ounces of carvey, the best, Mrs. Nanse bought for that memorable occasion. A short conversation then took place relative to the Pringles; and, while the tea was masking, for Miss Mally said it took a long time to draw, she read to him the following letter:-

LETTER XXII

Mrs. Pringle to Miss Mally Glencairn

My Dear Miss Mally—Trully, it may be said, that the croun of England is upon the downfal, and surely we are all seething in the pot of revolution, for the scum is mounting uppermost. Last week, no farther gone than on Mononday, we came to our new house heer in Baker Street, but it's nather to be bakit nor brewt what I hav sin syne suffert. You no my way, and that I like a been house, but no wastrie, and so I needna tell yoo, that we hav had good diners; to be sure, there was not a meerakle left to fill five baskets every day, but an abundance, with a proper kitchen of breed, to fill the bellies of four dumasticks. Howsomever, lo and behold, what was clecking downstairs. On Saturday morning, as we were sitting at our breakfast, the Doctor reading the newspapers, who shoud corn intil the room but Andrew's grum, follo't by the rest, to give us warning that they were all going to quat our sairvice, becas they were starvit. I thocht that I would hav fentit cauld deed, but the Doctor, who is a consiederat man, inquairt what made them starve, and then there was such an opprobrious cry about cold meet and bare bones, and no beer. It was an evendoun resurection—a rebellion waur than the forty-five. In short, Miss Mally, to make a leettle of a lang tail, they would have a hot joint day and day about, and a tree of yill to stand on the gauntress for their draw and drink, with a cock and a pail; and we were obligated to evacuate to their terms, and to let them go to their wark with flying colors; so you see how dangerous it is to live among this piple, and their noshans of liberty.

You will see by the newspapers that ther's a lection going on for parliament. It maks my corruption to rise to hear of such doings, and if I was a government as I'm but a woman, I woud put them doon with the strong hand, just to be revenged on the proud stomaks of these het and fou English.

We have gotten our money in the pesents put into our name; but I have had no peese since, for they have fallen in price three eight parts, which is very near a half, and if they go at this rate, where will all our legacy soon be? I have no goo

of the presents; so we are on the look-out for a landed estate, being a shure thing.

Captain Saber is still sneking after Rachel, and if she were awee perfited in her accomplugments, it's no saying what might happen, for he's a fine lad, but she's o'er young to be the heed of a family. Howsomever, the Lord's will maun be done, and if there is to be a match, she'll no have to fight for gentility with a straitent circumstance.

As for Andrew, I wish he was weel settlt, and we have our hopes that he's beginning to draw up with Miss Argent, who will have, no doobt, a great fortune, and is a treasure of a creeture in herself, being just as simple as a lamb; but, to be sure, she has had every advantage of edication, being brought up in a most fashonible boarding-school.

I hope you have got the box I sent by the smak, and that you like the patron of the goon. So no more at present, but remains, dear Miss Mally, your sinsaire friend,

JANET PRINGLE.

"The box," said Miss Mally, "that Mrs. Pringle speaks about came last night. It contains a very handsome present to me and to Miss Bell Tod. The gift to me is from Mrs. P. herself, and Miss Bell's from Rachel; but that ettercap, Becky Glibbans, is flying through the town like a spunky, mislikening the one and misca'ing the other: everybody, however, kens that it's only spite that gars her speak.

It's a great pity that she cou'dna be brought to a sense of religion like her mother, who, in her younger days, they say, wasna to seek at a clashing."

Mr. Snodgrass expressed his surprise at this account of the faults of that exemplary lady's youth; but he thought of her holy anxiety to sift into the circumstances of Betty, the elder's servant, becoming in one day Mrs. Craig, and the same afternoon sending for the midwife, and he prudently made no other comment; for the characters of all preachers were in her hands, and he had the good fortune to stand high in her favour, as a young man of great promise. In order, therefore, to avoid any discussion respecting moral merits, he read the following letter from Andrew Pringle:-

LETTER XXIII

Andrew Pringle, Esq., to the Reverend Charles Snodgrass My Dear Friend—
London undoubtedly affords the best and the worst specimens of the British character; but there is a certain townish something about the inhabitants in general, of which I find it extremely difficult to convey any idea. Compared with the English of the country, there is apparently very little difference between them; but still there is a difference, and of no small importance in a moral point of view. The country peculiarity is like the bloom of the plumb, or the down of the peach, which the fingers of infancy cannot touch without injuring; but this felt but not describable quality of the town character, is as the varnish which brings out more vividly the colours of a picture, and which may be freely and even rudely handled. The women, for example, although as chaste in principle as those of any other community, possess none of that innocent untempted simplicity, which is more than half the grace of virtue; many of them, and even young ones too, “in the first freshness of their virgin beauty,” speak of the conduct and vocation of “the erring sisters of the sex,” in a manner that often amazes me, and has, in more than one instance, excited unpleasant feelings towards the fair satirists. This moral taint, for I can consider it as nothing less, I have heard defended, but only by men who are supposed to have had a large experience of the world, and who, perhaps, on that account, are not the best judges of female delicacy. “Every woman,” as Pope says, “may be at heart a rake”; but it is for the interests of the domestic affections, which are the very elements of virtue, to cherish the notion, that women, as they are physically more delicate than men, are also so morally.

But the absence of delicacy, the bloom of virtue, is not peculiar to the females, it is characteristic of all the varieties of the metropolitan mind. The artifices of the medical quacks are things of universal ridicule; but the sin, though in a less gross form, pervades the whole of that sinister system by which much of the superiority of this vast metropolis is supported. The state of the periodical press, that great organ of political instruction—the unruly tongue of liberty, strikingly confirms the justice of this misanthropic remark.

G-had the kindness, by way of a treat to me, to collect, the other day, at dinner, some of the most eminent editors of the London journals. I found them men of talent, certainly, and much more men of the world, than “the cloistered student from his paling lamp”; but I was astonished to find it considered, tacitly, as a sort of maxim among them, that an intermediate party was not bound by any obligation of honour to withhold, farther than his own discretion suggested, any information of which he was the accidental depositary, whatever the

consequences might be to his informant, or to those affected by the communication. In a word, they seemed all to care less about what might be true than what would produce effect, and that effect for their own particular advantage. It is impossible to deny, that if interest is made the criterion by which the confidences of social intercourse are to be respected, the persons who admit this doctrine will have but little respect for the use of names, or deem it any reprehensible delinquency to suppress truth, or to blazon falsehood. In a word, man in London is not quite so good a creature as he is out of it. The rivalry of interests is here too intense; it impairs the affections, and occasions speculations both in morals and politics, which, I much suspect, it would puzzle a casuist to prove blameless. Can anything, for example, be more offensive to the calm spectator, than the elections which are now going on? Is it possible that this country, so much smaller in geographical extent than France, and so inferior in natural resources, restricted too by those ties and obligations which were thrown off as fetters by that country during the late war, could have attained, in despite of her, such a lofty pre-eminence—become the foremost of all the world—had it not been governed in a manner congenial to the spirit of the people, and with great practical wisdom? It is absurd to assert, that there are no corruptions in the various modifications by which the affairs of the British empire are administered; but it would be difficult to show, that, in the present state of morals and interests among mankind, corruption is not a necessary evil. I do not mean necessary, as evolved from those morals and interests, but necessary to the management of political trusts. I am afraid, however, to insist on this, as the natural integrity of your own heart, and the dignity of your vocation, will alike induce you to condemn it as Machiavellian.

It is, however, an observation forced on me by what I have seen here.

It would be invidious, perhaps, to criticise the different candidates for the representation of London and Westminster very severely. I think it must be granted, that they are as sincere in their professions as their opponents, which at least bleaches away much of that turpitude of which their political conduct is accused by those who are of a different way of thinking. But it is quite evident, at least to me, that no government could exist a week, managed with that subjection to public opinion to which Sir Francis Burdett and Mr. Hobhouse apparently submit; and it is no less certain, that no government ought to exist a single day that would act in complete defiance of public opinion.

I was surprised to find Sir Francis Burdett an uncommonly mild and

gentlemanly-looking man. I had pictured somehow to my imagination a dark and morose character; but, on the contrary, in his appearance, deportment, and manner of speaking, he is eminently qualified to attract popular applause. His style of speaking is not particularly oratorical, but he has the art of saying bitter things in a sweet way. In his language, however, although pungent, and sometimes even eloquent, he is singularly incorrect. He cannot utter a sequence of three sentences without violating common grammar in the most atrocious way; and his tropes and figures are so distorted, hashed, and broken—such a patchwork of different patterns, that you are bewildered if you attempt to make them out; but the earnestness of his manner, and a certain fitness of character, in his observations a kind of Shaksperian pithiness, redeem all this. Besides, his manifold blunders of syntax do not offend the taste of those audiences where he is heard with the most approbation.

Hobhouse speaks more correctly, but he lacks in the conciliatory advantages of personal appearance; and his physiognomy, though indicating considerable strength of mind, is not so prepossessing.

He is evidently a man of more education than his friend, that is, of more reading, perhaps also of more various observation, but he has less genius. His tact is coarser, and though he speaks with more vehemence, he seldomer touches the sensibilities of his auditors.

He may have observed mankind in general more extensively than Sir Francis, but he is far less acquainted with the feelings and associations of the English mind. There is also a wariness about him, which I do not like so well as the imprudent ingenuousness of the baronet. He seems to me to have a cause in hand—Hobhouse versus Existing Circumstances—and that he considers the multitude as the jurors, on whose decision his advancement in life depends.

But in this I may be uncharitable. I should, however, think more highly of his sincerity as a patriot, if his stake in the country were greater; and yet I doubt, if his stake were greater, if he is that sort of man who would have cultivated popularity in Westminster. He seems to me to have qualified himself for Parliament as others do for the bar, and that he will probably be considered in the House for some time merely as a political adventurer. But if he has the talent and prudence requisite to ensure distinction in the line of his profession, the mediocrity of his original condition will reflect honour on his success, should he hereafter acquire influence and consideration as a statesman. Of his literary

talents I know you do not think very highly, nor am I inclined to rank the powers of his mind much beyond those of any common well-educated English gentleman. But it will soon be ascertained whether his pretensions to represent Westminster be justified by a sense of conscious superiority, or only prompted by that ambition which overleaps itself.

Of Wood, who was twice Lord Mayor, I know not what to say. There is a queer and wily cast in his pale countenance, that puzzles me exceedingly. In common parlance I would call him an empty vain creature; but when I look at that indescribable spirit, which indicates a strange and out-of-the-way manner of thinking, I humbly confess that he is no common man. He is evidently a person of no intellectual accomplishments; he has neither the language nor the deportment of a gentleman, in the usual understanding of the term; and yet there is something that I would almost call genius about him. It is not cunning, it is not wisdom, it is far from being prudence, and yet it is something as wary as prudence, as effectual as wisdom, and not less sinister than cunning. I would call it intuitive skill, a sort of instinct, by which he is enabled to attain his ends in defiance of a capacity naturally narrow, a judgment that topples with vanity, and an address at once mean and repulsive. To call him a great man, in any possible approximation of the word, would be ridiculous; that he is a good one, will be denied by those who envy his success, or hate his politics; but nothing, save the blindness of fanaticism, can call in question his possession of a rare and singular species of ability, let it be exerted in what cause it may. But my paper is full, and I have only room to subscribe myself, faithfully, yours, A. PRINGLE.

“It appears to us,” said Mr. Snodgrass, as he folded up the letter to return it to his pocket, “that the Londoners, with all their advantages of information, are neither purer nor better than their fellow-subjects in the country.” “As to their betterness,” replied Miss Mally, “I have a notion that they are far waur; and I hope you do not think that earthly knowledge of any sort has a tendency to make mankind, or womankind either, any better; for was not Solomon, who had more of it than any other man, a type and testification, that knowledge without grace is but vanity?” The young clergyman was somewhat startled at this application of a remark on which he laid no particular stress, and was thankful in his heart that Mrs.

Glibbans was not present. He was not aware that Miss Mally had an orthodox corn, or bunyan, that could as little bear a touch from the royne-slippers of philosophy, as the inflamed gout of polemical controversy, which had gumfiated

every mental joint and member of that zealous prop of the Relief Kirk. This was indeed the tender point of Miss Mally's character; for she was left unplucked on the stalk of single blessedness, owing entirely to a conversation on this very subject with the only lover she ever had, Mr. Dalgliesh, formerly helper in the neighbouring parish of Dintonknow. He happened incidentally to observe, that education was requisite to promote the interests of religion. But Miss Mally, on that occasion, jocularly maintained, that education had only a tendency to promote the sale of books. This, Mr. Dalgliesh thought, was a sneer at himself, he having some time before unfortunately published a short tract, entitled, "The moral union of our temporal and eternal interests considered, with respect to the establishment of parochial seminaries," and which fell still-born from the press. He therefore retorted with some acrimony, until, from less to more, Miss Mally ordered him to keep his distance; upon which he bounced out of the room, and they were never afterwards on speaking terms.

Saving, however, and excepting this particular dogma, Miss Mally was on all other topics as liberal and beneficent as could be expected from a maiden lady, who was obliged to eke out her stinted income with a nimble needle and a close-clipping economy. The conversation with Mr. Snodgrass was not, however, lengthened into acrimony; for immediately after the remark which we have noticed, she proposed that they should call on Miss Isabella Tod to see Rachel's letter; indeed, this was rendered necessary by the state of the fire, for after boiling the kettle she had allowed it to fall low. It was her nightly practice after tea to take her evening seam, in a friendly way, to some of her neighbours' houses, by which she saved both coal and candle, while she acquired the news of the day, and was occasionally invited to stay supper.

On their arrival at Mrs. Tod's, Miss Isabella understood the purport of their visit, and immediately produced her letter, receiving, at the same time, a perusal of Mr. Andrew Pringle's. Mrs. Pringle's to Miss Mally she had previously seen.

LETTER XXIV

Miss Rachel Pringle to Miss Isabella Tod My Dear Bell—Since my last, we have undergone great changes and vicissitudes. Last week we removed to our present house, which is exceedingly handsome and elegantly furnished; and on Saturday there was an insurrection of the servants, on account of my mother not allowing them to have their dinners served up at the usual hour for servants at other genteel houses. We have also had the legacy in the funds transferred to my

father, and only now wait the settling of the final accounts, which will yet take some time. On the day that the transfer took place, my mother made me a present of a twenty pound note, to lay out in any way I thought fit, and in so doing, I could not but think of you; I have, therefore, in a box which she is sending to Miss Mally Glencairn, sent you an evening dress from Mrs. Bean's, one of the most fashionable and tasteful dressmakers in town, which I hope you will wear with pleasure for my sake. I have got one exactly like it, so that when you see yourself in the glass, you will behold in what state I appeared at Lady -'s route.

Ah! my dear Bell, how much are our expectations disappointed! How often have we, with admiration and longing wonder, read the descriptions in the newspapers of the fashionable parties in this great metropolis, and thought of the Grecian lamps, the ottomans, the promenades, the ornamented floors, the cut glass, the coup d'oeil, and the tout ensemble. "Alas!" as Young the poet says, "the things unseen do not deceive us." I have seen more beauty at an Irvine ball, than all the fashionable world could bring to market at my Lady -'s emporium for the disposal of young ladies, for indeed I can consider it as nothing else.

I went with the Argents. The hall door was open, and filled with the servants in their state liveries; but although the door was open, the porter, as each carriage came up, rung a peal upon the knocker, to announce to all the square the successive arrival of the guests. We were shown upstairs to the drawing-rooms. They were very well, but neither so grand nor so great as I expected. As for the company, it was a suffocating crowd of fat elderly gentlewomen, and misses that stood in need of all the charms of their fortunes.

One thing I could notice—for the press was so great, little could be seen—it was, that the old ladies wore rouge. The white satin sleeve of my dress was entirely ruined by coming in contact with a little round, dumpling duchess's cheek—as vulgar a body as could well be. She seemed to me to have spent all her days behind a counter, smirking thankfulness to bawbee customers.

When we had been shown in the drawing-rooms to the men for some time, we then adjourned to the lower apartments, where the refreshments were set out. This, I suppose, is arranged to afford an opportunity to the beaux to be civil to the belles, and thereby to scrape acquaintance with those whom they approve, by assisting them to the delicacies. Altogether, it was a very dull well-dressed affair, and yet I ought to have been in good spirits, for Sir Marmaduke Towler, a great

Yorkshire baronet, was most particular in his attentions to me; indeed so much so, that I saw it made poor Sabre very uneasy. I do not know why it should, for I have given him no positive encouragement to hope for anything; not that I have the least idea that the baronet's attentions were more than commonplace politeness, but he has since called. I cannot, however, say that my vanity is at all flattered by this circumstance. At the same time, there surely could be no harm in Sir Marmaduke making me an offer, for you know I am not bound to accept it. Besides, my father does not like him, and my mother thinks he's a fortune-hunter; but I cannot conceive how that may be, for, on the contrary, he is said to be rather extravagant.

Before we return to Scotland, it is intended that we shall visit some of the watering-places; and, perhaps, if Andrew can manage it with my father, we may even take a trip to Paris. The Doctor himself is not averse to it, but my mother is afraid that a new war may break out, and that we may be detained prisoners. This fantastical fear we shall, however, try to overcome. But I am interrupted. Sir Marmaduke is in the drawing-room, and I am summoned.—Yours truly,

RACHEL PRINGLE.

When Mr. Snodgrass had read this letter, he paused for a moment, and then said dryly, in handing it to Miss Isabella, "Miss Pringle is improving in the ways of the world."

The evening by this time was far advanced, and the young clergyman was not desirous to renew the conversation; he therefore almost immediately took his leave, and walked sedately towards Garnock, debating with himself as he went along, whether Dr. Pringle's family were likely to be benefited by their legacy. But he had scarcely passed the minister's carse, when he met with Mrs. Glibbans returning. "Mr. Snodgrass! Mr. Snodgrass!" cried that ardent matron from her side of the road to the other where he was walking, and he obeyed her call; "yon's no sic a black story as I thought."

Mrs. Craig is to be sure far gane! but they were married in December; and it was only because she was his servan' lass that the worthy man didna like to own her at first for his wife. It would have been dreadful had the matter been jealousied at the first. She gaed to Glasgow to see an auntie that she has there, and he gaed in to fetch her out, and it was then the marriage was made up, which I was glad to hear; for, oh, Mr. Snodgrass, it would have been an awfu' judgment had a man

like Mr. Craig turn't out no better than a Tam Pain or a Major Weir. But a's for the best; and Him that has the power of salvation can blot out all our iniquities. So good-night—ye'll have a lang walk."

CHAPTER VIII—THE QUEEN’S TRIAL

As the spring advanced, the beauty of the country around Garnock was gradually unfolded; the blossom was unclosed, while the church was embraced within the foliage of more umbrageous boughs. The schoolboys from the adjacent villages were, on the Saturday afternoons, frequently seen angling along the banks of the Lugton, which ran clearer beneath the churchyard wall, and the hedge of the minister’s glebe; and the evenings were so much lengthened, that the occasional visitors at the manse could prolong their walk after tea.

These, however, were less numerous than when the family were at home; but still Mr. Snodgrass, when the weather was fine, had no reason to deplore the loneliness of his bachelor’s court.

It happened that, one fair and sunny afternoon, Miss Mally Glencairn and Miss Isabella Tod came to the manse. Mrs. Glibbans and her daughter Becky were the same day paying their first ceremonious visit, as the matron called it, to Mr. and Mrs. Craig, with whom the whole party were invited to take tea; and, for lack of more amusing chit-chat, the Reverend young gentleman read to them the last letter which he had received from Mr. Andrew Pringle. It was conjured naturally enough out of his pocket, by an observation of Miss Mally’s “Nothing surprises me,” said that amiable maiden lady, “so much as the health and good-humour of the commonality. It is a joyous refutation of the opinion, that the comfort and happiness of this life depends on the wealth of worldly possessions.”

“It is so,” replied Mr. Snodgrass, “and I do often wonder, when I see the blithe and hearty children of the cottars, frolicking in the abundance of health and hilarity, where the means come from to enable their poor industrious parents to supply their wants.”

“How can you wonder at any sic things, Mr. Snodgrass? Do they not come from on high,” said Mrs. Glibbans, “whence cometh every good and perfect gift? Is there not the flowers of the field, which neither card nor spin, and yet Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these?”

“I was not speaking in a spiritual sense,” interrupted the other, “but merely made the remark, as introductory to a letter which I have received from Mr. Andrew Pringle, respecting some of the ways of living in London.”

Mrs. Craig, who had been so recently translated from the kitchen to the parlour, pricked up her ears at this, not doubting that the letter would contain something very grand and wonderful, and exclaimed, “Gude safe’s, let’s hear’t—I’m unco fond to ken about London, and the king and the queen; but I believe they are baith dead noo.”

Miss Becky Glibbans gave a satirical keckle at this, and showed her superior learning, by explaining to Mrs. Craig the unbroken nature of the kingly office. Mr. Snodgrass then read as follows:-

LETTER XXV

Andrew Pringle, Esq., to the Rev. Charles Snodgrass My Dear Friend—You are not aware of the task you impose, when you request me to send you some account of the general way of living in London. Unless you come here, and actually experience yourself what I would call the London ache, it is impossible to supply you with any adequate idea of the necessity that exists in this wilderness of mankind, to seek refuge in society, without being over fastidious with respect to the intellectual qualifications of your occasional associates. In a remote desert, the solitary traveller is subject to apprehensions of danger; but still he is the most important thing “within the circle of that lonely waste”; and the sense of his own dignity enables him to sustain the shock of considerable hazard with spirit and fortitude. But, in London, the feeling of self-importance is totally lost and suppressed in the bosom of a stranger. A painful conviction of insignificance—of nothingness, I may say—is sunk upon his heart, and murmured in his ear by the million, who divide with him that consequence which he unconsciously before supposed he possessed in a general estimate of the world.

While elbowing my way through the unknown multitude that flows between Charing Cross and the Royal Exchange, this mortifying sense of my own insignificance has often come upon me with the energy of a pang; and I have thought, that, after all we can say of any man, the effect of the greatest influence of an individual on society at large, is but as that of a pebble thrown into the sea.

Mathematically speaking, the undulations which the pebble causes, continue until the whole mass of the ocean has been disturbed to the bottom of its most secret depths and farthest shores; and, perhaps, with equal truth it may be affirmed, that the sentiments of the man of genius are also infinitely propagated;

but how soon is the physical impression of the one lost to every sensible perception, and the moral impulse of the other swallowed up from all practical effect.

But though London, in the general, may be justly compared to the vast and restless ocean, or to any other thing that is either sublime, incomprehensible, or affecting, it loses all its influence over the solemn associations of the mind when it is examined in its details. For example, living on the town, as it is slangishly called, the most friendless and isolated condition possible, is yet fraught with an amazing diversity of enjoyment. Thousands of gentlemen, who have survived the relish of active fashionable pursuits, pass their life in that state without tasting the delight of one new sensation. They rise in the morning merely because Nature will not allow them to remain longer in bed. They begin the day without motive or purpose, and close it after having performed the same unvaried round as the most thoroughbred domestic animal that ever dwelt in manse or manor-house. If you ask them at three o'clock where they are to dine, they cannot tell you; but about the wonted dinner-hour, batches of these forlorn bachelors find themselves diurnally congregated, as if by instinct, around a cozy table in some snug coffee-house, where, after inspecting the contents of the bill of fare, they discuss the news of the day, reserving the scandal, by way of dessert, for their wine. Day after day their respective political opinions give rise to keen encounters, but without producing the slightest shade of change in any of their old ingrained and particular sentiments.

Some of their haunts, I mean those frequented by the elderly race, are shabby enough in their appearance and circumstances, except perhaps in the quality of the wine. Everything in them is regulated by an ancient and precise economy, and you perceive, at the first glance, that all is calculated on the principle of the house giving as much for the money as it can possibly afford, without infringing those little etiquettes which persons of gentlemanly habits regard as essentials. At half price the junior members of these unorganised or natural clubs retire to the theatres, while the elder brethren mend their potations till it is time to go home. This seems a very comfortless way of life, but I have no doubt it is the preferred result of a long experience of the world, and that the parties, upon the whole, find it superior, according to their early formed habits of dissipation and gaiety, to the sedate but not more regular course of a domestic circle.

The chief pleasure, however, of living on the town, consists in accidentally falling in with persons whom it might be otherwise difficult to meet in private

life. I have several times enjoyed this. The other day I fell in with an old gentleman, evidently a man of some consequence, for he came to the coffee-house in his own carriage. It happened that we were the only guests, and he proposed that we should therefore dine together. In the course of conversation it came out, that he had been familiarly acquainted with Garrick, and had frequented the Literary Club in the days of Johnson and Goldsmith. In his youth, I conceive, he must have been an amusing companion; for his fancy was exceedingly lively, and his manners altogether afforded a very favourable specimen of the old, the gentlemanly school. At an appointed hour his carriage came for him, and we parted, perhaps never to meet again.

Such agreeable incidents, however, are not common, as the frequenters of the coffee-houses are, I think, usually taciturn characters, and averse to conversation. I may, however, be myself in fault. Our countrymen in general, whatever may be their address in improving acquaintance to the promotion of their own interests, have not the best way, in the first instance, of introducing themselves. A raw Scotchman, contrasted with a sharp Londoner, is very inadroit and awkward, be his talents what they may; and I suspect, that even the most brilliant of your old class-fellows have, in their professional visits to this metropolis, had some experience of what I mean.

ANDREW PRINGLE.

When Mr. Snodgrass paused, and was folding up the letter, Mrs.

Craig, bending with her hands on her knees, said, emphatically, “Noo, sir, what think you of that?” He was not, however, quite prepared to give an answer to a question so abruptly propounded, nor indeed did he exactly understand to what particular the lady referred. “For my part,” she resumed, recovering her previous posture—“for my part, it’s a very caldrife way of life to dine every day on coffee; broth and beef would put mair smeddum in the men; they’re just a whin auld fogies that Mr. Andrew describes, an’

no wurth a single woman’s pains.” “Wheesht, wheesht, mistress,”

cried Mr. Craig; “ye mauna let your tongue rin awa with your sense in that gait.” “It has but a light load,” said Miss Becky, whispering Isabella Tod. In this juncture, Mr. Mickleham happened to come in, and Mrs. Craig, on seeing him, cried out, “I hope, Mr.

Micklewham, ye have brought the Doctor's letter. He's such a funny man! and touches off the Londoners to the nines."

"He's a good man," said Mrs. Glibbans, in a tone calculated to repress the forwardness of Mrs. Craig; but Miss Mally Glencairn having, in the meanwhile, taken from her pocket an epistle which she had received the preceding day from Mrs. Pringle, Mr. Snodgrass silenced all controversy on that score by requesting her to proceed with the reading. "She's a clever woman, Mrs. Pringle," said Mrs.

Craig, who was resolved to cut a figure in the conversation in her own house. "She's a discreet woman, and may be as godly, too, as some that make mair wark about the elect." Whether Mrs. Glibbans thought this had any allusion to herself is not susceptible of legal proof; but she turned round and looked at their "most kind hostess"

with a sneer that might almost merit the appellation of a snort.

Mrs. Craig, however, pacified her, by proposing, "that, before hearing the letter, they should take a dram of wine, or pree her cherry bounce"—adding, "our maister likes a been house, and ye a'

ken that we are providing for a handling." The wine was accordingly served, and, in due time, Miss Mally Glencairn edified and instructed the party with the contents of Mrs. Pringle's letter.

LETTER XXVI

Mrs. Pringle to Miss Mally Glencairn

Dear Miss Mally—You will have heard, by the peppers, of the gret hobbleshow heer about the queen's coming over contrary to the will of the nation; and, that the king and parlement are so angry with her, that they are going to put her away by giving to her a bill of divorce. The Doctor, who has been searchin the Scriptures on the okashon, says this is not in their poor, although she was found guilty of the fact; but I tell him, that as the king and parlement of old took upon them to change our religion, I do not see how they will be hampered now by the word of God.

You may well wonder that I have no ritten to you about the king, and what he is like, but we have never got a sight of him at all, whilk is a gret shame, paying so

dear as we do for a king, who shurely should be a publik man. But, we have seen her majesty, who stays not far from our house heer in Baker Street, in dry lodgings, which, I am creditably informed, she is obligated to pay for by the week, for nobody will trust her; so you see what it is, Miss Mally, to have a light character. Poor woman, they say she might have been going from door to door, with a staff and a meal pock, but for ane Mr. Wood, who is a baillie of London, that has ta'en her by the hand. She's a woman advanced in life, with a short neck, and a pentit face; housomever, that, I suppose, she canno help, being a queen, and obligated to set the fashons to the court, where it is necessar to hide their faces with pent, our Andrew says, that their looks may not betray them—there being no shurer thing than a false-hearted courtier.

But what concerns me the most, in all this, is, that there will be no coronashon till the queen is put out of the way—and nobody can take upon them to say when that will be, as the law is so dootful and endless—which I am verra sorry for, as it was my intent to rite Miss Nanny Eydent a true account of the coronashon, in case there had been any partiklars that might be servisable to her in her bisness.

The Doctor and me, by ourselves, since we have been settlt, go about at our convenience, and have seen far mae farlies than baith Andrew and Rachel, with all the acquaintance they have forgathert with—but you no old heeds canno be expectit on young shouthers, and they have not had the experience of the world that we have had.

The lamps in the streets here are lighted with gauze, and not with crusies, like those that have lately been put up in your toun; and it is brought in pips aneath the ground from the manufactors, which the Doctor and me have been to see—an awful place—and they say as fey to a spark as poother, which made us glad to get out o't when we heard so;—and we have been to see a brew-house, where they mak the London porter, but it is a sight not to be told. In it we saw a barrel, whilk the Doctor said was by gauging bigger than the Irvine muckle kirk, and a masking fat, like a barn for mugnited. But all thae were as nothing to a curiosity of a steam-ngine, that minches minch collops as natural as life—and stuffs the sosogees itself, in a manner past the poor of nature to consiv. They have, to be shure, in London, many things to help work—for in our kitchen there is a smoking-jack to roast the meat, that gangs of its oun free will, and the brisker the fire, the faster it runs; but a potatoe-beetle is not to be had within the four walls of London, which is a great want in a house; Mrs. Argent never hard of sic a thing.

Me and the Doctor have likewise been in the Houses of Parliament, and the Doctor since has been again to heer the argol-bargoling about the queen. But, cepting the king's throne, which is all gold and velvet, with a croun on the top, and stars all round, there was nothing worth the looking at in them baith. Howsomever, I sat in the king's seat, and in the preses chair of the House of Commons, which, you no, is something for me to say; and we have been to see the printing of books, where the very smallest dividual syllib is taken up by itself and made into words by the hand, so as to be quite confounding how it could ever read sense. But there is ane piece of industry and froughgalaty I should not forget, whilk is wives going about with whirl-barrows, selling horses' flesh to the cats and dogs by weight, and the cats and dogs know them very well by their voices. In short, Miss Mally, there is nothing heer that the hand is not turnt to; and there is, I can see, a better order and method really among the Londoners than among our Scotch folks, notwithstanding their advantages of edicashion, but my pepper will hold no more at present, from your true friend, JANET PRINGLE.

There was a considerable diversity of opinion among the commentators on this epistle. Mrs. Craig was the first who broke silence, and displayed a great deal of erudition on the minch-collop-engine, and the potatoe-beetle, in which she was interrupted by the indignant Mrs. Glibbans, who exclaimed, "I am surprised to hear you, Mrs.

Craig, speak of sic baubles, when the word of God's in danger of being controverted by an Act of Parliament. But, Mr. Snodgrass, dinna ye think that this painting of the queen's face is a Jezebitical testification against her?" Mr. Snodgrass replied, with an unwonted sobriety of manner, and with an emphasis that showed he intended to make some impression on his auditors—"It is impossible to judge correctly of strangers by measuring them according to our own notions of propriety. It has certainly long been a practice in courts to disfigure the beauty of the human countenance with paint; but what, in itself, may have been originally assumed for a mask or disguise, may, by usage, have grown into a very harmless custom. I am not, therefore, disposed to attach any criminal importance to the circumstance of her majesty wearing paint. Her late majesty did so herself." "I do not say it was criminal," said Mrs. Glibbans; "I only meant it was sinful, and I think it is." The accent of authority in which this was said, prevented Mr. Snodgrass from offering any reply; and, a brief pause ensuing, Miss Molly Glencairn observed, that it was a surprising thing how the Doctor and Mrs.

Pringle managed their matters so well. “Ay,” said Mrs. Craig, “but we a’ ken what a manager the mistress is—she’s the bee that mak’s the hincy—she does not gang bizzing aboot, like a thriftless wasp, through her neighbours’ houses.” “I tell you, Betty, my dear,”

cried Mr. Craig, “that you shouldna make comparisons—what’s past is gane—and Mrs. Glibbans and you maun now be friends.” “They’re a’

friends to me that’s no faes, and am very glad to see Mrs. Glibbans sociable in my house; but she needna hae made sae light of me when she was here before.” And, in saying this, the amiable hostess burst into a loud sob of sorrow, which induced Mr. Snodgrass to beg Mr. Micklewham to read the Doctor’s letter, by which a happy stop was put to the further manifestation of the grudge which Mrs. Craig harboured against Mrs. Glibbans for the lecture she had received, on what the latter called “the incarnated effect of a more than Potipharian claught o’ the godly Mr. Craig.”

LETTER XXVII

The Rev. Z. Pringle, D.D., to Mr. Micklewham, Schoolmaster and Session-Clerk of Garnock

Dear Sir—I had a great satisfaction in hearing that Mr. Snodgrass, in my place, prays for the queen on the Lord’s Day, which liberty, to do in our national church, is a thing to be upholden with a fearless spirit, even with the spirit of martyrdom, that we may not bow down in Scotland to the prelatie Baal of an order in Council, whereof the Archbishop of Canterbury, that is cousin-german to the Pope of Rome, is art and part. Verily, the sending forth of that order to the General Assembly was treachery to the solemn oath of the new king, whereby he took the vows upon him, conform to the Articles of the Union, to maintain the Church of Scotland as by law established, so that for the Archbishop of Canterbury to meddle therein was a shooting out of the horns of aggressive domination.

I think it is right of me to testify thus much, through you, to the Session, that the elders may stand on their posts to bar all such breaking in of the Episcopalian boar into our corner of the vineyard.

Anent the queen’s case and condition, I say nothing; for be she guilty, or be she innocent, we all know that she was born in sin, and brought forth in iniquity—

prone to evil, as the sparks fly upwards—and desperately wicked, like you and me, or any other poor Christian sinner, which is reason enough to make us think of her in the remembering prayer.

Since she came over, there has been a wonderful work doing here; and it is thought that the crown will be taken off her head by a strong handling of the Parliament; and really, when I think of the bishops sitting high in the peerage, like owls and rooks in the bartisans of an old tower, I have my fears that they can bode her no good. I have seen them in the House of Lords, clothed in their idolatrous robes; and when I looked at them so proudly placed at the right hand of the king's throne, and on the side of the powerful, egging on, as I saw one of them doing in a whisper, the Lord Liverpool, before he rose to speak against the queen, the blood ran cold in my veins, and I thought of their woeful persecutions of our national church, and prayed inwardly that I might be kept in the humility of a zealous presbyter, and that the corruption of the frail human nature within me might never be tempted by the pampered whoredoms of prelacy.

Saving the Lord Chancellor, all the other temporal peers were just as they had come in from the crown of the causeway—none of them having a judicial garment, which was a shame; and as for the Chancellor's long robe, it was not so good as my own gown; but he is said to be a very narrow man. What he spoke, however, was no doubt sound law; yet I could observe he has a bad custom of taking the name of God in vain, which I wonder at, considering he has such a kittle conscience, which, on less occasions, causes him often to shed tears.

Mrs. Pringle and me, by ourselves, had a fine quiet canny sight of the queen, out of the window of a pastry baxter's shop, opposite to where her majesty stays. She seems to be a plump and jocose little woman; gleg, blithe, and throwgaun for her years, and on an easy footing with the lower orders—coming to the window when they call for her, and becking to them, which is very civil of her, and gets them to take her part against the government.

The baxter in whose shop we saw this told us that her majesty said, on being invited to take her dinner at an inn on the road from Dover, that she would be content with a mutton-chop at the King's Arms in London, {2} which shows that she is a lady of a very hamely disposition. Mrs. Pringle thought her not big enough for a queen; but we cannot expect every one to be like that bright accidental star, Queen Elizabeth, whose effigy we have seen preserved in armour in the Tower of London, and in wax in Westminster Abbey, where they have a

living-like likeness of Lord Nelson, in the very identical regimentals that he was killed in. They are both wonderful places, but it costs a power of money to get through them, and all the folk about them think of nothing but money; for when I inquired, with a reverent spirit, seeing around me the tombs of great and famous men, the mighty and wise of their day, what department it was of the Abbey —“It’s the eighteenpence department,” said an uncircumcised Philistine, with as little respect as if we had been treading the courts of the darling Dagon.

Our concerns here are now drawing to a close; but before we return, we are going for a short time to a town on the seaside, which they call Brighton. We had a notion of taking a trip to Paris, but that we must leave to Andrew Pringle, my son, and his sister Rachel, if the bit lassie could get a decent gudeman, which maybe will cast up for her before we leave London. Nothing, however, is settled as yet upon that head, so I can say no more at present anent the same.

Since the affair of the sermon, I have withdrawn myself from trafficking so much as I did in the missionary and charitable ploys that are so in vogue with the pious here, which will be all the better for my own people, as I will keep for them what I was giving to the unknown; and it is my design to write a book on almsgiving, to show in what manner that Christian duty may be best fulfilled, which I doubt not will have the effect of opening the eyes of many in London to the true nature of the thing by which I was myself beguiled in this Vanity Fair, like a bird ensnared by the fowler.

I was concerned to hear of poor Mr. Witherspoon’s accident, in falling from his horse in coming from the Dalmailing occasion. How thankful he must be, that the Lord made his head of a durability to withstand the shock, which might otherwise have fractured his skull.

What you say about the promise of the braird gives me pleasure on account of the poor; but what will be done with the farmers and their high rents, if the harvest turn out so abundant? Great reason have I to be thankful that the legacy has put me out of the reverence of my stipend; for when the meal was cheap, I own to you that I felt my carnality grudging the horn of abundance that the Lord was then pouring into the lap of the earth. In short, Mr.

Micklewham, I doubt it is o’er true with us all, that the less we are tempted, the better we are; so with my sincere prayers that you may be delivered from all evil, and led out of the paths of temptation, whether it is on the highway, or on the

footpaths, or beneath the hedges, I remain, dear sir, your friend and pastor,
ZACHARIAH PRINGLE.

“The Doctor,” said Mrs. Glibbans, as the schoolmaster concluded, “is there like himself—a true orthodox Christian, standing up for the word, and overflowing with charity even for the sinner. But, Mr.

Snodgrass, I did not ken before that the bishops had a hand in the making of the Acts of the Parliament; I think, Mr. Snodgrass, if that be the case, there should be some doubt in Scotland about obeying them. However that may be, sure am I that the queen, though she was a perfect Deliah, has nothing to fear from them; for have we not read in the Book of Martyrs, and other church histories, of their concubines and indulgences, in the papist times, to all manner of carnal iniquity? But if she be that noghty woman that they say”-

-“Gude safe’s,” cried Mrs. Craig, “if she be a noghty woman, awa’

wi’ her, awa’ wi’ her—wha kens the cantrips she may play us?”

Here Miss Mally Glencairn interposed, and informed Mrs. Craig, that a noghty woman was not, as she seemed to think, a witch wife. “I am sure,” said Miss Becky Glibbans, “that Mrs. Craig might have known that.” “Oh, ye’re a spiteful deevil,” whispered Miss Mally, with a smile to her; and turning in the same moment to Miss Isabella Tod, begged her to read Miss Pringle’s letter—a motion which Mr.

Snodgrass seconded chiefly to abridge the conversation, during which, though he wore a serene countenance, he often suffered much.

LETTER XXVIII

Miss Rachel Pringle to Miss Isabella Tod My Dear Bell—I am much obliged by your kind expressions for my little present. I hope soon to send you something better, and gloves at the same time; for Sabre has been brought to the point by an alarm for the Yorkshire baronet that I mentioned, as showing symptoms of the tender passion for my fortune. The friends on both sides being satisfied with the match, it will take place as soon as some preliminary arrangements are made. When we are settled, I hope your mother will allow you to come and spend some time with us at our country-seat in Berkshire; and I shall be happy to repay all the expenses of your journey, as a jaunt to England is what your mother would, I

know, never consent to pay for.

It is proposed that, immediately after the ceremony, we shall set out for France, accompanied by my brother, where we are to be soon after joined at Paris by some of the Argents, who, I can see, think Andrew worth the catching for Miss. My father and mother will then return to Scotland; but whether the Doctor will continue to keep his parish, or give it up to Mr. Snodgrass, will depend greatly on the circumstances in which he finds his parishioners. This is all the domestic intelligence I have got to give, but its importance will make up for other deficiencies.

As to the continuance of our discoveries in London, I know not well what to say. Every day brings something new, but we lose the sense of novelty. Were a fire in the same street where we live, it would no longer alarm me. A few nights ago, as we were sitting in the parlour after supper, the noise of an engine passing startled us all; we ran to the windows—there was haste and torches, and the sound of other engines, and all the horrors of a conflagration reddening the skies. My father sent out the footboy to inquire where it was; and when the boy came back, he made us laugh, by snapping his fingers, and saying the fire was not worth so much—

although, upon further inquiry, we learnt that the house in which it originated was burnt to the ground. You see, therefore, how the bustle of this great world hardens the sensibilities, but I trust its influence will never extend to my heart.

The principal topic of conversation at present is about the queen.

The Argents, who are our main instructors in the proprieties of London life, say that it would be very vulgar in me to go to look at her, which I am sorry for, as I wish above all things to see a personage so illustrious by birth, and renowned by misfortune. The Doctor and my mother, who are less scrupulous, and who, in consequence, somehow, by themselves, contrive to see, and get into places that are inaccessible to all gentility, have had a full view of her majesty. My father has since become her declared partisan, and my mother too has acquired a leaning likewise towards her side of the question; but neither of them will permit the subject to be spoken of before me, as they consider it detrimental to good morals.

I, however, read the newspapers.

What my brother thinks of her majesty's case is not easy to divine; but Sabre is convinced of the queen's guilt, upon some private and authentic information which a friend of his, who has returned from Italy, heard when travelling in that country. This information he has not, however, repeated to me, so that it must be very bad. We shall know all when the trial comes on. In the meantime, his majesty, who has lived in dignified retirement since he came to the throne, has taken up his abode, with rural felicity, in a cottage in Windsor Forest; where he now, contemning all the pomp and follies of his youth, and this metropolis, passes his days amidst his cabbages, like Dioclesian, with innocence and tranquillity, far from the intrigues of courtiers, and insensible to the murmuring waves of the fluctuating populace, that set in with so strong a current towards "the mob-led queen," as the divine Shakespeare has so beautifully expressed it.

You ask me about Vauxhall Gardens;—I have not seen them—they are no longer in fashion—the theatres are quite vulgar—even the opera-house has sunk into a second-rate place of resort. Almack's balls, the Argyle-rooms, and the Philharmonic concerts, are the only public entertainments frequented by people of fashion; and this high superiority they owe entirely to the difficulty of gaining admission. London, as my brother says, is too rich, and grown too luxurious, to have any exclusive place of fashionable resort, where price alone is the obstacle. Hence, the institution of these select aristocratic assemblies. The Philharmonic concerts, however, are rather professional than fashionable entertainments; but everybody is fond of music, and, therefore, everybody, that can be called anybody, is anxious to get tickets to them; and this anxiety has given them a degree of eclat, which I am persuaded the performance would never have excited had the tickets been purchasable at any price. The great thing here is, either to be somebody, or to be patronised by a person that is a somebody; without this, though you were as rich as Croesus, your golden chariots, like the comets of a season, blazing and amazing, would speedily roll away into the obscurity from which they came, and be remembered no more.

At first when we came here, and when the amount of our legacy was first promulgated, we were in a terrible flutter. Andrew became a man of fashion, with all the haste that tailors, and horses, and dinners, could make him. My father, honest man, was equally inspired with lofty ideas, and began a career that promised a liberal benefaction of good things to the poor—and my mother was almost distracted with calculations about laying out the money to the best advantage, and the sum she would allow to be spent. I alone preserved my natural equanimity; and foreseeing the necessity of new accomplishments to suit

my altered circumstances, applied myself to the instructions of my masters, with an assiduity that won their applause. The advantages of this I now experience—my brother is sobered from his champaign fumes—my father has found out that charity begins at home—and my mother, though her establishment is enlarged, finds her happiness, notwithstanding the legacy, still lies within the little circle of her household cares. Thus, my dear Bell, have I proved the sweets of a true philosophy; and, unseduced by the blandishments of rank, rejected Sir Marmaduke Towler, and accepted the humbler but more disinterested swain, Captain Sabre, who requests me to send you his compliments, not altogether content that you should occupy so much of the bosom of your affectionate

RACHEL PRINGLE.

“Rachel had ay a gude roose of hersel’,” said Becky Glibbans, as Miss Isabella concluded. In the same moment, Mr. Snodgrass took his leave, saying to Mr. Micklewham, that he had something particular to mention to him. “What can it be about?” inquired Mrs. Glibbans at Mr. Craig, as soon as the helper and schoolmaster had left the room: “Do you think it can be concerning the Doctor’s resignation of the parish in his favour?” “I’m sure,” interposed Mrs. Craig, before her husband could reply, “it winna be wi’ my gudewill that he shall come in upon us—a pridefu’ wight, whose saft words, and a’ his politeness, are but lip-deep; na, na, Mrs. Glibbans, we maun hae another on the leet forbye him.”

“And wha would ye put on the leet noo, Mrs. Craig, you that’s sic a judge?” said Mrs. Glibbans, with the most ineffable consequentiality.

“I’ll be for young Mr. Dirlton, who is baith a sappy preacher of the word, and a substantial hand at every kind of civility.”

“Young Dirlton!—young Deevilton!” cried the orthodox Deborah of Irvine; “a fallow that knows no more of a gospel dispensation than I do of the Arian heresy, which I hold in utter abomination. No, Mrs.

Craig, you have a godly man for your husband—a sound and true follower; tread ye in his footsteps, and no try to set up yoursel’

on points of doctrine. But it’s time, Miss Mally, that we were taking the road; Becky and Miss Isabella, make yourselves ready.

Noo, Mrs. Craig, ye’ll no be a stranger; you see I have no been lang of coming to give you my countenance; but, my leddy, ca’ canny, it’s no easy to carry a fu’

cup; ye hae gotten a great gift in your gudeman. Mr. Craig, I wish you a good-night; I would fain have stopped for your evening exercise, but Miss Mally was beginning, I saw, to weary—so good-night; and, Mrs. Craig, ye'll take tent of what I have said—it's for your gude." So exeunt Mrs. Glibbans, Miss Mally, and the two young ladies. "Her bark's waur than her bite," said Mrs. Craig, as she returned to her husband, who felt already some of the ourie symptoms of a henpecked destiny.

CHAPTER IX—THE MARRIAGE

Mr. Snodgrass was obliged to walk into Irvine one evening, to get rid of a raging tooth, which had tormented him for more than a week.

The operation was so delicately and cleverly performed by the surgeon to whom he applied—one of those young medical gentlemen, who, after having been educated for the army or navy, are obliged, in this weak piping time of peace, to glean what practice they can amid their native shades—that the amiable divine found himself in a condition to call on Miss Isabella Tod.

During this visit, Saunders Dickie, the postman, brought a London letter to the door, for Miss Isabella; and Mr. Snodgrass having desired the servant to inquire if there were any for him, had the good fortune to get the following from Mr. Andrew Pringle:-

LETTER XXIX

Andrew Pringle Esq., to the Rev. Mr. Charles Snodgrass My Dear Friend—I never receive a letter from you without experiencing a strong emotion of regret, that talents like yours should be wilfully consigned to the sequestered vegetation of a country pastor's life. But we have so often discussed this point, that I shall only offend your delicacy if I now revert to it more particularly. I cannot, however, but remark, that although a private station may be the happiest, a public is the proper sphere of virtue and talent, so clear, superior, and decided as yours. I say this with the more confidence, as I have really, from your letter, obtained a better conception of the queen's case, than from all that I have been able to read and hear upon the subject in London. The rule you lay down is excellent. Public safety is certainly the only principle which can justify mankind in agreeing to observe and enforce penal statutes; and, therefore, I think with you, that unless it could be proved in a very simple manner, that it was requisite for the public safety to institute proceedings against the queen—her sins or indiscretions should have been allowed to remain in the obscurity of her private circle.

I have attended the trial several times. For a judicial proceeding, it seems to me too long—and for a legislative, too technical.

Brougham, it is allowed, has displayed even greater talent than was expected; but he is too sharp; he seems to me more anxious to gain a triumph, than to establish truth. I do not like the tone of his proceedings, while I cannot sufficiently admire his dexterity. The style of Denman is more lofty, and impressed with stronger lineaments of sincerity. As for their opponents, I really cannot endure the Attorney-General as an orator; his whole mind consists, as it were, of a number of little hands and claws—each of which holds some scrap or portion of his subject; but you might as well expect to get an idea of the form and character of a tree, by looking at the fallen leaves, the fruit, the seeds, and the blossoms, as anything like a comprehensive view of a subject, from an intellect so constituted as that of Sir Robert Gifford. He is a man of application, but of meagre abilities, and seems never to have read a book of travels in his life. The Solicitor-General is somewhat better; but he is one of those who think a certain artificial gravity requisite to professional consequence; and which renders him somewhat obtuse in the tact of propriety.

Within the bar, the talent is superior to what it is without; and I have been often delighted with the amazing fineness, if I may use the expression, with which the Chancellor discriminates the shades of difference in the various points on which he is called to deliver his opinion. I consider his mind as a curiosity of no ordinary kind. It deceives itself by its own acuteness. The edge is too sharp; and, instead of cutting straight through, it often diverges—

alarming his conscience with the dread of doing wrong. This singular subtlety has the effect of impairing the reverence which the endowments and high professional accomplishments of this great man are otherwise calculated to inspire. His eloquence is not effective—it touches no feeling nor affects any passion; but still it affords wonderful displays of a lucid intellect. I can compare it to nothing but a pencil of sunshine; in which, although one sees countless motes flickering and fluctuating, it yet illuminates, and steadily brings into the most satisfactory distinctness, every object on which it directly falls.

Lord Erskine is a character of another class, and whatever difference of opinion may exist with respect to their professional abilities and attainments, it will be allowed by those who contend that Eldon is the better lawyer—that Erskine is the greater genius.

Nature herself, with a constellation in her hand, playfully illuminates his path to the temple of reasonable justice; while Precedence with her guide-book, and

Study with a lantern, cautiously show the road in which the Chancellor warily plods his weary way to that of legal Equity. The sedateness of Eldon is so remarkable, that it is difficult to conceive that he was ever young; but Erskine cannot grow old; his spirit is still glowing and flushed with the enthusiasm of youth. When impassioned, his voice acquires a singularly elevated and pathetic accent; and I can easily conceive the irresistible effect he must have had on the minds of a jury, when he was in the vigour of his physical powers, and the case required appeals of tenderness or generosity. As a parliamentary orator, Earl Grey is undoubtedly his superior; but there is something much less popular and conciliating in his manner. His eloquence is heard to most advantage when he is contemptuous; and he is then certainly dignified, ardent, and emphatic; but it is apt, I should think, to impress those who hear him, for the first time, with an idea that he is a very supercilious personage, and this unfavourable impression is liable to be strengthened by the elegant aristocratic languor of his appearance.

I think that you once told me you had some knowledge of the Marquis of Lansdowne, when he was Lord Henry Petty. I can hardly hope that, after an interval of so many years, you will recognise him in the following sketch:- His appearance is much more that of a Whig than Lord Grey—stout and sturdy—but still withal gentlemanly; and there is a pleasing simplicity, with somewhat of good-nature, in the expression of his countenance, that renders him, in a quiescent state, the more agreeable character of the two. He speaks exceedingly well—clear, methodical, and argumentative; but his eloquence, like himself, is not so graceful as it is upon the whole manly; and there is a little tendency to verbosity in his language, as there is to corpulency in his figure; but nothing turgid, while it is entirely free from affectation. The character of respectable is very legibly impressed, in everything about the mind and manner of his lordship. I should, now that I have seen and heard him, be astonished to hear such a man represented as capable of being factious.

I should say something about Lord Liverpool, not only on account of his rank as a minister, but also on account of the talents which have qualified him for that high situation. The greatest objection that I have to him as a speaker, is owing to the loudness of his voice—in other respects, what he does say is well digested. But I do not think that he embraces his subject with so much power and comprehension as some of his opponents; and he has evidently less actual experience of the world. This may doubtless be attributed to his having been almost constantly in office since he came into public life; than which nothing is more detrimental to the unfolding of natural ability, while it induces a sort of

artificial talent, connected with forms and technicalities, which, though useful in business, is but of minor consequence in a comparative estimate of moral and intellectual qualities. I am told that in his manner he resembles Mr. Pitt; be this, however, as it may, he is evidently a speaker, formed more by habit and imitation, than one whom nature prompts to be eloquent. He lacks that occasional accent of passion, the melody of oratory; and I doubt if, on any occasion, he could at all approximate to that magnificent intrepidity which was admired as one of the noblest characteristics of his master's style.

But all the display of learning and eloquence, and intellectual power and majesty of the House of Lords, shrinks into insignificance when compared with the moral attitude which the people have taken on this occasion. You know how much I have ever admired the attributes of the English national character—that boundless generosity, which can only be compared to the impartial benevolence of the sunshine—

that heroic magnanimity, which makes the hand ever ready to succour a fallen foe; and that sublime courage, which rises with the energy of a conflagration roused by a tempest, at every insult or menace of an enemy. The compassionate interest taken by the populace in the future condition of the queen is worthy of this extraordinary people. There may be many among them actuated by what is called the radical spirit; but malignity alone would dare to ascribe the bravery of their compassion to a less noble feeling than that which has placed the kingdom so proudly in the van of all modern nations.

There may be an amiable delusion, as my Lord Castlereagh has said, in the popular sentiments with respect to the queen. Upon that, as upon her case, I offer no opinion. It is enough for me to have seen, with the admiration of a worshipper, the manner in which the multitude have espoused her cause.

But my paper is filled, and I must conclude. I should, however, mention that my sister's marriage is appointed to take place to-morrow, and that I accompany the happy pair to France.—Yours truly, ANDREW PRINGLE.

“This is a dry letter,” said Mr. Snodgrass, and he handed it to Miss Isabella, who, in exchange, presented the one which she had herself at the same time received; but just as Mr. Snodgrass was on the point of reading it, Miss Becky Glibbans was announced. “How lucky this is,” exclaimed Miss Becky, “to find you both thegither! Now you maun tell me all the particulars; for Miss Mally Glencairn is

no in, and her letter lies unopened. I am just gasping to hear how Rachel conducted herself at being married in the kirk before all the folk—married to the hussar captain, too, after all! who would have thought it?”

“How, have you heard of the marriage already?” said Miss Isabella.

“Oh, it’s in the newspapers,” replied the amiable inquisitant,—

“Like ony tailor or weaver’s—a’ weddings maun nowadays gang into the papers. The whole toun, by this time, has got it; and I wouldna wonder if Rachel Pringle’s marriage ding the queen’s divorce out of folk’s heads for the next nine days to come. But only to think of her being married in a public kirk. Surely her father would never submit to hae’t done by a bishop? And then to put it in the London paper, as if Rachel Pringle had been somebody of distinction.

Perhaps it might have been more to the purpose, considering what dragoon officers are, if she had got the doited Doctor, her father, to publish the intended marriage in the papers beforehand.”

“Haud that condumacious tongue of yours,” cried a voice, panting with haste as the door opened, and Mrs. Glibbans entered. “Becky, will you never devawl wi’ your backbiting. I wonder frae whom the misleart lassie takes a’ this passion of clashing.”

The authority of her parent’s tongue silenced Miss Becky, and Mrs.

Glibbans having seated herself, continued,—“Is it your opinion, Mr.

Snodgrass, that this marriage can hold good, contracted, as I am told it is mentioned in the papers to hae been, at the horns of the altar of Episcopalian apostacy?”

“I can set you right as to that,” said Miss Isabella. “Rachel mentions, that, after returning from the church, the Doctor himself performed the ceremony anew, according to the Presbyterian usage.”

“I am glad to heart, very glad indeed,” said Mrs. Glibbans. “It would have been a judgment-like thing, had a bairn of Dr. Pringle’s-

-than whom, although there may be abler, there is not a sounder man in a’ the

West of Scotland—been sacrificed to Moloch, like the victims of prelatric idolatry.”

At this juncture, Miss Mally Glencairn was announced: she entered, holding a letter from Mrs. Pringle in her hand, with the seal unbroken. Having heard of the marriage from an acquaintance in the street, she had hurried home, in the well-founded expectation of hearing from her friend and well-wisher, and taking up the letter, which she found on her table, came with all speed to Miss Isabella Tod to commune with her on the tidings.

Never was any confluence of visitors more remarkable than on this occasion. Before Miss Mally had well explained the cause of her abrupt intrusion, Mr. Micklewham made his appearance. He had come to Irvine to be measured for a new coat, and meeting by accident with Saunders Dickie, got the Doctor’s letter from him, which, after reading, he thought he could do no less than call at Mrs. Tod’s, to let Miss Isabella know the change which had taken place in the condition of her friend.

Thus were all the correspondents of the Pringles assembled, by the merest chance, like the *dramatis personae* at the end of a play.

After a little harmless bantering, it was agreed that Miss Mally should read her communication first—as all the others were previously acquainted with the contents of their respective letters, and Miss Mally read as follows:-

LETTER XXX

Mrs. Pringle to Miss Mally Glencairn

Dear Miss Mally—I hav a cro to pik with you consarning yoor comishon aboot the partickels for your friends. You can hav no noshon what the Doctor and me suffert on the head of the flooring shrubs. We took your Nota Beny as it was spilt, and went from shop to shop enquirin in a most partiklar manner for “a Gardner’s Bell, or the least of all flowering plants”; but sorrow a gardner in the whole tot here in London ever had heard of sic a thing; so we gave the porshoot up in despare. Howsomever, one of Andrew’s acquaintance—a decent lad, who is only son to a saddler in a been way, that keeps his own carriage, and his son a coryikel, happent to call, and the Doctor told him what ill socsess we had in our serch for the gardner’s bell; upon which he sought a sight of your yepissle, and read it as a thing that was just wonderful for its whorsogroffie; and then he sayid,

that looking at the prinsipol of your spilling, he thought we should reed, “a gardner’s bill, or a list of all flooring plants”; whilk being no doot your intent, I have proqurt the same, and it is included heerin. But, Miss Mally, I would advize you to be more exac in your inditing, that no sic torbolashon may hippen on a future okashon.

What I hav to say for the present is, that you will, by a smak, get a bocks of kumoddities, whilk you will destraboot as derekit on every on of them, and you will before have resievit by the post-offis, an account of what has been don. I need say no forther at this time, knowin your discredishon and prooduns, septs that our Rachel and Captain Sabor will, if it please the Lord, be off to Parish, by way of Bryton, as man and wife, the morn’s morning. What her father the Doctor gives for tocher, what is settlt on her for jontor, I will tell you all aboot when we meet; for it’s our dishire noo to lose no tim in retorning to the manse, this being the last of our diplomaticals in London, where we have found the Argents a most discrit family, payin to the last farding the Cornal’s legacy, and most seevil, and well bred to us.

As I am naterally gretly okypt with this matteromoneal afair, you cannot expect ony news; but the queen is going on with a dreadful rat, by which the pesents hav falen more than a whole entirr pesent.

I wish our fonds were well oot of them, and in yird and stane, which is a constansie. But what is to become of the poor donsie woman, no one can expound. Some think she will be pot in the Toor of London, and her head chappit off; others think she will raise sic a stramash, that she will send the whole government into the air, like peelings of ingons, by a gunpoother plot. But it’s my opinion, and I have weighed the matter well in my understanding, that she will hav to fight with sword in hand, be she ill, or be she good. How els can she hop to get the better of more than two hundred lords, as the Doctor, who has seen them, tells me, with princes of the blood-royal, and the prelatic bishops, whom, I need not tell you, are the worst of all.

But the thing I grudge most, is to be so long in Lunden, and no to see the king. Is it not a hard thing to come to London, and no to see the king? I am not pleased with him, I assure you, becose he does not set himself out to public view, like ony other curiosity, but stays in his palis, they say, like one of the anshent wooden images of idolatry, the which is a great peety, he beeing, as I am told, a beautiful man, and more the gentleman than all the coortiers of his court.

The Doctor has been minting to me that there is an address from Irvine to the queen; and he, being so near a neighbour to your toun, has been thinking to pay his respects with it, to see her near at hand. But I will say nothing; he may take his own way in matters of gospel and spiritualety; yet I have my scroopols of consence, how this may not turn out a rebellyon against the king; and I would hav him to sift and see who are at the address, before he pits his han to it. For, if it's a radikol job, as I jealoos it is, what will the Doctor then say? who is an orthodox man, as the world nose.

In the maitre of our dumesticks, no new axcident has cast up; but I have seen such a wonder as could not have been forethocht. Having a washin, I went down to see how the lassies were doing; but judge of my feelings, when I saw them triomphing on the top of pattons, standing upright before the boyns on chairs, rubbin the clothes to juggins between their hands, above the sapples, with their gouns and stays on, and round-cared mutches. What would you think of such a miracle at the washing-house in the Goffields, or the Gallows-knows of Irvine? The cook, howsomever, has shown me a way to make rice-puddings without eggs, by putting in a bit of shoohet, which is as good—and this you will tell Miss Nanny Eydent; likewise, that the most fashionable way of boiling green pis, is to pit a blade of spearmint in the pot, which gives a fine flavour. But this is a long letter, and my pepper is done; so no more, but remains your friend and well-wisher, JANET PRINGLE.

“A great legacy, and her dochtir married, in ae journey to London, is doing business,” said Mrs. Glibbans, with a sigh, as she looked to her only get, Miss Becky; “but the Lord’s will is to be done in a’ thing;—sooner or later something of the same kind will come, I trust, to all our families.” “Ay,” replied Miss Mally Glencairn, “marriage is like death—it’s what we are a’ to come to.”

“I have my doubts of that,” said Miss Becky with a sneer. “Ye have been lang spair’t from it, Miss Mally.”

“Ye’re a spiteful puddock; and if the men hae the e’en and lugs they used to hae, gude pity him whose lot is cast with thine, Becky Glibbans,” replied the elderly maiden ornament of the Kirkgate, somewhat tartly.

Here Mr. Snodgrass interposed, and said, he would read to them the letter which Miss Isabella had received from the bride; and without waiting for their concurrence, opened and read as follows:-

LETTER XXXI

Mrs. Sabre to Miss Isabella Tod

My Dearest Bell—Rachel Pringle is no more! My heart flutters as I write the fatal words. This morning, at nine o'clock precisely, she was conducted in bridal array to the new church of Mary-le-bone; and there, with ring and book, sacrificed to the Minotaur, Matrimony, who devours so many of our bravest youths and fairest maidens.

My mind is too agitated to allow me to describe the scene. The office of handmaid to the victim, which, in our young simplicity, we had fondly thought one of us would perform for the other, was gracefully sustained by Miss Argent.

On returning from church to my father's residence in Baker Street, where we breakfasted, he declared himself not satisfied with the formalities of the English ritual, and obliged us to undergo a second ceremony from himself, according to the wonted forms of the Scottish Church. All the advantages and pleasures of which, my dear Bell, I hope you will soon enjoy.

But I have no time to enter into particulars. The captain and his lady, by themselves, in their own carriage, set off for Brighton in the course of less than an hour. On Friday they are to be followed by a large party of their friends and relations; and, after spending a few days in that emporium of salt-water pleasures, they embark, accompanied with their beloved brother, Mr. Andrew Pringle, for Paris; where they are afterwards to be joined by the Argents. It is our intention to remain about a month in the French capital; whether we shall extend our tour, will depend on subsequent circumstances: in the meantime, however, you will hear frequently from me.

My mother, who has a thousand times during these important transactions wished for the assistance of Nanny Eydent, transmits to Miss Mally Glencairn a box containing all the requisite bridal recognisances for our Irvine friends. I need not say that the best is for the faithful companion of my happiest years. As I had made a vow in my heart that Becky Glibbans should never wear gloves for my marriage, I was averse to sending her any at all, but my mother insisted that no exceptions should be made. I secretly took care, however, to mark a pair for her, so much too large, that I am sure she will never put them on. The asp will be not a little vexed at the disappointment. Adieu for a time, and believe that, although

your affectionate Rachel Pringle be gone that way in which she hopes you will soon follow, one not less sincerely attached to you, though it be the first time she has so subscribed herself, remains in RACHEL SABRE.

Before the ladies had time to say a word on the subject, the prudent young clergyman called immediately on Mr. Micklewham to read the letter which he had received from the Doctor; and which the worthy dominie did without delay, in that rich and full voice with which he is accustomed to teach his scholars elocution by example.

LETTER XXXII

The Rev. Z. Pringle, D.D., to Mr. Micklewham, Schoolmaster and Session-Clerk, Garnock—LONDON.

Dear Sir—I have been much longer of replying to your letter of the 3rd of last month, than I ought in civility to have been, but really time, in this town of London, runs at a fast rate, and the day passes before the dark's done. What with Mrs. Pringle and her daughter's concernments, anent the marriage to Captain Sabre, and the trouble I felt myself obliged to take in the queen's affair, I assure you, Mr. Micklewham, that it's no to be expressed how I have been occupied for the last four weeks. But all things must come to a conclusion in this world. Rachel Pringle is married, and the queen's weary trial is brought to an end—upon the subject and motion of the same, I offer no opinion, for I made it a point never to read the evidence, being resolved to stand by THE WORD from the first, which is clearly and plainly written in the queen's favour, and it does not do in a case of conscience to stand on trifles; putting, therefore, out of consideration the fact libelled, and looking both at the head and the tail of the proceeding, I was of a firm persuasion, that all the sculduddery of the business might have been well spared from the eye of the public, which is of itself sufficiently prone to keek and kook, in every possible way, for a glimpse of a black story; and, therefore, I thought it my duty to stand up in all places against the trafficking that was attempted with a divine institution. And I think, when my people read how their prelatie enemies, the bishops (the heavens defend the poor Church of Scotland from being subjected to the weight of their paws), have been visited with a constipation of the understanding on that point, it must to them be a great satisfaction to know how clear and collected their minister was on this fundamental of society. For it has turned out, as I said to Mrs. Pringle, as well as others, it would do, that a sense of grace and religion would be manifested in

some quarter before all was done, by which the devices for an unsanctified repudiation or divorce would be set at nought.

As often as I could, deeming it my duty as a minister of the word and gospel, I got into the House of Lords, and heard the trial; and I cannot think how ever it was expected that justice could be done yonder; for although no man could be more attentive than I was, every time I came away I was more confounded than when I went; and when the trial was done, it seemed to me just to be clearing up for a proper beginning—all which is a proof that there was a foul conspiracy. Indeed, when I saw Duke Hamilton's daughter coming out of the coach with the queen, I never could think after, that a lady of her degree would have countenanced the queen had the matter laid to her charge been as it was said. Not but in any circumstance it behoved a lady of that ancient and royal blood, to be seen beside the queen in such a great historical case as a trial.

I hope, in the part I have taken, my people will be satisfied; but whether they are satisfied or not, my own conscience is content with me. I was in the House of Lords when her majesty came down for the last time, and saw her handed up the stairs by the usher of the black-rod, a little stumpy man, wonderful particular about the rules of the House, insomuch that he was almost angry with me for stopping at the stair-head. The afflicted woman was then in great spirits, and I saw no symptoms of the swelled legs that Lord Lauderdale, that jocking man, spoke about, for she skipplit up the steps like a lassie. But my heart was wae for her when all was over, for she came out like an astonished creature, with a wild steadfast look, and a sort of something in the face that was as if the rational spirit had fled away; and she went down to her coach as if she had submitted to be led to a doleful destiny. Then the shouting of the people began, and I saw and shouted too in spite of my decorum, which I marvel at sometimes, thinking it could be nothing less than an involuntary testification of the spirit within me.

Anent the marriage of Rachel Pringle, it may be needful in me to state, for the satisfaction of my people, that although by stress of law we were obligated to conform to the practice of the Episcopalians, by taking out a bishop's license, and going to their church, and vowing, in a pagan fashion, before their altars, which are an abomination to the Lord; yet, when the young folk came home, I made them stand up, and be married again before me, according to all regular marriages in our national Church. For this I had two reasons: first, to satisfy myself that there had been a true and real marriage; and, secondly, to remove the doubt of the former ceremony being sufficient; for marriage being of divine

appointment, and the English form and ritual being a thing established by Act of Parliament, which is of human ordination, I was not sure that marriage performed according to a human enactment could be a fulfilment of a divine ordinance. I therefore hope that my people will approve what I have done; and in order that there may be a sympathising with me, you will go over to Banker M-y, and get what he will give you, as ordered by me, and distribute it among the poorest of the parish, according to the best of your discretion, my long absence having taken from me the power of judgment in a matter of this sort. I wish indeed for the glad sympathy of my people, for I think that our Saviour turning water into wine at the wedding, was an example set that we should rejoice and be merry at the fulfilment of one of the great obligations imposed on us as social creatures; and I have ever regarded the unhonoured treatment of a marriage occasion as a thing of evil bodement, betokening heavy hearts and light purses to the lot of the bride and bridegroom. You will hear more from me by and by; in the meantime, all I can say is, that when we have taken our leave of the young folks, who are going to France, it is Mrs. Pringle's intent, as well as mine, to turn our horses'

heads northward, and make our way with what speed we can, for our own quiet home, among you. So no more at present from your friend and pastor,

Z. PRINGLE.

Mrs. Tod, the mother of Miss Isabella, a respectable widow lady, who had quiescently joined the company, proposed that they should now drink health, happiness, and all manner of prosperity, to the young couple; and that nothing might be wanting to secure the favourable auspices of good omens to the toast, she desired Miss Isabella to draw fresh bottles of white and red. When all manner of felicity was duly wished in wine to the captain and his lady, the party rose to seek their respective homes. But a bustle at the street-door occasioned a pause. Mrs. Tod inquired the matter; and three or four voices at once replied, that an express had come from Garnock for Nanse Swaddle the midwife, Mrs. Craig being taken with her pains.

"Mr. Snodgrass," said Mrs. Glibbans, instantly and emphatically, "ye maun let me go with you, and we can spiritualise on the road; for I hae promis't Mrs. Craig to be wi' her at the crying, to see the upshot—so I hope you will come awa."

It would be impossible in us to suppose, that Mr. Snodgrass had any objections to spiritualise with Mrs. Glibbans on the road between Irvine and Garnock; but, notwithstanding her urgency, he excused himself from going with her; however, he recommended her to the special care and protection of Mr. Micklewham, who was at that time on his legs to return home. “Oh! Mr. Snodgrass,” said the lady, looking slyly, as she adjusted her cloak, at him and Miss Isabella, “there will be marrying and giving in marriage till the day of judgment.” And with these oracular words she took her departure.

CHAPTER X—THE RETURN

On Friday, Miss Mally Glencairn received a brief note from Mrs.

Pringle, informing her, that she and the Doctor would reach the manse, “God willing,” in time for tea on Saturday; and begging her, therefore, to go over from Irvine, and see that the house was in order for their reception. This note was written from Glasgow, where they had arrived, in their own carriage, from Carlisle on the preceding day, after encountering, as Mrs. Pringle said, “more hardships and extorshoning than all the dangers of the sea which they met with in the smack of Leith that took them to London.”

As soon as Miss Mally received this intelligence, she went to Miss Isabella Tod, and requested her company for the next day to Garnock, where they arrived betimes to dine with Mr. Snodgrass. Mrs.

Glibbans and her daughter Becky were then on a consolatory visit to Mr. Craig. We mentioned in the last chapter, that the crying of Mrs. Craig had come on; and that Mrs. Glibbans, according to promise, and with the most anxious solicitude, had gone to wait the upshot. The upshot was most melancholy,—Mrs. Craig was soon no more;—she was taken, as Mrs. Glibbans observed on the occasion, from the earthly arms of her husband, to the spiritual bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which was far better. But the baby survived; so that, what with getting a nurse, and the burial, and all the work and handling that a birth and death in one house at the same time causes, Mr. Craig declared, that he could not do without Mrs. Glibbans; and she, with all that Christianity by which she was so zealously distinguished, sent for Miss Becky, and took up her abode with him till it would please Him, without whom there is no comfort, to wipe the eyes of the pious elder. In a word, she staid so long, that a rumour began to spread that Mr. Craig would need a wife to look after his bairn; and that Mrs. Glibbans was destined to supply the desideratum.

Mr. Snodgrass, after enjoying his dinner society with Miss Mally and Miss Isabella, thought it necessary to dispatch a courier, in the shape of a barefooted servant lass, to Mr. Micklewham, to inform the elders that the Doctor was expected home in time for tea, leaving it to their discretion either to greet his safe return at the manse, or in any other form or manner that would be most agreeable to themselves. These important news were soon diffused through the

clachan. Mr. Mickleham dismissed his school an hour before the wonted time, and there was a universal interest and curiosity excited, to see the Doctor coming home in his own coach. All the boys of Garnock assembled at the braehead which commands an extensive view of the Kilmarnock road, the only one from Glasgow that runs through the parish; the wives with their sucklings were seated on the large stones at their respective door-cheeks; while their cats were calmly reclining on the window soles. The lassie weans, like clustering bees, were mounted on the carts that stood before Thomas Birlpenny the vintner's door, churming with anticipated delight; the old men took their stations on the dike that incloses the side of the vintner's kail-yard, and "a batch of wabster lads," with green aprons and thin yellow faces, planted themselves at the gable of the malt kiln, where they were wont, when trade was better, to play at the hand-ball; but, poor fellows, since the trade fell off, they have had no heart for the game, and the vintner's half-mutchkin stoups glitter in empty splendour unrequired on the shelf below the brazen sconce above the bracepiece, amidst the idle pewter pepper-boxes, the bright copper tea-kettle, the coffee-pot that has never been in use, and lids of saucepans that have survived their principals,—the wonted ornaments of every trig change-house kitchen.

The season was far advanced; but the sun shone at his setting with a glorious composure, and the birds in the hedges and on the boughs were again gladdened into song. The leaves had fallen thickly, and the stubble-fields were bare, but Autumn, in a many-coloured tartan plaid, was seen still walking with matronly composure in the woodlands, along the brow of the neighbouring hills.

About half-past four o'clock, a movement was seen among the callans at the braehead, and a shout announced that a carriage was in sight.

It was answered by a murmuring response of satisfaction from the whole village. In the course of a few minutes the carriage reached the turnpike—it was of the darkest green and the gravest fashion,—

a large trunk, covered with Russian matting, and fastened on with cords, prevented from chafing it by knots of straw rope, occupied the front,—behind, other two were fixed in the same manner, the lesser of course uppermost; and deep beyond a pile of light bundles and bandboxes, that occupied a large portion of the interior, the blithe faces of the Doctor and Mrs. Pringle were discovered. The boys huzzaed, the Doctor flung them penny-pieces, and the mistress baubees.

As the carriage drove along, the old men on the dike stood up and reverently took off their hats and bonnets. The weaver lads gazed with a melancholy smile; the lassies on the carts clapped their hands with joy; the women on both sides of the street acknowledged the recognising nods; while all the village dogs, surprised by the sound of chariot wheels, came baying and barking forth, and sent off the cats that were so doucely sitting on the window soles, clambering and scampering over the roofs in terror of their lives.

When the carriage reached the manse door, Mr. Snodgrass, the two ladies, with Mr. Micklewham, and all the elders except Mr. Craig, were there ready to receive the travellers. But over this joy of welcoming we must draw a veil; for the first thing that the Doctor did, on entering the parlour and before sitting down, was to return thanks for his safe restoration to his home and people.

The carriage was then unloaded, and as package, bale, box, and bundle were successively brought in, Miss Mally Glencairn expressed her admiration at the great capacity of the chaise. "Ay," said Mrs.

Pringle, "but you know not what we have suffert for't in coming through among the English taverns on the road; some of them would not take us forward when there was a hill to pass, unless we would take four horses, and every one after another reviled us for having no mercy in loading the carriage like a waggon,—and then the drivers were so gleg and impudent, that it was worse than martyrdom to come with them. Had the Doctor taken my advice, he would have brought our own civil London coachman, whom we hired with his own horses by the job; but he said it behoved us to gi'e our ain fish guts to our ain sea-maws, and that he designed to fee Thomas Birlpenny's hostler for our coachman, being a lad of the parish.

This obliged us to post it from London; but, oh! Miss Mally, what an outlay it has been!"

The Doctor, in the meantime, had entered into conversation with the gentlemen, and was inquiring, in the most particular manner, respecting all his parishioners, and expressing his surprise that Mr. Craig had not been at the manse with the rest of the elders.

"It does not look well," said the Doctor. Mr. Daff, however, offered the best apology for his absence that could be made. "He has had a gentle dispensation,

sir—Mrs. Craig has won awa’ out of this sinful world, poor woman, she had a large experience o’t; but the bairns to the fore, and Mrs. Glibbans, that has such a cast of grace, has ta’en charge of the house since before the interment.

It’s thought, considering what’s by gane, Mr. Craig may do waur than make her mistress, and I hope, sir, your exhortation will no be wanting to egg the honest man to think o’t seriously.”

Mr. Snodgrass, before delivering the household keys, ordered two bottles of wine, with glasses and biscuit, to be set upon the table, while Mrs. Pringle produced from a paper package, that had helped to stuff one of the pockets of the carriage, a piece of rich plum-cake, brought all the way from a confectioner’s in Cockspur Street, London, not only for the purpose of being eaten, but, as she said, to let Miss Nanny Eydent pree, in order to direct the Irvine bakers how to bake others like it.

Tea was then brought in; and, as it was making, the Doctor talked aside to the elders, while Mrs. Pringle recounted to Miss Mally and Miss Isabella the different incidents of her adventures subsequent to the marriage of Miss Rachel.

“The young folk,” said she, “having gone to Brighton, we followed them in a few days, for we were told it was a curiosity, and that the king has a palace there, just a warld’s wonder! and, truly, Miss Mally, it is certainly not like a house for a creature of this world, but for some Grand Turk or Chinaman. The Doctor said, it put him in mind of Miss Jenny Macbride’s sideboard in the Stockwell of Glasgow; where all the pepper-boxes, poories, and teapots, punch-bowls, and china-candlesticks of her progenitors are set out for a show, that tells her visitors, they are but seldom put to use. As for the town of Brighton, it’s what I would call a gawky piece of London. I could see nothing in it but a wheen idlers, hearing twa lads, at night, crying, “Five, six, seven for a shilling,” in the booksellers’ shops, with a play-actor lady singing in a corner, because her voice would not do for the players’ stage. Therefore, having seen the Captain and Mrs. Sabre off to France, we came home to London; but it’s not to be told what we had to pay at the hotel where we staid in Brighton. Howsomever, having come back to London, we settled our counts,—and, buying a few necessars, we prepared for Scotland,—and here we are. But travelling has surely a fine effect in enlarging the understanding; for both the Doctor and me thought, as we came along, that everything had a smaller and poorer look than when we went away; and I dinna think this room is just what it used to be. What think ye o’t, Miss

Isabella? How would ye like to spend your days in't?"

Miss Isabella reddened at this question; but Mrs. Pringle, who was as prudent as she was observant, affecting not to notice this, turned round to Miss Mally Glencairn, and said softly in her ear,—

"Rachel was Bell's confidante, and has told us all about what's going on between her and Mr. Snodgrass. We have agreed no to stand in their way, as soon as the Doctor can get a mailing or two to secure his money upon."

Meantime, the Doctor received from the elders a very satisfactory account of all that had happened among his people, both in and out of the Session, during his absence; and he was vastly pleased to find there had been no inordinate increase of wickedness; at the same time, he was grieved for the condition in which the poor weavers still continued, saying, that among other things of which he had been of late meditating, was the setting up of a lending bank in the parish for the labouring classes, where, when they were out of work, "bits of loans for a house-rent, or a brat of claes, or sic like, might be granted, to be repaid when trade grew better, and thereby take away the objection that an honest pride had to receiving help from the Session."

Then some lighter general conversation ensued, in which the Doctor gave his worthy counsellors a very jocose description of many of the lesser sort of adventures which he had met with; and the ladies having retired to inspect the great bargains that Mrs. Pringle had got, and the splendid additions she had made to her wardrobe, out of what she denominated the dividends of the present portion of the legacy, the Doctor ordered in the second biggest toddy-bowl, the guardevine with the old rum, and told the lassie to see if the tea-kettle was still boiling. "Ye maun drink our welcome hame," said he to the elders; "it would nae otherwise be canny. But I'm sorry Mr.

Craig has nae come." At these words the door opened, and the absent elder entered, with a long face and a deep sigh. "Ha!" cried Mr.

Daff, "this is very droll. Speak of the Evil One, and he'll appear";—which words dinted on the heart of Mr. Craig, who thought his marriage in December had been the subject of their discourse.

The Doctor, however, went up and shook him cordially by the hand, and said, "Now I take this very kind, Mr. Craig; for I could not have expected you,

considering ye have got, as I am told, your jo in the house"; at which words the Doctor winked paukily to Mr. Daff, who rubbed his hands with fainness, and gave a good-humoured sort of keckling laugh. This facetious stroke of policy was a great relief to the afflicted elder, for he saw by it that the Doctor did not mean to trouble him with any inquiries respecting his deceased wife; and, in consequence, he put on a blither face, and really affected to have forgotten her already more than he had done in sincerity.

Thus the night passed in decent temperance and a happy decorum; insomuch, that the elders when they went away, either by the influence of the toddy-bowl, or the Doctor's funny stories about the Englishers, declared that he was an excellent man, and, being none lifted up, was worthy of his rich legacy.

At supper, the party, besides the minister and Mrs. Pringle, consisted of the two Irvine ladies, and Mr. Snodgrass. Miss Becky Glibbans came in when it was about half over, to express her mother's sorrow at not being able to call that night, "Mr. Craig's bairn having taken an ill turn." The truth, however, was, that the worthy elder had been rendered somewhat tozy by the minister's toddy, and wanted an opportunity to inform the old lady of the joke that had been played upon him by the Doctor calling her his jo, and to see how she would relish it. So by a little address Miss Becky was sent out of the way, with the excuse we have noticed; at the same time, as the night was rather sharp, it is not to be supposed that she would have been the bearer of any such message, had her own curiosity not enticed her.

During supper the conversation was very lively. Many "pickant jokes," as Miss Becky described them, were cracked by the Doctor; but, soon after the table was cleared, he touched Mr. Snodgrass on the arm, and, taking up one of the candles, went with him to his study, where he then told him, that Rachel Pringle, now Mrs. Sabre, had informed him of a way in which he could do him a service. "I understand, sir," said the Doctor, "that you have a notion of Miss Bell Tod, but that until ye get a kirk there can be no marriage.

But the auld horse may die waiting for the new grass; and, therefore, as the Lord has put it in my power to do a good action both to you and my people,—whom I am glad to hear you have pleased so well,—if it can be brought about that you could be made helper and successor, I'll no object to give up to you the whole stipend, and, by and by, maybe the manse to the bargain. But that is if you marry Miss Bell; for it was a promise that Rachel gar't me make to her on her wedding

morning. Ye know she was a forecasting lassie, and, I have reason to believe, has said nothing anent this to Miss Bell herself; so that if you have no partiality for Miss Bell, things will just rest on their own footing; but if you have a notion, it must be a satisfaction to you to know this, as it will be a pleasure to me to carry it as soon as possible into effect.”

Mr. Snodgrass was a good deal agitated; he was taken by surprise, and without words the Doctor might have guessed his sentiments; he, however, frankly confessed that he did entertain a very high opinion of Miss Bell, but that he was not sure if a country parish would exactly suit him. “Never mind that,” said the Doctor; “if it does not fit at first, you will get used to it; and if a better casts up, it will be no obstacle.”

The two gentlemen then rejoined the ladies, and, after a short conversation, Miss Becky Glibbans was admonished to depart, by the servants bringing in the Bibles for the worship of the evening.

This was usually performed before supper, but, owing to the bowl being on the table, and the company jocose, it had been postponed till all the guests who were not to sleep in the house had departed.

The Sunday morning was fine and bright for the season; the hoarfrost, till about an hour after sunrise, lay white on the grass and tombstones in the churchyard; but before the bell rung for the congregation to assemble, it was exhaled away, and a freshness, that was only known to be autumnal by the fallen and yellow leaves that strewed the church-way path from the ash and plane trees in the avenue, encouraged the spirits to sympathise with the universal cheerfulness of all nature.

The return of the Doctor had been bruited through the parish with so much expedition, that, when the bell rung for public worship, none of those who were in the practice of stopping in the churchyard to talk about the weather were so ignorant as not to have heard of this important fact. In consequence, before the time at which the Doctor was wont to come from the back-gate which opened from the manse-garden into the churchyard, a great majority of his people were assembled to receive him.

At the last jingle of the bell, the back-gate was usually opened, and the Doctor was wont to come forth as punctually as a cuckoo of a clock at the striking of the

hour; but a deviation was observed on this occasion. Formerly, Mrs. Pringle and the rest of the family came first, and a few minutes were allowed to elapse before the Doctor, laden with grace, made his appearance. But at this time, either because it had been settled that Mr. Snodgrass was to officiate, or for some other reason, there was a breach in the observance of this time-honoured custom.

As the ringing of the bell ceased, the gate unclosed, and the Doctor came forth. He was of that easy sort of feather-bed corpulency of form that betokens good-nature, and had none of that smooth, red, well-filled protuberancy, which indicates a choleric humour and a testy temper. He was in fact what Mrs. Glibbans denominated “a man of a gausy external.” And some little change had taken place during his absence in his visible equipage. His stockings, which were wont to be of worsted, had undergone a translation into silk; his waist-coat, instead—of the venerable Presbyterian flap-covers to the pockets, which were of Johnsonian magnitude, was become plain—his coat in all times single-breasted, with no collar, still, however, maintained its ancient characteristics; instead, however, of the former bright black cast horn, the buttons were covered with cloth.

But the chief alteration was discernible in the furniture of the head. He had exchanged the simplicity of his own respectable grey hairs for the cauliflower hoariness of a PARRISH {3} wig, on which he wore a broad-brimmed hat, turned up a little at each side behind, in a portentous manner, indicatory of Episcopalian predilections.

This, however, was not justified by any alteration in his principles, being merely an innocent variation of fashion, the natural result of a Doctor of Divinity buying a hat and wig in London.

The moment that the Doctor made his appearance, his greeting and salutation was quite delightful; it was that of a father returned to his children, and a king to his people.

Almost immediately after the Doctor, Mrs. Pringle, followed by Miss Mally Glencairn and Miss Isabella Tod, also debouched from the gate, and the assembled females remarked, with no less instinct, the transmutation which she had undergone. She was dressed in a dark blue cloth pelisse, trimmed with a dyed fur, which, as she told Miss Mally, “looked quite as well as sable, without costing a third of the money.” A most matronly muff, that, without being of

sable, was of an excellent quality, contained her hands; and a very large Leghorn straw bonnet, decorated richly, but far from excess, with a most substantial band and bow of a broad crimson satin ribbon around her head.

If the Doctor was gratified to see his people so gladly thronging around him, Mrs. Pringle had no less pleasure also in her thrice-welcome reception. It was an understood thing, that she had been mainly instrumental in enabling the minister to get his great Indian legacy; and in whatever estimation she may have been previously held for her economy and management, she was now looked up to as a personage skilled in the law, and particularly versed in testamentary erudition. Accordingly, in the customary testimonials of homage with which she was saluted in her passage to the church door, there was evidently a sentiment of veneration mingled, such as had never been evinced before, and which was neither unobserved nor unappreciated by that acute and perspicacious lady.

The Doctor himself did not preach, but sat in the minister's pew till Mr. Snodgrass had concluded an eloquent and truly an affecting sermon; at the end of which, the Doctor rose and went up into the pulpit, where he publicly returned thanks for the favours and blessings he had obtained during his absence, and for the safety in which he had been restored, after many dangers and tribulations, to the affections of his parishioners.

Such were the principal circumstances that marked the return of the family. In the course of the week after, the estate of Moneypennies being for sale, it was bought for the Doctor as a great bargain. It was not, however, on account of the advantageous nature of the purchase that our friend valued this acquisition, but entirely because it was situated in his own parish, and part of the lands marching with the Glebe.

The previous owner of Moneypennies had built an elegant house on the estate, to which Mrs. Pringle is at present actively preparing to remove from the manse; and it is understood, that, as Mr. Snodgrass was last week declared helper, and successor to the Doctor, his marriage with Miss Isabella Tod will take place with all convenient expedition. There is also reason to believe, that, as soon as decorum will permit, any scruple which Mrs. Glibbans had to a second marriage is now removed, and that she will soon again grace the happy circle of wives by the name of Mrs. Craig. Indeed, we are assured that Miss Nanny Eydent is actually at this time employed in making up her wedding garments; for, last week, that worthy and respectable young person was known to have visited

Bailie Delap's shop, at a very early hour in the morning, and to have priced many things of a bridal character, besides getting swatches; after which she was seen to go to Mrs. Glibbans's house, where she remained a very considerable time, and to return straight therefrom to the shop, and purchase divers of the articles which she had priced and inspected; all of which constitute sufficient grounds for the general opinion in Irvine, that the union of Mr. Craig with Mrs.

Glibbans is a happy event drawing near to consummation.

Footnotes:

{1} The administration of the Sacrament.

{2} The honest Doctor's version of this bon mot of her majesty is not quite correct; her expression was, "I mean to take a chop at the King's Head when I get to London."

{3} See the Edinburgh Review, for an account of our old friend, Dr.

Parr's wig, and Spital Sermon.

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