

THE DIARY OF A GALLOWAY LAIRD 323

"Make your proposition. I will consider it. If it is just I will accept it. If not, not."

Our laird is an honourable gentleman who has had large experience, and knows exactly the value of time. When first he rode south he marked the distances, the inns, and what could be obtained at them. He is therefore able to give the clearest information possible to his tenants for their direction on the trips to Lainshaw—where without doubt, they will find themselves both generously and amply entertained.

Among all his farms Mr. Cuninghame is evidently most impressed with that of Drumglass. It is here that he stays when among his tenantry. The daughter of the house pleases him. She is always neat and clean, well educated (of course), with a fortune large for the time and country—altogether evidently a prize in the local marriage market.

He sleeps in the fine four-poster bed, which (like the lady of the house) is also remarked upon as being neat and clean—besides being curtained from draughts when the wind blows about the windy eminence on which the house stands. With a sigh the tired laird of Lainshaw snuggles his weary limbs between the sheets, and draws up to his chin the warm blankets and coverlets with a sense of genial well-being. He is pleased with his purchase, pleased with his tenantry, pleased with his hostess. He reflects that he will not rack-rent them, neither cause them to leave his farms unlet on his hands. He knows that the ability to keep good tenants on his land is better than a few pounds of extra rent.

Sound is his sleep, and in the morning he awakes to a Galloway breakfast, porridge doubtless, though he does not name them, of a thicker consistency than those of Ayrshire. (The plural demonstrative is used advisedly.)

It may be surmised, however, that the good folk of Drumglass thought porridge beneath the dignity of a laird, and took theirs early in the morning before the great man got up. At any rate they did not scant him of other provend. Beef and mutton ham sliced on platters, fresh scones of divers sorts, oatmeal cakes in farles crisp from the girdle, and pats of fresh