

materialism. Imagination is, day by day waxing dim as a sick man's taper at day break. The old kindly usages of our forefathers are sneered down, as being of no mercantile utility. Religion is fast becoming a mere cento of rationalistic propositions, cold, lifeless, and unfructifying. And as for politics, are they not summed up and comprehended, in the single, sordid word *railroads*?

DOCTOR.—Thou Leviathan of croakers!

LAIRD.—There is ae thing to be said in favour o' Crabtree's theory, which is, that poets are deicin' oot, as railroads increase. Look at the auld kintra, for instance. Sam Rogers is the only bard worthy o' the name, that's left to the fore. Doubtless, there are some cleverish verse-makers, such as the Laureate, and Massey and Sauners Smith, but will ony ane tell me that the best o' the lot is honestly entitled to the rank o' a first class poet? Na, na! Twenty years ago they would hae been looked upon as minnows—bonnie creatures I grant—but still only minnows, sporting and playing among the saumons and pikes, and cods o' the sea o' ideality! As for Dollar-dom she never had any thing but rhymsters at the very best, so that her loss would na' be great if twa lines were never again jingled in her borders!

MAJOR.—Jonathan has mightily degenerated as a prose fictionist since the commencement of the *iron age*.

LAIRD.—Naebody can deny the truth o' that, without telling a notorious lee. Charles Brockdon Brown, and Washington Irving, and Fennimore Cooper furnish a striking contrast to the authors o' sic emasculated dish washings as *Uncle Tam*, and the *Lamp Lighter*. The former, may be likened and compared to substantial, appeeteezin' hotch potch, and the latter to tastless, fusionless muslin kail! I mak' it a point o' conscience never to read, and far less to buy a novel that bears to be "entered, according to Act of Congress" in the "Clerks office" o' a Yankee State! Without opening a page o' the production you may safely mak' affidavit before me, or ony other o' Her Majesty's Justices o' the Peace, that it is trash to the spinal marrow!

DOCTOR.—Speaking of novels, Bonnie Braes, have you fallen in with Mrs. Grey's last story "The Young Husband?"

LAIRD.—No. Is it as guide as her "Gambler's Wife?"

DOCTOR.—Better, by several degrees, in my humble opinion.

MAJOR.—Mrs. Grey is a clever writer, but too fond of dwelling upon the darker features of our fallen humanity. She is always straining after painful effects.

DOCTOR.—Such is the distinguishing characteristic of her present work. An amiable young girl is married to a scamp who does not care two pence for her, and is continually keeping her in scalding water.

LAIRD.—What is the use o' writing sic havers, I should like to ken! When a man takes up a story book it is for the purpose o' relaxation. He has been worn oot wi sewing breeks, if a tailor—or skelpin' dogged laddies, if a school-master—or ploughing, if a farmer, like your humble servant—or battling for the possession o' some corpse, if a Toronto coroner—or wi' telling lees if a lawyer—or eggin on chuckle-head women to squander the cash o' their misfortunate husbands in silks and lace, if a haberdasher. The creature lees down upon a sofa, lights his pipe, and opens the volume expectin' to be entertained and diverted. But, losh pity me, ere he has read a dizen pages he fluids himself in a perfect bog o' misery and tribulation—up to the vera oxters in sorrow—and far mair inclined to greet than to laugh! Whaur is the relaxation there, I should like to ken? The puir man might as well apply a blister o' Spanish flees to his hinder-end, or divert himself by walking wi unboiled peas in his pumps!

DOCTOR.—I perfectly agree with you. There is enough, and more than enough, of cark and care in this planet of ours, without seeking to import any of the article from dream land.

MAJOR.—How does Mother Grey's romance end?

DOCTOR.—Why the scampish hero gets converted by the opera-singer with whom helevants, and makes a "happy end!"

MAJOR.—Such a style of catastrophe is consumedly popular in the present day and generation. The ancient fallacy, which declares that "the greater sinner is the greater saint," is quite at a premium at present.

LAIRD.—Never was there a mair mischievous bouncer coined, oot o' a place that shall be nameless! I'll tak' guid care that Girzy does na' get the "*Young Husband*" into her clutches, or wha' kens but that she will be making a moon licht flittin' wi' some drucken, worthless neer-do-weel, on the calculation that he will be turn-