

ary had been spiked. Dressing themselves as expeditiously as possible they hurried to the fort, only to learn that the report was true. Consternation was on every face, and disturbed imagination suggested pictures in which shrieks and wounds and blood were the least disagreeable features. But all agreed, although some more tremblingly than others, that death itself was preferable to dishonor, and that the town should never yield so long as there were powder and shot. The best brains were turned to what was supposed to be the best account, and suggestions were offered sufficient in number to supply a debating society with material for discussion for a year, and wild and varied enough to convert a placid philosopher into a lunatic. At last some one proposed to send for the blacksmith to drill out the touch holes, and this being generally approved, a messenger was sent for him post haste; but before the return of the envoy with the mechanic, our David, who was among the onlookers, quietly requested that the guns should be turned over, and behold when this was done the unspiked vents appeared, and it became manifest that the semblances to spiking was due to the use of the file and other tools. My friend of the artillery service informs me that a cannon, even a very elderly cannon, is so constructed about the touch hole that no one knowing anything of such an instrument could have been deceived in the manner related. To this I can only reply that it is very sad that practical men will insist upon the investigation of the details of traditions; that my critic very likely has never seen ordinance of the kind in use at Fort Tipperary; and that, in any event, a fiction is for many purposes as good as a truth.

It is only fair to say that Mr. George Mowat of St. Andrews, a cousin of my father, the mother of the