

village. Wishing to have the opinion of those, whom long residence had made familiar with its resources, he invited the village bankers, two doctors, two lawyers and Mr. Hamilton to dinner.

As Mr. Russel made a pride of having a well-stocked cellar and sideboard, wines and liquors of the choicest brands were freely served.

"May I have the pleasure of drinking wine with you, Mr. Hamilton?" the fair hostess blandly asked. Not having the moral courage to say that he did not drink wine, he filled his glass and raised it to his lips. He preferred to debase himself in his own eyes rather than incur even the suspicion of want of gallantry in those of his hostess. After she had retired the conversation turned on the proposed manufactory. One of its strongest recommenders was Dr. Angus, who was loud in his praise of his host's liquors, and whose frequent applications to the bottle showed that he intended to enjoy them. He was a short, rubicund, jovial-looking man, with hair as woolly as a negro's almost, and temperament almost as excitable. His small black eyes twinkled out, half-covered by his bloated cheeks.

His rival, Dr. Fergus, was a very different man. He sat at the end of the table and only spoke when he was directly addressed. Any one watching his extreme temperance at dinner, the simple repast he took consisting merely of a small slice of beef, a piece of bread and a drink of water; the care which he took of his dress, living at table apparently in constant dread of having some one upset a gravy boat on his immaculate black coat and shepherd plaid trousers, would have felt that he was eccentric, and probably considered him small in his eccentricity. Nor would they have been far wrong. His mother, a narrow but strong-minded woman, who considered that virtue, goodness, and truth had no representative in the world save herself, had brought him up after her own heart. When a boy he was never suffered to play with his peers, lest he should be contaminated by them. When he went to college his mother accompanied him, going there on foot, for she was very poor. There was no danger of his getting into

bad habits in the city, or of getting any of his contracted views of life expanded, for he was not permitted by his mother (and he never thought of disputing her commands) to go anywhere, except to his class, without being accompanied by her. Never allowing him to forget that it was by the sweat of her brow he had obtained his educational advantages, she kept him closely at his studies. When the college session was over mother and son together sought employment amid the farmers of Mid Lothian, and by the strictest economy laid past sufficient to meet the winter's expenses. After his eight years of attendance had expired, Dr. Fergus left Edinburgh with a very excellent diploma, but knowing almost as little of men and life as when he entered it, his mother carrying on her back his slender wardrobe and her own. By his mother's command he settled in Weston, his native village, and being skilful, careful, and methodical, obtained considerable practice. His time was divided between the duties of his profession, taking care of a little Shetland pony, his mother had bargained for, and discovering what meats agreed and disagreed with his system. His mother of course presided over his house, and occupied her time in taking care of the Doctor, as she always took pains to call him, fretting herself lest he should take cold or get into bad company, taking care of her houseplants, railing at mankind in general and the people of Weston in particular, getting herself into fits of indignation against the Pope and his lazy cardinals. She firmly believed that it was her mission, and that of her son, to warn the world of its wickedness, and that unless it speedily repented it would be destroyed. She would join no Christian church, though she regularly attended the Presbyterian.

She had taken great pains to dress him for this dinner, for she was ambitious for him, though she would not acknowledge it; and giving him great charges to take care and not eat too much fruit, and putting her head out of the front window looking into the street, to scream after him to take care and not stain his black coat, she had dismissed him with an umbrella. This last appendage was a part of himself; he had