



THE sun is shining gently through misty clouds; there is a feeling of soft freshness in the air which tells of green grass springing on the hills, and sending its sweet breath abroad to whisper of the new life which is fast approaching completion. It is all very tempting, and almost before we have made up our minds what to do we find ourselves strolling towards that Mecca of tourists—Princess St.

It is Saturday morning, a time when that thoroughfare assumes the character of a grand promenade for beauty, wealth and fashion. Gay groups pass incessantly. They seem to be gregarious creatures, these Scotch folk who are usually defined as reserved and undemonstrative.

As we turn the corner a handsome, aristocratic looking old lady, in garments of the very newest cut, passes, chatting confidentially with a contemporary who evidently possesses the courage of her convictions. No modern nonsense for her. A coal scuttle bonnet engulfs her placid features; from throat to knees extend a velvet pelisse under which appears a short skirt, the flounces of which are well distended by a crinoline. Behind, stroll two young exquisites, wearing light, kid gloves, silk hats and overcoats of fawn and pale green, the lapels of which are decorated with large bunches of violets.

Jostling against their faultless attire is a young boy with a sharp eager face. He, too, has violets, but they are slung on a tray about his neck. His bare feet almost tread on a pair of patent leather shod ones, and his rags brush against a pale green sleeve as he lustily cries his wares, 'Violets, sweet violets, pefiny a bunch!'

On the steps of a hotel a little further on stands a typical 'Mrs. Ponsonby,' with a small daughter on oneside and a smaller son on the other. Very demure and stiff looking little ones they are. One can easily imagine the boy to be a miniature of 'fathah' with his long ulster, Christie hat, well fitting kid gloves, and neatly furled umbrella; while his sister's small nose gives promise of developing the decided curve which renders her mother's so imposing.

Three girls pass with glowing cheeks and bright eyes. They hold themselves erect and walk with ease in the stout, heavy shoes, which are revealed as the wind blows back their skirts. They turn to glance admiringly at two French poodles which trot behind their young mistresses.

'What darlings,' cries one girl, as she surveys the shaved proportions of the canine pair. Both dogs are sleek and well grown; their natural protection of curly black hair ends just at the proper spots, and their tails wave like small dusky palm trees. One has a top-knot of black curls tied with a bow of blue ribbon, and his silly, simpering expression as this bob over his blinking eyes, makes one feel quite sorry, as for 'one more sensible dog gone wrong.' They are very discreet little dogs, too, and keep their eyes straight ahead, even when a bus filled with shouting boys in piper's costume rumbles on its way to the International football match, where the impulsive fervor of Paddy is to be pitted against Sandy's canny shrewdness. Another bus follows closely behind its exterior smothered in advertisements, its driver seated behind a barrier upon which are set forth in glowing terms the merits of a well-known food

for infants; and as one glances at the fat, rubicund countenance above, one wonders if it has been placed there as a testimonial.

On our side of the broad thoroughfare are lines of handsome shops, where light straw hats and bonnets, adorned with many colored flowers make a brave show; and better than these artificial creations, are nature's own spring beauties displayed in many windows; masses of violets, tulips, lilacs, lilies-of-the-valley, daffodils and hyacinths, all fresh, and fragrant, and ridiculously cheap.

'Yes; its a real nice building,' remarks a fair tourist, as she gazes across the street to where, from the summit of a cool, grey cliff, Edinburgh Castle looks down in haughty isolation; and as we, too, pause to admire the scene, we are accosted by a fair native of the place whose acquaintance we have recently made, and having retired to a doorway, are introduced to her father, who stands before us, very rigid, very grave, in the professional top hat and frock coat.

'This is Miss M.—, father,—just from Canada,' and the daughter waves her hand towards Miss M. with the air of a showman.

'Oh! Ah!' says the old gentleman, adjusting a pair of gold rimmed eyeglasses the better to examine the new specimen just offered to his notice.

'And this is Miss B.—, father,—just from Canada.'

'Oh! Ah!' remarks father again, in exactly the same tone as before, while he transfers his gaze of interested curiosity to my humble self. As his pointed observations appear to call for no reply, we venture upon none, and he surveys us in turn and in silence for the space of a minute, when he says with his soft Scottish burr, 'Ah, so you are just out, are you?'

We hint that this is rather an unpleasant way of putting it, being suggestive of convicts or lunatics.

'Ah, indeed?' he answers mildly; and dropping his eyeglasses suddenly, relapses into meditative silence until we bid himself and his daughter farewell and proceed on our way.

Turning from the ever changing, prosperous looking throng we pass into a side street, and after mounting a hill, enter a stone archway. Everything is stone here, pavements, steps, houses. It is dark and damp and our footsteps echo dismally as we traverse several nights of steps and proceed along a narrow passage walled in by tall houses. Some men lounging in a doorway glance inquiringly at us as we pass, but make no remark. They are ragged and hard featured and have a look of dogged misery. Presently we issue on High street, and are once more in the midst of teeming human life.

But what a contrast to the careless throng we have just left! Spring tailinery is evidently not patronized here unless you dignify by that name the straw hat with its tawdry feather hanging limply on the frowsy head of a young girl, whose face wears a set smile more pitiful than tears, or the torn tartan shawl protecting the grey hairs of the wretched, leering woman who staggers across the street, clutching a black bottle tightly in one hand. But for the most part a luxuriant and uncared for head of hair is considered sufficient covering. Groups of women stand and gossip

here as on Princess street, but in place of sleek, pampered poodles, led by silver chains, there are emaciated babies wrapped in coarse shawls; and there is a forbiddleness of expression not permitted in polite circles. But, after all, surely this is a merry place. Listen to the laughter; don't think of the hollowness, the coarseness of it.

And here comes a fine 'soney lassie' with a physique which many a man might envy. She is a fish wife, with her heavy shoes, home knitted stockings, short coarse blue serge skirt, loose jacket with sleeves turned back to the elbow, red kerchief showing at her throat, and the heavy creel on her back supported by a strap crossing her forehead. She is cleanly, healthy and energetic, and as she steps briskly on her way her eyes are fastened on the knitting which her fingers are busily plying.

Yes, but look behind. A pitiful figure shuffles along. A young woman in a ragged old gown, a thin shawl partly thrown over her red hair, partly wrapped about a puny infant. As she hurries past, her red and swollen eyes look vacantly before her in dumb misery. The dirt on her thin cheeks is furrowed by recent tears. In her blind haste she almost stumbles upon a tiny urchin who is gleefully scrubbing the pavement with an old blacking brush, while his baby brother sits near and howls with envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. Some more small boys are intent upon a game of football, their dirty bare feet receiving many a hard knock, as they kick a projecting cobblestone in the roadway, instead of the bundle of rags which does duty for a ball.

We peep into some of the 'closes,' 'courts,' or 'wynds,' as they are called. Most of them are entered by a stone archway which leads to a narrow passage walled in by dilapidated houses, on the doorposts of which you may often find some old inscription or coat of arms; for Cannongate was once the aristocratic residence quarter. And whereas now electricity sheds its cold white light on scenes of squalor, noise, and dirt, flaring torches once lit up gay pageants and showed my lord and lady stepping forth from one of these very tenements, perchance on their way to dine with an earl farther down the street.

For three centuries have some of these houses looked upon varied scenes; grandeur and revelry, battle and death, life and misery. In that plain stone church farther down the street, the beautiful Mary Stuart was married to Boswell, and a brilliant following of ladies and courtiers passed from the gateway where now some neglected looking children are playing hop Scotch with a piece of stone—children everywhere, playing, working, fighting, laughing, weeping.

In passing a tiny shop in the window of which are some dusty papers, we spy a quaint figure within, and enter, ostensibly to buy a pencil. A little bit of a woman, whose thin grey locks are fantastically arranged in curl papers rises to greet us. She is very friendly, and on my lifting the corner of a shabby little photograph album lying on the counter, she beams upon me, and proceeds to exhibit its contents.

'Ma son, eh! but he's a bonnie laddie, wi' his curly porr. An' ma brother, th' waenister, a rich and guid mon—to be an Episcopalian. Ye'r Episcopalian yersel! Ah, weel! I hae nae deet