

MAJOR.—Judge from the following snatch of an essay upon our great English epic—

“In our apprehension Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a very bad novel—a book, whose mischief in theology, moral tone, and general influence, are not atoned for even by its poetry!”

LAIRD.—Hoot awa' wi' the clatty land louter! Let my freend and benefactress, Jenny, hae his tinkler-tongued trash, in order to sing geese wi'! If I kened whaur the Toronto hangman puts up, I would gie him a groat, in order to burn the abomination at the common place o' execution.

DOCTOR.—You perceive, Laird, that an *Elder* can write heresy as well as a meaner mortal!

LAIRD.—None o' your impudence, ye railing Rab-shakeh! Oh, I wish I had ye before the Kirk Session for half an hour! Foul fa' me, if I wadna' gie ye a face red as a pickled beet!

MAJOR.—By the way, Bonnie Braes, in case I forget it, let me give you this volume for my friend, the fair and chaste Grizelda.

LAIRD.—That's oor Girzy, I suppose! Hech, sirs, but she's getting up in the world! What ca' ye the piece?

MAJOR.—*Donna Blanca of Navarre*: an Historical Romance, by Don Francisco Navarro Villoslada.

LAIRD.—It will be a translation, I'm thinking.

MAJOR.—You are right. It is an English version of a story which has acquired no small degree of popularity in Spain.

LAIRD.—But what makes ye sae keen for Girzy, puir woman, to get it?

MAJOR.—Because it is just the thing for a romantic maiden's perusal. *Donna Blanca* is a tale of the genuine old school, full of love-making, and mysteries, and murders, and what not, as an egg is of meat.

LAIRD.—Is it clever?

MAJOR.—Decidedly so. The author is impregnated to the back-bone with the concentrated essence of story telling. On he goes from one adventure to another, without stopping to moralize, or do the sentimental, and crams as much material into a chapter as would serve the majority of modern fiction manufacturers for a full-grown volume!

DOCTOR.—Are you serious in your commendations? On cursorily turning over the pages of Don Villoslada's engenderation, it struck me that it belonged to the justly exploded Minerva Press school of literature!

MAJOR.—“Clean wrang,” as Bailie Nicol Jarvie says. It is a pear of a widely different

tree. The Don's ladies are composed of veritable flesh and blood, and his knights are regular bone-breakers and blood-tappers! One of them would put to flight a baker's dozen of Miss Porter's wishy-washy heroes, who indulge in bear's grease, and cannot make a campaign without a supply of medicated shaving soap and pearl tooth powder!

LAIRD.—Weel, mony kind thanks to you for the buik; but, man, I wish sairly that Girzy would tak' to some profitable course o' reading! She kens as little about history as she does about the pattern o' Cleopatra's night-sark!

MAJOR.—Why, for that matter, your sister will receive from the perusal of *Donna Blanca* a considerable inkling of the manners and customs, and the intestine feuds of Spain during the fifteenth century.

LAIRD.—That's aye some consolation! Better for a bairn to eat it's way to learning through a ginger-bread alphabet, than to grow up ignorant o' the A, B, C!

DOCTOR.—So it seems, Laird, you have been seeing Dugald Macallister, the far-famed wizard of Saint Mungo?

LAIRD.—Confound me if Toronto is not the very El Dorado o' gossip! I verily believe that if the Laird blew his nose at the Lunatic Asylum twa minutes afore twull, the transaction would be reported at St Lawrence Ha', ere the knock had heralded the birth, o' noon! Wha informed you o' my visit to Dugald?

DOCTOR.—Our mutual friend the Bachelor of Music. He sat behind you in the same box.

MAJOR.—And how did you enjoy the necromancer's performances?

LAIRD.—No' weel at a'.

MAJOR.—Indeed! Why, I understood that he was a clever, nimble-fingered mountebank!

LAIRD.—He was o' that, and yet I was choused and cheated oot o' every particle o' pleasure, which I might hae derived from his cantrips, in consequence o' my having the misfortune to be seated next to a diabolically *practical* man!

DOCTOR.—Pray explain yourself!

LAIRD.—The vagabond (I canna ca' him onything else) to whom I refer was a prim, stuck-up, black-a-viceed-looking customer, sporting black claes and a white neck-cloth, stiff as a sheet o' tin iron. Frae the style o' his conversation, I jaloused that he was a Professor o' Moral, Natural, and Political Philosophy in some o' the ten thousand and ten Universities o' Dollardom, wha confer degrees upon young