

scarily injured, and I dinna like ti is state o' the poor boy a little longer at school. She maisters awa."

"Has her influence been used in a way to do you much injury?"

"In mony ways, sir. I'll just gie you an instance, and it's only yane o' mony mair. The auld woman had been accustomed to keep a pig when she staid at hame, and she pits 't into Nelly's head that she ought to get yane. I said, 'Whaur will ye keep it?' 'Oo, I was tauld, 'in the laue at the back o' the hoose. There's naething ayont the laue but stables, and nane will interfere.' Our bed-room window looks on this laue, you ken, sir, and the plan was to set up a bit wooden crib next our ain pairt o' the hoose, close under the window. Was ever the like heard o'? 'And hoo will you keep this precious pig?' I said. 'There's as muckle tatie peelins, and scrapins o' pats and odds and ends, as feed the creatur,' said Nelly. 'Dinna tell me that, Nelly,' I said; 'we fin' it hard enuch to feed the twa-leggit pigs that we hae.' I said a' I could against the scheme, tauld them the neebors wouldna endure sic a thing, and that, although they did, the pellice would fin' it out and order it to be removed as a nuisance. But my words gaed for naething, and re nicht I had na weel lain doon i' the bed when I heard the grunt o' a soo at my lug, and it grunit an' squeeled on the hail nicht."

John was in dead earnest when he told me all this, but I could not help smiling. I would fain have laughed right out, but the seriousness of the man's manner, his real distress, and the fact that he was appealing to me as his counsellor, compelled me to preserve a decent measure of gravity. "And is the sow there still?" I asked. "Oo, na, it was just as I forewarned them. It wasna there but sax nichts. The neebors rose in arms, some yane tauld the pellice, and I had a visit frae yane o' thir gentry orderin' me to remove the nuisance. Then the auld woman fell foul o' the neebors wi' her dreadful tongue, scauldit them richt and left, young and auld, said to them they were dirtier than any soo, and Guid kens what mair."

"Weel" (I observed when John said 'weel' he was always beginning another count in the indictment), "Weel, I wantit to keep Tam at the session schule for another year or sae—that laddie is only eleven past in June last. I ken hoo great a misfortune the want o' learnin' is. for I got little o't mysel'—but the auld wife thoct he should be wonin breid, and there was nae peace in the hoose, nane, until Tam was sent aff to turn a wheel in a Tobacco Manufactory for eighteen pence a-week. My heart's grieved for that wee laddie. He canna read the word o' God. I've learned him a' I could mysel', but I hae little time to spen' wi' him, and it's but little I hae to gie him."

"I am astonished," I observed, "that Mrs. Gerry would not see the propriety of keeping

the poor boy a little longer at school. She surely must love her own children."

"Oo! she naes them weel; nae mither kindlier or better to her bairns, and I wot she keeps them a' hale and clean and comfortable; but you see Tam is better pleased to be amang the thrang o' the laddies than to be at the schule, and she's aye for lettin' the bairns hae ower muckle their ain way. The auld woman's motive is blin' thrift, Nelly's motive is just silliness, and atween the twa I'm outvoted."

"You are perfectly right in this matter, John. You ought to insist on the boy going to school. You ought to carry out *that* plan in the face of all opposition. I am delighted to see that you have so high a sense of duty, and if the payment of the school fee is any hindrance, I'll try to get the boy on the free list."

"Thank you kindly, Mr. —, but the fee is nae worth speekin' aboot. I am able, as yet, thank God, to work baith for breid and schulin' to my bairns; and when I'm no able, you'll maybe help me to get yane on the free list."

"Weel, the auld woman belongs to the Free Kirk, and she's clean crazy on that point!"

"You do not call the Free Church a point, John, do you?"

"My language is nae the best, I daresay. Ca' 't anything you like, it's a dreadful point to her. I've nae objection till her gaun to ony Kirk she likes (keep awa frae the Catholics and the Mormons), but she wunna rest satisfied wi' her ain notions, she rages on against the Kirk o' Scotland—that venerable and noble Kirk that has been the honored instrument, in the hands o' the Almighty, o' settin' up and preservin' till noo a pure and undefiled religion in the midst of the land—the Kirk that I was born and brocht up in—the Kirk that gied me a' the knowledge o' God I hae, and all the guid that's been put into me."

"Let the poor woman enjoy her own views, and never mind her raving, John."

"That's easy said, sir (beggin' your pardon), but its verra hurtfu' to my feelins to see sae muckle malice o' heart, sic bitter revilin' o' that which she kens is verra sacred to me. I never say anything against the Free Kirk to her or to ony body else, and I never thoct ony ill against it. I dinna doubt but it's a usefu' concern, and has its mission in this warld like a'thing else that the Almighty either ordains or permits; but the truth is, the auld woman, wi' her continual outspitten venom on my ain Kirk—that great and goodly edifice reared through God's power, by the hans o' giant men, aboon the wreck and rubbish o' a doonstricken Papacy, cleansed frae all carnal pollution, and throwin' open a free and welcome door to rich and poor and gentle and simple, and spreadin' a rich gospel table for a';—I was meanin' to