

MRS. MCGROOTHER'S PHILOSOPHY.



HY, "the way you speak of me, of my husband, of my clergy-men, and of my questions Mr. Dog- on his knees, is most in-sulting, and no decent woman is bound to put up with it."

"We protest, madame, before you go

further, that 'Mr.' is a prefix to our name which we repudiate. We are plain DIOGENES. Like all great men, we despise the modern idea of being "Mistered." Did you ever hear of Mr. Job, or Mr. Luke, or Mr. Jonah or Mr. Iscariot? No, Mrs. McGroother, call us by our simple name; none of your 'Misters' for us."

Our readers will see that, with our usual tact, we used names quite familiar to our interlocutor's ears;—that our meaning might be clear, we chose names from the Bible instead of from Plutarch's Lives or other classical sources. But our illustrations were as unlucky as our explanations about the Equator and Perigee. Instead of seizing the point, she was off at a tangent, wondering at our impudence in comparing ourselves to the excellent and patient Job; wondering if our Tub was any relation to the one that was cast to Jonah's whale. "If it was, no wonder it made the brute sick," she spitefully added.

"Which brute?" we mildly inquired.

"The whale, of course,—since it was the whale that was sick," she replied.

"Doubtless you meant the Great Fish," said DIOGENES. "Nevertheless, we like to be sure in our parts of speech, and, Madame, you will allow that we might easily have been mistaken as to your meaning, since the Prophet was, probably, no more sick of his sea-bathing machine than the owner thereof was of him. In fact, like some married couples we wot of, they were, probably, heartily sick of one another."

"I scorn your insinuations, you old heathen!" was the pious rejoinder. "Sandy Mac. and me have lived together for more than thirty years; and, since the first twelvemonth, when he was a "wee camstreary" about the 'halter breakings,' there never was a quieter or more loving husband."

DIOGENES was a good deal alarmed. It was clear that his strong-minded friend was one of those ladies who required no promptings from Mr. Stuart Mill to assert her independence of man in general, and her well-broken Sandy in particular. Therefore,—and as we had spoken a little too freely on the subject,—she had just "put on her bonnet and shawl," and was bent on "having it out with us." To meet the storm by any direct resistance we knew was hopeless; but, remembering the circular theory of storms, and that the female logic is alleged to move also in circles, instead of putting our helm

down and making a run for it, we merely shifted our course so as to get out of the stormy "inner centre" of the gale. Dropping all metaphor, we tried to "jouk and let the jaw gae by."

"Ah! dear Mrs. McGroother," we exclaimed, "few ladies have brought up a husband so well as you have done yours. The goodman does credit to your skill; but did it not cost you more than twelvemonths of the breaking bit?"

"Yes," said our fair friend, "with an occasional touch of the 'creepie'; but I daresay you don't know what that is. The 'creepie' is the old-fashioned three-legged stool. No woman ought to marry without one,—it's worth a thousand of Stuart Mill's Essays! I was often obliged to use it on Sandy's crown on 'Packet days.'"

"On Packet days!" we repeated in surprise.

"Yes," continued she, "these Packet days were a sore trouble to me. When we were first married, the merchants, before the subsidy days, only wrote home once a fortnight; and on the days the mails were made up, they were, or pretended to be, so busy that they could not come home to dinner, nor until nine or ten o'clock at night. Sandy, like the rest, had his "Packet days,"—and what with hard work and a hurried 'snack,' as he called it, at good old Dolly's, he generally came home without the least appetite for his supper, and pretty often it was clear that he was just a little—"

"*Plenus Bacchi*," we whispered, seeing that the forgiving wife was looking for a soft word to express Sandy's delinquency.

"Yes, strong of both brandy and 'bacey," she said. "But I made up my mind that I would put an end to the "Packet days;" and one or two applications of the 'creepie' taught him to write his letters before dinner, and take his quiet glass of toddy and his pipe at his own fireside. We have long given up business, so he has no more "Packet" nonsense. They tell me they have mails made up twice a week now-a-days,—how the wives stand that, I cannot see; but I think they should put up with no such pretences. Let the men write their letters in the morning, or it will soon be Packet day every night in the week, and then it will be too late even for the 'creepie.'"

"That might be an excellent course of training for some men, but we think it could hardly be of universal application," we ventured, with a shake of the head, to say.

Mrs. McGroother admitted that in some cases the "creepie" might be dangerous, but that every woman of ordinary judgment could find some means of breaking her husband in "How else," she asked, "can we take care of the puir bodies?"

"Had you been the lady of Sir John A, for instance, do you think your three-legged stool would have been the proper instrument of correction?"

"Sir John!" she exclaimed. "Oh! a fine, good-tempered fellow he is; but if he is not broken in already, I fear it would be too late to begin;—besides, I sometimes half think that his head is a wee cracked as it is. No,—the 'creepie' might be dangerous there."

"Now, if you had been Lady Cartier?"

"Fie! fie!" said Mrs. McGroother. "The stool would never do for him, it would kill outright. It would be an awful task to try to keep that little gentleman quiet. He is the most restless creature I ever saw. They say his mother weaned him on grasshoppers. The only thing I could think of for him would be to put him on the mantel-piece when he behaved ill."

"On the mantel piece, over the fireplace, beside the ormolu clock!" cried DIOGENES, utterly flabbergasted.

"There would be some danger for the clock, no doubt," composedly replied the old lady, "but I would just keep him there till he was quieted. Of course he could not get down