

A DOCTOR OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

BY IAN MACLAREN.

A GENERAL PRACTITIONER.

Drumtochty was accustomed to break every law of health, except wholesome food and fresh air, and yet had reduced the Palmist's farthest limit to an average life-rate. Our men made no difference in their clothes for summer or winter, Drumsheugh and one or two of the larger farmers condescending to a topcoat on Sabbath, as a penalty of their position, and without regard to temperature. They wore their blacks at a funeral, refusing to cover them with anything, out of respect to the deceased, and standing longest in the kirkyard when the north wind was blowing across a hundred miles of snow. If the rain was pouring at the Junction, then Drumtochty stood two minutes longer through sheer native dourness till each man had a cascade from the tail of his coat, and hazarded the suggestion, halfway to Kildrummie, that it had been 'a bit scrowie, 'a "scrowie" being as far short of a "shoor" as a "shoor as a "shoor" as a "shoor as a "sho

an' it's no easy accontin' for't.

"The gudewife was sayin' he wes never the same sin'a weet nicht he lost himsel on the muir and slept below a bush; but that's neither here nor there. A'm thinkin' he sappit his constitution thae years he wes grieve aboot England. That was thirty years syne, but ye're never the same aifter thae foreign climates." foreign climates

foreign climates."

Drumtochty listened patiently to Hillocks' apologia, but was not satisfied.

"It's clean havers about the muir. Losh keep's, we've a sleepit out and never been a hair the waur.

"A' admit that England micht hae dune the job; it's no cannie stravagin' yon wy frae place tae place, but Drums never complained tae me as if he hed been nippit in the Sooth."

Sooth."

The parish had, in fact, lost confidence in Drums after his wayward experiment with a potato-digging machine, which turned out a lamentable failure, and his premature departure confirmed our vague impression of his character.

"He's awa noo," Drumsheugh summed up, after opinion had time to form; "an' there were waur fouk than Drums, but there's nae doot he wes a wee flichty."

When illness had the audacity to attack a Drumtochty man, it was described as a "whup," and was treated by the men with a fine negligence. Hillocks was sitting in the Post Office one afternoon when I looked in for my letters, and the right side of his face was blazing red. His subject of discourse was the prospects of the turnip "breer," but he casually explained that he was waiting for medical advice.

"The gudewife is keepin' up a ding-dong frae mornin' till nicht aboot ma face, and a'm fair deaved (deafened), so a'm watchin' for MacLure tae get a bottle as he comes wast; yon's bim neo."

him noo."
The doctor made his diagnosis from horseback on sight, and stated the result with that admirable clearness which endeared him to Drumtochty.
"Confoond ye, Hillocke, what are ye ploiterin' aboot here for in the weet wi's face liked a boiled beet? Div ye no ken that ye've a titch o' the rose (erysipelas), and ocht tae be in the hoose? Gae hame wi'ye afore a'leave the bit, and send a haffin for some medicine. Ye donnerd idot, are ye ettlin tae follow Drums afore yir time?" And the medical attendant of Drumtochty continued his invective till Hillocka started, and still pursued his retreating figure with medical directions of a simple and practical character.

follow Drums afore yir time?" And the medical attendant of Drumtochty continued his invective till Hillocks started, and still pursued his retreating figure with medical directions of a simple and practical character.

"A'm watchin', an' peety ye if ye pit aff time. Keep yir bed the mornin', and dinna show yir face in the fields till a' see ye. A'll gie ye a cry on Monday—sic an auld fule—but there's no ane o' them tae mind anither in the hale pairish."

Hillocks' wife informed the kirkyaird that the docter "gied the gudeman an awfu' clearin'." and that Hillocks' "wes keepin the hoose." which meant that the patient had tea breakfast, and at that time was wandering about the farm buildings in an easy undress with his head in a plaid.

It was impossible for a doctor to earn even the most modest competence from a people of such scandalous health, and so MacLure had annexed neighbouring parishes. His house—little more than a cottage—stood on the roadside among the pines towards the head of our Glen, and from this ba'se of operations he dominated the wild gien that broke the wall of the Grampians above Drumtochty—where the snow drifts were tw:lve feet deep in winter, and the only way of passage at times was the channel of the river—and the moorland district westwards till he came to the Dunleith sphere of influence, where there were four doctors and a hydropathic. Drumtochty in its length, which was eight miles, and its breatth, which was four, lay in his hand; besides a glen behind, unknown to the world, which in the night time he visited at the risk of life, for the way thereto was across the big moor with its peat holes and treacherous bog. And he held the land eastwards towards Muirtown so far as Geordie, the Drumtochty post, travelled every day, and could carry word that the doctor was wanted. He did his best for the need of every man, woman, and child in this wild, straggling district. One horse could not do the work of this man, but we liked best to see him on his old white mare, who died the week after her m

a winter's night, heard the rattle of a horse's hoofs on the road, or the shepherds, out after the sheep, traced a black speck across the snow to the upper glen, they knew it was the doctor, and without being conscious of it, wished him God

doctor, and without being conscious of it, wished him God speed.

Before and behind his saddle were strapped the instruments and medicines the doctor might want, for he never knew what was before him. There were no specialists in Drumtochty, so this man had to do everything as best he could, and as quickly. He was chest doctor and doctor for every other organ as well; he was dentist and chloroformist, he was oculist and aurist; he was dentist and chloroformist, besides being chemist and druggist. It was often told how he was far up Glen Urtach when the feeders of the threshing mill caught young Burnbrae, and how he only stopped to change horses at his house, and galloped all the way to Burnbrae, and flung himself off his horse and amputated the arm, and saved the lad's life.

"You wud hae thocht that every meenut was an hour," said Jamie Soutar, who had been at the threshing, "an' a'll never forget the puir lad lying as white as deith on the floor o' the loft, wi'his head on a sheaf, an' Burnbrae haudin' the bandage ticht an' prayin' a' the while, and the mither greetin' in the corner.

ticht an' prayin' a' the while, and the mither greetin' in the corner.

"Will he never come i' she cries, an' a' heard the soond o' the horse's feet on the road a mile awa in the frosty air.

"The Lord be praised!' said Burnbrae, and a' slippit doon the ladder as the doctor came skelpin' intae the close, the foam fleein' frae his horse's mooth.

"Whar is he!' wes a' that passed his lips, an' in five meenuts he hed him on the feedin' board, and wes at his wark—sic wark, neebure—but he did it weel. An' as thing a' thocht rael thochtfu' o' him: he first sent aff the laddie's mither tae get a bed ready.

"Noo that's feenished, and his constitution "ill dae the rest, and he carried the laddoon the ladder in his airms like a bairn, and laid him in his bed, and waits aside him till he wes sleepin,' and then says he: "Burnbrae, yir a gey lad never tae say "Collie, will ye lick!" for a' hevna tasted meat for saxteen hours."

and laid him in his bed, and waits aside him till he were sleepin, and then says he: "Burnbrae, yir a gey lad never tae say
"Collie, will ye lick!" for a hevna tasted meat for saxteen
"It was michty tae see him come intae the yaird that day,
neeburs; the varra look o' him was victory."

Jamie's cynicism slipped off in the enthusiasm of this reminiscence, and he expressed the feeling of Drumtochty. No
one sent for MacLure save in great straits, and the sight of
him put courage in sinking hearts. But this was not by the
grace of his appearance, or the advantage of a good-bedside
manner. A tail, gaunt, loosely made man, without an ounce
of superfluous flesh on his body, his face burned a dark brick
colour by constant exposure to the weather, red hair and
beard turning grey, houest blue eyes that looked you ever in
the face, huge hands with wrist bones like the shank of a ham,
and a voice that hurled his salutations acrose two fields, he
suggested the moor rather than the drawing room. But what
a clever hand it was in an operation, as delicate as a woman's,
and what a kindly voice it was in the humble room where the
shepherd's wife was weeping by her man's bedside. He was
"ill pitten thegither" to begin with, but many of his physical
defects were the penalties of his work, and endeared him to
the Glen. That ugly soar that out into his right eyebrow and
gave him such a sinister expression, was got one night Jess
slipped on the lee and laid him incensible eight miles from
home. His limp marked the big snowstorm in the fitties,
when his horse missed the road in Glen Urtach, and they
rolled together in a drift. MacLure eccaped with a broken
leg and the fracture of three ribs, but he never walked like
other men again. He could not swing himself into the saddle
without making two attempts and holding Jess's mane.
Neither can you "warstle" through the peat bogs and snow
drifts for forty winters without a touch of rheumatism. But
they were honourable scars, and for such risks of life men get
the Victoria Cross in other

"Some threep that he's worn that cedentical pair the last twenty year, an' a' mind masel him gettin' a tear ahint, when he was crossin' oor palin', and the mend's still veesible. "Ithers declare at he's got a wab o' claith, and hes a new in Muirtown aince in the twa year maybe, and

"Ithers declare 'at he's got a wab o' claith, and hes a new pair made in Muirtown aince in the twa year maybe, and keeps them in the garden till the new look wears aff.

"For my ain pairt," Soutar used to declare, "a' canna mak up my mind, but there's as thing sure, the Glen wud not like tae see him withoot them; it wud be a shock tae confidence. There's no muckle o' the check left, but ye can aye tell it, and when ye see thae breeks comin' in ye keen that if human pooer can save yir bairn's life it "ill be dune."

The confidence of the Glen—and tributary states—was unbounded, and rested partly on long experience of the doctor's resources, and partly on his hereditary connection.

"His father was here afore him," Mrs. Macfadyen used to explain; "atween them they've hed the countyside for weel on tae a century; if MacLure disma understand oor constitution, wha die, a' wud like tae ask?"

For Drumtochty had its own constitution and a special throat disease, as became a parish which was quit self-contained between the woods and the hills, and not dependent on the lowlands either for its diseases or its doctors.

"He's a skilly man, Doctor MacLure," continued my friend Mrs. Macfadyen, whose judgment on sermons or anything else was seldom at fault; "an' a kind-hearted, though o' coorse he hes his faults like us a', an' he disna tribble the Kirk often.

"He aye can tell what's wrang wi' a body, an' maistly he can put ye richt, an' there's nae newfangled wys wi' him: a blister for the ootside an' Epsom salts for the inside dis his wark, an' they say there's no an herb on the hills he disna ken.

"If we're tae dee, we're tae dee; an' if we're tae live, we're tae live, concluded Elspeth, with sound Calvinistic logic; "but a'll say this for the doc'or, that whether yir tae live or dee, he can aye keep up a shairp meisture on the skin.

"But he's no verra ceev'll gin ye bring him when there's naethin wrang." and Mrs. Macfadyen's face reflected another of Mr. Hopps' laddie ate grosarts (gooseberries) till they hed to git u

right.
"Hopps' laddie ate grosarts (gooseberries) till they hed to
sit up a' nicht wi' him and naething wud do but they maun
hae the doc'or, an'he writes "immediately" op a slip o' paper.
"Weel, MacLure had been awa a' nicht wi' a shepherd's wife
Dunleith wy, and he comes here withoot drawin' bridle, mud

up fae the een.

"What's a dae here, Hillocks?"he cries; 'it's no an accident, ist'? and when he got aff his horse he cud hardly stand wi'stiffness and tire.

"It's nane o' us, doctor; it's Hopps' laddie; he's been eatin' ower mony berries.'

"If he didna turn on me like a tiger.

"Div ye mean tae say.......'

"Weesht, weesht, 'an' I tried tae quiet him, for Hopps' wes comin' oot.

wes comin' oot.

"'Well, doctor,' begins he, as brisk as a magpie, 'you're here at last; there's no hurry with you Scotchmen. My boy has been sick all night, and I've never had one wink of sleep. You might have come a little quicker, that's all I've got to

say." We've mair tae dae in Drumtochty than attend tae

every bairn that hes a sair stomach,' and a' saw MacLure wes

every bairn that hes a sair stomach, and a saw MacLure wes roosed.

"I'm astonished to hear you speak. Our doctor at home always says to Mrs. 'Opps, "Look on me as a family friend, Mrs. 'Opps, and send for me though it be only a headache."

"He'd be mair sparin' o' his offers if he hed four an' twenty mile tae look aifter. There's naething wrang w' yir laddle but greed. Gie him a gude does o' castor oil and stop his meat for a day, an' he'll be a' richt the morn.

"He 'ill not take castor oil, doctor. We have given up those barbarous medicines."

"Whatna kind o' medicines has ye noo in the Sooth?

"Well, you see, Dr. MacLure, we're homeopathists, and I've my little chest here, and oot Hopps comes wi' his boxy.

"Let's see', an' MacLure sits doon and take oot the bit bottles, and he reads the names wi' a launch every time.

"Belladonna; did ye ever hear the like? Aconite; it cowse a'. Nux Vomica. What next? Weel, ma mannie, he says tae Hopps, 'it's a fine ploy, and ye 'ill better gang on wi' the Nux till it's dune, and gie him ony ither o' the sweeties he fancies.

"Noo. Hillocks. a' mann he aff tae see Drumsheugh's

the Nux thill it's dune, and gas he fancies.

"Noo, Hillocks, a' maun be aff tae see Drumsheugh's grieve, for he's doon wi' the fever, an' it's tae be a teuch fecht. A' hinna time tae wait for dinner; gie me some cheese an' cake in ma haund, and Jess 'ill take a pail o' meal an' water.

"'Fee; a'm no wantin' yir fees, man; wi' that boxy ye dinna need a doctor; na, na, gie yir siller tae some puir body, Maister Hopps, an' he was doon the road as hard as he cud lick."

dinna need a doctor; na, na, gie yir siller tae some puir body, Maister Hopps, an'he was doon the road as hard as he cud lick."

His fees were pretty much what the folks chose to give him, and he collected them once a year at Kildrummie fair.

"Weel, doctor, what am a 'awin'ye for the wife and bairn? Ye 'ill need three notes for that nicht ye stayed in the hoose an'a' the veesits."

"Havers," MacLure would answer, "prices are low, a'm hearing; gie's thirty shillings."

"No, a'll no, or the wife 'ill tak ma ears off," and it was settled for two pounds.

Lord Kilspindie gave him a free house and fields, and one way or other. Drumsheugh told me, the Doctor might get in about £150 a year, out of which he had to pay his old house-keepers wages and a boy's, and keep two horses, besides the cost of instruments and books, which be bought through a friend in Edinburgh with much judgment.

There was only one man who ever complained of the doctor's charges, and that was the new farmer of Milton, who was so good that he was above both churches, and held a meeting in his barn. It was Milton the Glen supposed at first to be a Mormon, but I can't go into that now.) He offered MacLure a pound less than he asked, and two tracts, whereupon MacLure expressed his opinion of Milton, both from a theological and social standpoint, with such vigour and frankness that an attentive audience of Drumtochty men could hardly contain themselves.

Jamie Soutar was selling his pig at the time, and missed the meeting, but he hastened to condole with Milton, who was complaining everywhere of the doctor's language.

"Ye did richt tae resist him; it 'ill maybe roose the Glen tae mak a stand; he fair hands them in bondage.

"Thirty shiller as yir tracts.

"Ye 'ill hae the sympathy' o' the Glen, for a' body kens yir as free wi' yir siller as yir tracts.

"Ye 'ill hae the sympathy' o' the Glen, for a' body kens yir as free wi' yir siller as yir tracts.

"Wes't 'Beware o' gude warks' ye offered him! Man, ye chose it weel, for he's been colleckin' sae

П. THROUGH THE FLOOD.

Doctor MacLure did not lead a solemn procession from the sick bed to the dining-room, and give his opinion from the sick bed to the dining-room, and give his opinion from the hearthrug with an air of wisdom bordering on the aupernatural, because neither the Drumtochty houses nor his manners were on that large scale. He was accustomed to deliver himself in the yard, and to conclude his directions with one foot in the stirrup; but when he left the room where the life of Annie Mitchell was ebbing slowly away, our doctor said not one word, and at the sight of his face her husband's heart was troubled.

He was a dull man, Tammas, who could not read the meaning of a sign, and laboured under a perpetual disability of speech; but love was eyes to him that day, and a mouth.

"Is'tt as bad as yir lookin', doctor' tell's the truth; will Annie no come through f' and Tammas looked MacLure straight in the face, who never flinched his duty or said smooth things.

"Awud gie onything tae say Annie hes a chauce, but a' daurn; a' doot yir gaein' tae lose her, Tammas."

M colure was in the saddle, and as he gave his judgment,

"Awud gie onything tae say Annie hes a chauce, but a' daurn; a' doot yir gaein' tae lose her, Tammas."

MecLure was in the saddle, and as he gave his judgment, he laad his hand on Tammas's shoulder with one of the rare caresses that pass between men.

"It's a sair business, but ye 'ill play the man and no ver Ann e; she 'ill dae her best, a'll warrant."

"An'a'll dae mine," and Tammas gave MacLure's hand a grip that would have crushed the bones of a weakling. Drumtochty felt in such moments the brotherliness of this roughlooking man, and loved him.

Tammas hid his face in Jess's mane. who looked round with sorrow in her beautiful eyes, for she had seen many tragedies, and in this silent sympathy the stricken man drank his cup, drop by drop.

"A' wesna prepared for this, for a' aye thocht she wud live the langest. . She's younger than me by ten years, and never wes ill. . . We've been mairit twal year laist Martinmas, but it's juist like a year the day. . . A wes never worthy o' her, the bonniest, snoddest (neatest), kindliest lass in the Glen. . . A'never cud mak oot hoo she ever lookit at me, at hesna hed ac word tae say aboot her till it's ower late. . . She didna cuist up tae me that a' wesna worthy o' her, no her, but aye she said, 'Yir ma ain gudeman, and nane cud be kinder tae me'. . . An'a 'wes minded tae be kind, but a' see noo mony little trokes a' micht hae dune for her, and noo the time is bye. . . . Nacbody kens hoo patient she wes wi' me, and aye made the best o' me, an' never pit me tae shame afore the fouk. . . An' we never hed ac croes word, no are in twal year. . . . We were mair nor man and wife, we were sweethearts a' the time. . . . Oh, ma bonnie lass, what 'ill the bairnies an'me dae withoot ye, Annie!"

The winter night was falling fast, the snow lay deep upon

Annie?"

The winter night was falling fast, the snow lay deep upon the ground, and the merciless north wind moaned through the close as Tammas wrestled with his sorrow dry-eyed, for tears were denied Druntochty men. Neither the doctor nor Jess moved hand or foot, but their hearts were with their fellow creature, and at length the doctor made a sign to Marget Howe, who had come out in search of Tammas, and now stood by his side.

"Dinne mount to the brain's in heat "Times and now stood by his side."

by his side.

"Dinna mourn tae the brakin' o' yir hert, Tammas," she said, "as if Annie an' you hed never luved. Neither death nor time can pairt them that luve; there's naethin' in a' the warld sae strong as luve. If Annie gass frae the sicht o' yir een she 'ill come the nearer tae yir hert. She wants tae see ye, and tae hear ye say that ye 'ill never forget her nicht nor day till ye meet in the land where there's nae pairtin'. Oh. a' ken what a'm sayin', for it's five year noo sin George gied awa, an' he's mair wi' me noo than when he wes in Edinboro' and I wes in Drumtochty."

"Thank ye kindly, Marget: thae are gude words and true."

in Drumtochty."

"Thank ve kindly, Marget; thae are gude words and true, an'ye hev the richt tae say them; but a'canna dae without see'n' Annie comin' tae meet me in the glosmin', an' geein' in an' oot the hoose, an' hearin' her ca' me by ma name, an' a'll no can tell her that a'luve her when there's nae Annie in the

[TO BE CONTINUED.]