

a preloeminary stap tae stappin' in as pairt-ner i' the business some day. The denner was tae come aff at sax o'clock, sae I just tellt the bookkeeper wi' a pawkic wink, that I wad like tae get aff an oor or twa earlier than usual. Hame I ran—aff wi' ma claes, an' intill a tub as fast as I cud wallop, an' gae mase! sic a scoorin'—losh! I hacna got sic a dookin' sin' the day I fell intae the mill dam when I was a bit callant o' five year auld. I never was gien tae soomin', like ma brithers, ma mither was aye feart—bein' the youngest, I wad tak the cauld, or get drooned, an' then whaur wad I be noo? Weel, after I had dried mase! an' gotten on ma flannels, I taks out the koy an' opens ma trunk, to get oot ma best white linen sark, ma black breeks, an' waistcoat, an' ma gude black coat. But, waes me! there was neither coat, breeks, nor sark to be seen—everything was there but the suit an' the sark I wanted. Did ever ye ken sic a predicament? But I was aye remarkable for ma presence o' mind, sae haulin' on ma auld breeks again, I gaed tae the tap o' the stair an' I just gae ae roar that brocht the landlady an' aboot a dizzen boarders instantly tae the front.

"Whar's ma sark, an' ma Sunday breeks, an' ma best black coat," says I till the landlady, fixin' ma e'e on her sternly?

"Why, what do you mean, Mr. Airlie," says she?

"I mean," says I, "whaur's ma claes? can ye no conerstaun the Queen's English?"

"What the doose is all the row about?" was the answer I got frae a voice like a craw, on the tap story. "There's your blamed clothes. I never was so uncomfortable in all my life—couldn't dance worth a cent in 'em." An' wi' that doon comes the hale suit, sark an' a, on ma devoted head. Tae say that I was clean dumfounded wad puirly express ma feelin's—but, tae mak a lung story short—that impident blackguard in the attic actually had the stamack tae open ma trunk an' tak a loan o' ma gude Sabbath-day claes to gang till a low shindy, whaur he danced in ma best braid-claith till fower o'clock i' the mornin'. Ma landlady, decent woman, gaed up an' ordered him oot o' the hoose there an' than—but that didna mend matters i' the meantime; for time was fleein'—an' ma coat was stinkin' sae o' whusky an' tobawky, an' tae croon a', ma braw fine linen sark was like a dishcloth. I didna greet, Wullie, but I maun confess I cudna help swearin' a wee. There's really times in a mau's life when a gude swear is as refreshin' as a gude sneeze, an' raily, I think, it's a preventer o' bluidshed sometimes, tae let aff steam wi' a gude roon swear—but mind ye I'm no a swearer—far frae it. Ma landlady was vera sympatheesin' an' gaed doon an' tellt he boarders that I was gann oot tae dine wi' Maister Tamson—an' hoo ma claes warn a fit tae pit on a swine till they had been cleaned an' smeekit wi' steam. Wi' that, ma roon was in twa meenits like a drygoods store wi' neckties, coats, vests, breeks, collars, cuffs an' sarks o' every description—it was extraordinar' the kindness o' the fallows, an' shewed their appreciation o' a mau like me. But, waes me! the breeks—they nicht dae tae cover their sma' spindle shanks, but I couldna get the calfs o' ma legs doon over the knees o' them, they were a' sic diminutive creatures, an' hadna been brocht up on gude parrich an' milk as I had been. At last a new boorder, a fine stalwart fellow, sic like's mase!, offered tae lend me a suit frae tap tae toe, a bonny unarled grey suit, that just litted me till a tee. At length an' long I got ready, an' altho' I say t mase!, there wasna a finer luckin' fellow on the street than mase!—an' I made up ma mind tae get a suit the vera marrow o' that I had on as sune as possible. I was just in time, an' was shown in tae the maist beautifu' roon it was ever ma fortune tae licht on—in fact—I was feared tae sit doon, for the chairs were covered wi' licht blue satin, sae I just tuk oot

ma white cawmrick pocketneepkin' an' spread it on the chair afore I sat doon. I didna see what the servant lass could get tae lauch at, but it fairly nettled me when she speered me for ma name. I was sae mad I never let on I heard her—but when she speert the second time what ma name was, it was mair than I could stand. "Ye impident little limmer," says I, "hoo daur ye stand up there an' demaund the name o' yer maister's vesetors? I kent yer maister—an' his granny afore him, lang afore ye wore born—sae—" Just at this meenit the door bell rang, an' she ran awa, whan, tae ma disgust, wha should step in but the bookkeeper an' twa clerks, wha, like mase! had been invected tae denner. Losh! I was tae'en doon maist terrible! Here's me, thiukin' that I had been picket oot for special honor, when, in fact, it turned oot that I am was in the habit o' invectin his clerks an' employees twa-ree times a year up tae his hoose tae dine by way o' cultivatin' gude freenship. It was a dooncome, but the denner was sae gude, an' Mistress Tamson sae gracious, that after a while I forgot a' ma annoyance aboot it—in fact—I was a kind o' glad after a' that the clerks were there, for when we sat doon at the table, there were some bits o' things that I just didna weel ken hoo tae manage, an' I didna want Tam's wife tae see that I was abint Tam himsel' in onything. "What d'ye ca' the bits o' white cloots faulded up sae pernickity like?" says I tae the clerk in a whisper. "These are napkins," says he, "just use one for yourself." An' wi' that he taks up ane o' them an' spreads it oot, an' sticks it in his vest—but thinks I—I'll let them see I ken what's proper, an' just as Mrs. Tamson was makin' some pleasant remarks, I taks up ma neepkin', an' wi' a great flourish, I blew ma nose, wi' a blast like the last trumpet, an' then wi' muckle dignity I gae ma face a rub an' stack it in the breast pocket o' ma coat. They a' sat vera quiet after that, an' then, evidently over-poor'd wi' ma example, they a' began tae blaw their noses, but no wi' the neepkins. I noticed they used their ain pocket neepkins for that purpose. Then the conversation becam kind o' general like, an' when it cam tae ma turn, Tam, he lucks at me, an' speers what I wad like. I tuk a gude glower a' roon the table, an' then says I, "Weel, raily, there's sae mony gude things I hardly weel ken what tae pick on. Hoosover, ye can just gie me a clash o' the neeps an' a hock o' the bubbly tae begin wi'." Tam lucked at me for a meenit, an' then he laid doon his knife an' fork, an' he lauched, an' they a' lauched till I got tae be real uncomfortable. "Excuse me, Mr. Airlie," says he, "but do you know that for a minute I could not think what you meant. That is Scotch for a spoonful of turnips and a leg of turkey—or, bubbly-jock, as we used to call that bird, eh! Airlie?" an' wi' that he helpet me tae ma hert's content, but sic lauchin' an' merriment I never saw—in fact, I had a kind o' an' inkliu' that Tam was lauchin' at mase!. But the climax cam when after denner I was busy tellin' Mrs. Tamson sicca a weel-faured woman Tam's granma was, an' hoo she wad chase us twa wi' a stick hame in the o'nein's. Ane after another drappit speakin' an' begood tae listen tae ma discourse till finally I fairly had "the floor," as the debaters would say. I tuk the opportunity tae tell them the terrible funk I was in, an' aboot the blackguard bor-rowin ma claes, an' aboot ha'en tae borrow the suit I had on tae come wi', an' I had then a' lauchin' fit tae split, when the servant lass handed me a bit note—it was frae the mau I borrowed the suit frae—requestin' me to return hame at auce, as he had got a telegram tae gae aff by the nine o'clock train. Losh! I wasna I vexed tae leave the party just i' the middle o' the merriment, but there was nae-thing for't but tae jowk an' let the jaw by! Sae said gude nicht an' cam awa. I hadna gotten within three yairds o' ma boordin' hoose, when

just below a lamp-post a strong hand grippit me by the collar, an' afore I could draw ma breath, I was handcuffed an' cleckit atween twa policemen. "In a' the face o' the airth what does this mean?" says I, chokin' wi' wrath an' astonishment. "It means," says the fallow on ma richt side, "that you, Mr. Morton, alias O'Gorman, alias Tomkins, alias De 'Fouville, alias Flannigan, are nabbed at last." "But ye're mistaken, ma man, ye've gotten the wrang soo by the lug—I'm Hugh Airlie." "Not much, Mary Ann! here's the description, grey suit, felt hat, broad rim.—shew me the name inside your hat—wi' that he aff wi' ma hat, an' sure enouch, there was A. Morton i' the croon o't. Morton was oor new boorder, an' a notorious forger. Gude help me—this was awfu'—mair neist week.

Yer brither,
HUGH AIRLIE.

HALF-HOURS WITH THE POETS.

Mrs. H—m—ns.

ALPHONZO DEL BANKRUPTO.

Alphonzo bent his ear-muffled head, and bowed his mighty will,
And sued the haughty plumber to reduce his little bill;
"I bring thee here a broken heart, my watch and Sunday pants,
Accept these trifles, I beseech, and look not so askance!

Oh, let thine ice-bound heart be thawed like water-pipes in May—
Reduce, reduce thy little bill! Oh, cut it down, I pray!"
The plumber turned aside his head, a wintry smile
Smiled he,
"Hand over your account" he said, "just hand it here to me."

He took the roll of paper from it's india-rubber band—
It was a lengthy document writ out in flowing hand:
He read it once, he read it twice, with glance both grim
And dark,
And then he winked an evil wink, and gave it to his clerk:

"Rejoice, rejoice, Alphonzo! Thine eloquence hath won!
Thy bill shall be cut down, my boy, I swear it shall be done!
Hand over now those Sunday pants, that watch, and broken heart,
(Praps with the last named trifle 'twould be better not to part.)

"And come and take a drink with me—don't blush—I'll let you treat,
And while we're gone my book-keeper will fix the thing up neat."
Alphonzo winked a rapturous wink as to the nearest bar
He followed that there plumber. No doubts his joy did mar.

"Come, drink to me, Alphonzo, drink had, and drink thy fill!
And then that sneaking plumber let Alphonzo foot the bill!
But still his rapture lasted, and still, as I have heard,
He thought that man of water-pipes was going to keep his word.

At last they turned their faces once more towards the street,
And as they reached the plumber's shop, his book-keeper did meet:
"Ha! minion, hast thou done it?" the plumber did demand,
And snatched a tiny envelope from out his head-clerk's hand;

"Here, take it, dear Alphonzo?" this arch-fiend then did cry
"Tis thy reduced account, my boy,—and now, good-bye,
With that he gave Alphonzo a mighty push behind,
And in a trice himself that youth upon the street did find.

With tears of gratitude he clutched th' envelope to his breast,
Alas for poor Alphonzo! 'Twas but a sorry jest!
"Reduced" in size alone his bill—such was that plumber's game—
"Cut down, and writ much smaller,—but—the total was the same!"

Unchanged those awful figures which had worked Alphonzo's woe,
Unchanged his doom—and with a groan he sank upon the snow.

The legend goes no further—his into we may not know.
—L. G.