

corks, and the necks o' stane bottles wi which the channe! was replenished instead o' shells!

DOCTOR.—Alas poor Laird!

LAIRD.—After this adventure, I found myself a prisoner under sentence o' death, for a crime that I had never committed—to wit, murdering our respected friend Mr. McQuarto. The Major and you did your best to get me out o' the condemned cell, and got a key conveyed to me in the heart o' a prime doo tert. Wi' this implement I opened a' the doors o' the prison, and soon stood on the public street. Just at this moment I took sic a cramp in my left leg, that I could na' progress a single inch! There I stood in helpless despair till Mr. Allan, the Governor o' the Jail, on looking out in his night cap to see what kind o' a morning it was, discovered my position! Back was I carried to the cell! Ten tons' weight o' chains were riveted to my ancles, and pie was strictly prohibited to me as an article o' diet for the balance o' my short lease o' life!

DOCTOR.—Well, what next?

LAIRD.—The days sped on, and the night preceding my execution arrived. Till twelve o'clock the minister (worthy Dr. Scaud-the-deil!) sat wi' me, urging me to confess, but, of course, I wasna gangin' to dee wi' a lee in my mouth! When he left, he advised me to try and get some sleep, and following his counsel, I dropped aff intil a slumber. Oh, hoo sweet were my dreams! I was sitting below the big hawthorn bush at the west end o' Bonnie-Braes Cottage, reading *The Gentle Shepherd*! The sangs o' birds were in my lugs! The odour o' new-mown hay, mingled wi' the scent o' roses and apple ringy, delectified my smell. And Girzy stood beside me wi' a bowfu' o' glorious, snow-white curds for my solacement and sustentation!

DOCTOR.—Rural felicity, and no mistake!

LAIRD.—A' on a sudden, a craw, which had perched in the bush under which I lay, geid a hoarse cry, and I started up. Alas! I wasna' at Bonnie-Braes, but in the gousty prison, and my cell was ringing wi' the hideous knocking o' the carpenters, putting the finishing touch to the scaffold on which I was to die like a dog!

DOCTOR.—Most miserable of agriculturalists!

LAIRD.—At sax o'clock the turnkey let in the minister, and lang and sair he wrestled wi' me to mak a clean breast, but, of course, a' in vain. Seven o'clock cam, and Mr. Allan sent me some toasted bread and coffee, but I couldna' swallow a morsel! Half an hour after, the Sheriff arrived wi' the hangman, wearing an auld battered cocked hat, and having his face covered wi' crape. O, hoo I shuddered, mair wi' disgust

than fear, when the wretch took hold o' me and tied doon my arms wi' a rope! The touch o' that monster was waur than the idea o' death itsel!

DOCTOR.—Rather an undesirable valet is Mr. John Ketch, I must admit!

LAIRD.—Eight o'clock chappit, and the procession moved on; and before I could ken whaur I was, I was standing exposed to the glower o' thousands! It was dreadfu' to think that each ane o' thae gaping, cruel, idle faces was fixed upon me, and eagerly marking every flush o' my countenance, and every shudder that my limbs exhibited! I noticed, too, scores and hundreds o' women, young and auld, some o' them wi' weans in their arms, who had come oot frae their warm hames that cauld, grey morning, to see a fellow-being put to death by inches! Confound them! The jauds looked like sae many deils in petticoats, and their brats like sooking imps!

DOCTOR.—I thoroughly coincide with you in your estimate of female amateurs in hangings.

LAIRD.—Let me gang on wi' my tale. Just as the executioner was drawing the stiff linen cap ower my een, wha do you think I saw coming towards the prison? Wha, but Mr. M'Quarto, the very man for murdering whom I was aboot to be launched into eternity, as newspaper writers express it!

DOCTOR.—The plot waxeth interesting!

LAIRD.—Though our friend was a considerable way off, I could notice a paper sticking oot o' his pouch, and my een, doubtless rendered supernaturally gleg by the circumstances in which I was placed, plainly decyphered the endorsement thereof. It was to this effect—"PARDON TO THE LAIRD!"

DOCTOR.—How delicious your sensations must have been at that moment!

LAIRD.—Delicious! Preserve me frae sic deliciousness! There was I standing wi' the rope aboot my thrapple, wi' naething but a thin board between me and the invisible warld. Instead o' hurrying on, as ony reasonable man would hae done in a matter o' life and death, the worthy man progressed wi' a' the deliberation o' a fly through a glue pot. I roared to him to mak' haste, but catch my gentleman putting himself oot o' his snail-like pace. The cap was drawn doon ower my face, but through a hole I could see, as weel as before. "Look sharp!" whispered the sheriff to the hangman—"and draw the bolt when I make the signal." Still the auld sinner lingered. "Make ready!" again interjected the sheriff—and lo the tardy pardon bearer became stationary! He had fallen in wi' a friend, and