

*McGLASHAN'S WIFE.*

ONE New Year's eve, fifty years ago, twelve Glasgow students formed a social club. An old fashioned tavern on the outskirts of the city, was the place chosen for meeting. The club was limited to twelve members, who were pledged never to fill up vacancies, and to meet each New Year's eve. Should any member be prevented from doing so, he was to send the president a letter to be read on the occasion and then laid upon the absentee's empty chair.

For three years the full complement of members took their places on each appointed day. On the fourth year, however, we sat down with one chair vacant, and a letter was read. And so on for five years, when the number was reduced to eight, and we were to meet once more. I was the first at the tavern and was welcomed by the host as if he had been my father. Before another quarter of an hour, two of our fellowship came in together, another and another dropped in until all but one of the eight were there, and we set to parodying, "We are Seven" in a most ludicrous, mock-pathetic way, while we looked rather anxiously for some sign of the eighth, McGlashan, who, we felt, would be the last to fail us. But we looked in vain. The hour of meeting was past and the president reluctantly rang the bell. We all sat down in silence and looked ruefully at the empty chair that should have held McGlashan. And, indeed, it was not till the wine had gone round more than once that we regained our jovial spirits. Songs and toasts

were given and stories told, and the influence of the empty chair seemed to have vanished, when an unusual clatter was heard outside and a stamping of feet in the hall. Presently the door opened noisily and McGlashan rushed in.

"You did not expect to have a bridegroom at table to-night, did you?"

The question was met with a roar of laughter.

"Having announced my new character, I shall leave details for later on," continued the new comer. "You remember how we parted here last year and how I told you I was going south at the request of my godmother, Miss Mickleston, she having taken it into her head that I was just the man to successfully manage her estate. The place was to go to her niece and I knew that she had always cherished the wish to marry me to the heiress. Of course grateful as I was for her intentions, I disliked the idea of even meeting the girl she destined for my wife, and not until I got to the house did my godmother tell me that her niece was staying with her.

Immediately on my arrival at Mickleston Hall, I was introduced to the dreaded heiress and another young girl, a poor relation of my godmother, who was living at the Hall as Miss Mickleston's companion. I set to work at once and I can tell you it was no sinecure, for the books had been kept for years in a most slovenly manner. The pleasantest part of my task was the outdoor work—surveying farms,