PAT'S POT.

- BY -FRANCES MAITLAND.

F mme of us, not such old folk either, remember the year of the great outburst of anthrax—the cattle-plague—and the misery at brought for man and beast. I put "man" first 'r reasons you will see, but the lump comes to my throat to this day when I think of Ivy and Bess, and Beauty and Aryshire-Pride, and Eglantine—she was named for the little Miss up at the Tower, and they think a deal of the name among the bigger Galloway folk—the Sukie and Belle No. 2 (slie got first prize at the show the year before), our seven fine Ayrshire kye lying, one top of the other, in the pit John Robson, the ploughman, dug (my father had'nt the heart to take a spade) at the foot of the Broom field where the ground is soft. Bess and Sukie, and Belle No. 2 died, but the other four were "slaughtered," as they worded it, by order of the Commissioners.

They were hard times; and when man's skill failed, we turned—by command of Her Graeious Majesty in Council—to God, and held a day of solemn humiliation and prayer throughout her United Kingdom.

The Fast Day, as we termed it, seems to me only a matter of yesterday. My father had been atling since the afternoon of the day before; he had pains in his joints and vonitings once or twice, and my mother would not leave him; but the rest of us put on our Sunday clothes, and, with John Robson and his wife who lived at the Cot-house, took our Bibles and went acroes the fields by the short cut, to the Established Kirk. I remember, as we passed the Mains of Myrtown, we wondered whether the Finlays, who were new tonants and Oatholies, kept the fast as we did, or if they waited for orders from their Pope who might, or might nor, hight not, know of our straits. John, who spoke with some authority, having been in the chapel once when Mrs. Pagan, the priest's housekeeper, was oleaning it out, was of opinion that they would wait for orders from His Holines; and we were the more inclined to agree with him that we saw Mrs. Finlay through the bars of the yard gate, crossing to the byre in her work-aday dress

Fast.

I can recall our minister's text to this day (his name was McPherson, and he was a Highlandman)—Exodus, sith chapter and 8th verse: "And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, 'Entreat the Lord that He may take away the frogs from me and my people." I wondered, when I turned it up, what he would make of the frogs; but he read it: "Entreat the Lord that He may take away"—and he stopped—"this plague—from me an! from my people." He had no business to change God's word, John Robson said (as we walked home) in his dull way, and frogs had nought to do with kye that he could see; and he took off his hat to scratch his head; and his wife said, "Hoots, John!" sahamed of his stupidity. The rest of us knew what Mr. McPherson was after well enough. "Entreat the Lord, that He may take away this plague from me and my people." And then he repeated "from me." and bade us have in mind that Her Majesty was beseeching the Lord with her people that day. I saw old Quin tau McCullagh, who thought little of queens (or kings if it came to that), take his pinch of snuff and wriggle on his seat. Mr. McPherson was a wee black man, and quick in speech as all the Highlanders are (he was the first minister ever I saw with a beard), and to hear him you would have thought the Egyptian plagues were nought compared to ours. He would have fleyed (frightened) a bairn into fits that day when he banged away at the pulpit-board, and told us of God's justice that must be satisfied, and threatened us with the judgments, that, according to him, we all so richly deserved.

I think we all felt, as old Jenny Henderson said at the kirk gate, "convicted of sin," and we walked home soberly enough to our broth and bit of roast meat—Sunday fare in honor of the Faet—and I think, tor, we all looped that the Alnighty justice would be appeased by this meal and the morning's going to church, and tet the lappier, for what we had done, tought source.

sickness and pains were always getting worse.

Old Finlay (as people called him already to distinguish him from his lanky sou, though he could not have been much over forty then) came in about tea time; he had heard my father was siling and wanted to know if there was anything he could do for us. He brought a jug of milk from his wife in his kand—his cattle, though they fed but a stone-through they fed but a stone-through cour own, were still safe—and he said, as he gave it to us, never to hee family about the jug, they would get it back another time. He had neither ahoes or stocking on, and had rolled his troustrs up to his knee. He must

inave seen us staring at his feet, for he said with a little nod at me, "a man canna be too careful these times;" and then he and John Robson, who was sitting by the fire (we farmer folk were homelier in those days) began to argufy as to whether the infection could be carried from man to beast; and Finlay getting provoked, as all did from John's stupidness, wound up by saying quite shortly at last, "Weel, weel, feet's easy washed," and then John, who was moor bred, began to lament in his slow way the burying of sound kye that might have served for wholesome food, and gave it as opinion that even the sick beasts, if they had been killed and bled when first attacled, would have served for the pickle particular and winter use, the said drawing the poison out, according for him, is youth, and eating a sick beast or two was little to him. Finlay let him talk, without contradicting him; he was taken up now watching my father, and presently he went over to the bed and lifting him up in his arms made him more comfortable for the time, and then turning to my mother he said, if he were her, he would send for Doctor Tait at once. His anxiety made my mother, though she had thought "little of the palna and sickness up till this, sanxious too, and she told John to take the gig and be off as quick as he could. But when Finlay saw how slowly he got up from the fire—he was a disobliging fellow, though he had been with us so many years—he told him sharply he would go himself. He beckoned my eldest sister to the door and said he didn't want to frighten her, and 'he must not frighten my mot. . . out that just after the first outbreate of the pest, a cousin of his wife's had been taken the same way—by Dumfries — and he thought it wise to take the sickness in time.

"Was he siling long?" Aggie asked. Finlay looked at her, of register her shirt, called out there was a spot or two on his skin. Would he be taking the pox, we wondered—a begar-wife had been down with it at the tramp's lodging-house. As the night went of his head on he pa

convuisions set in, and the thirty day he died.

My nephew, my sister Jeanie's son, who has passed his medical classes in Edinburgh well, tells me the wonder as there were not many more cases of splenic fever at that time. No one, in our part of the world at least, thought of any dauger in handling the sick or dead beasts. Some of the farmers cut up the carcases themselves to see if they could learn anything by that, and some on the sly (for one man caught at it was burned in effigy) did what John Robson advised and killed and bled the creatures when they first showed signs of the plague and eat parts fresh, and salted down the rest, though (fortunately for them) the meat soon spoiled. Adam (the nephew I I spoke of) tells me that once in San Domingo fifteen thousand people—I hope I am right in my figures—died from nothing else but eating this diseased meat, and in the worst anthrax years on the Siberian Steppes a fourth of the peasant folks were attacked from just doing the same thing. My poor father had a terrible death, and you see now why I said the plague brought suffering on man as well as beast, for I am not counting the poverty and ruin it meant for many and many a one, though that was hard enough, God knows.

This is a long preface to the story I want to tell, but it shows how it was we got so intimate with Finlay and his lolk. What we would have done without him I couldn't tell. When folk got it into their heads in the grave himself; there never had been such a small funeral in our parts, though few men were more respected than (I may say it) my father was. It was Finlay, too, who went to Sir John shout my mother carrying on the farm. He promised to give an eye to things himself, on one condition, that she would give John Robson his leave; my mother shillie-shallied for a bit, the truth was she was afraid of John: and then Finlay said he only wanted her to give him leave to give him the sack, and went out into the yard and called him and gave it there and then. John was sully and lay enough we all knew

ATHOLIC KEGISTER,

Tather (who was easy) had always let himgo his owngait. He upin a moment and told Finlay to his face, it wasn't from him or the like of him he would take his leave, but from the mistress herself, and then Finlay brought my nother out and said, "Tell him he is to go," and she was that seared—looking first at one and then at the other of them—she could not say a word, but Aggie came and stood beside her and said. "Speak up, mother"—and then she said, "John it's may be better two should part."
"Much bester," says Finlay out—"It's well seen the master's no' here," says John, as black as thunder-tolud and "Oh, John, John!" my mother says and began to cry, and I beleive she would have begged him to to stop if Aggie hadn't dragged her back into the house.
"You understand, then," Finlay says, "you're not warted after the next term."
"If that's the way of it," says John, flinging down his clart (he had been mucking the byre), "Fillay said, my retter head cone head and war said, my metter head one head and met and war said, my metter head one head and met a

mucking the byre, "I'll go mis very hour."

"Let him go," Finlay said, ny mother had come back, and was listening and crying on the doorstep, "let him go, inpudent scoundrel," says he; and "Be off with you," he says to John, "none of us here want to see your face again."

"I's not for your bidding I'm going," said John, and went into the barn for his coat; and we watched him drawing it on as he went down the road.

In the evening his wife came up; she was a bold land of a woman, and we thought we were in for more impudence, but she wished us "guide o'en" civilly enough and said she had come for he husband's belongings, and that he was a fool for his pains to give up such a place, and she had told him so plain. We saw John had told him so plain. We saw John had told his own tale, but we said naught, and when she had put all together she thanked us for all our kindnesses in the past, and went away, her apron at her eyes.

John didn't do badly for himself after all, for a week later we heard he was hired to Oarhin Mane; the minister there was a great scholar, and having no notion of farming, let out the glebe land, so John had nothing to do but keep the garden, that was no better than a kail yard (esbbage garden), and look after the old mare that was not out once in a month, if all folks said was true.

Finlay soon found us another man, Ayrshire like hinself (It always seems to me the Ayrshire folk are sirrewd compared to us); he was a sober, act we young chap, Hugh Kennedy by name, and Finlay took care he did not let the grass grow under his feet. Our farm was small compared to usy; he was a sober, act we young chap, Hugh Kennedy by name, and Finlay took care he did not let the grass grow under his feet. Our farm was small compared to usy; he was a sober, act we young chap, Hugh Kennedy by name, and Finlay took oare he did not let the grass grow under his feet. Our farm was small compared to usy; he was a sober, act we young chap. Hugh Kennedy by name, and Finlay took oare he did not let the grass grow under his

he should do well enough (my father, as I have said, had always taken thinge easy and let hohn Robson do the same). We all know that Jessie Armour, Finlay's neice who lived with him, was to be married very soon, and we used to wonder if Mrs. Finlay would not need an extra lass when she went; for Jessie, though she had three hundred pounds, worked as hard as any hired servant in the dairy and house, and folks did say the Finlays gave her a wage, and that she put it all in the bank to help to stock her lover's farm. Finlay had said to my mother more than once it was a pity three of us should be at home—"idling," he said one day—my mother was quite affonted, for no one had ever evened us to service, though we were not afraid of hard work and were accustomed to it, too. (There were no lady helps then, nor should we have called our selves ladies at all; the Myrtown lasses, or Culterhows lasses, or whatever the name of the farm might be was good enough for us and our betters, too.) She could keep us in the meantime, she said, and she looked to us all having homes of our own some day, and indeed, that Henry Gilchrist, of Birneiknowe, was courting Aggie was common country side talk.

In spite of all Finlay had said, my mother was taken aback, when after a wonderful beating about the bush for him that was so outspoken, he proposed that one of us should take Jessie's place!

My mother's pride was up in a minute, but he did not give her time to speak. She'd be one of ourselves," he said, "and never you fear but the mistress and she will hit it off. What do you say to it, Miss Jossie? and he twender is at.

I was not so unwilling, for I had a great notion of Mrs. Finlay, and I

turned his chair so that he faced me where I sat.

I was not so unwilling, for I had a great notion of Mrs. Finlay, and I suppose he read it in my face.

"We gave Jess just what we'd have given a lass of our own—eight pounds in the half year, her sitting of eggs in the half year, her sitting of eggs in the sapring, and it might be, now and again, the compliment of a calf."

Sixteen pounds was a big wage, and I saw my mother look up.

"You would heave plenty of talk if I evened one of their father's bairns to service," she said."

"Woman folk think more of talk than of sin!" Finlay say.

unan of sin!" Finlay say.

'If it was to convenience Mrs. Finlay for a week or two," my mother says, after a bit. She had been questioning Aggie (we all thought a lot of Aggie's sense) with her eyes, and Aggie's sense) with her eyes, and Aggie's sense) with her a nod.

I know when she said that, it was ttled, and so did Finlay, and he got

up to go.
"Well Miss Jeanie, we'll look for you across the fields before long," he

you aeross the neus becore long, as aid.

The Mains, as the crow flies, is not four hundred yard from our farm, Calterhows, but if I'd been going to North Pole we couldn't every one of us, have made a greater its.

Morth Pole we could it every one of us, have made a greater its.

Morth Pole we could it every one of us, have made a greater its.

Morth Pole we could it of the great of the services and done when my father deal and Aggies and Jante. Air sepoid it of the services and the great great its of the day before I felt, to the kirk yard, and you know think we off out out if the room facel and seal and the great great the days we ame heno by the Broomfacel and the great great the days we have been greated to the affoldis—daffalown we are the great and the great greathed of then the season de bunch, with, they are the great greathed of then the season de bunch, with, maybe, a first white whole or 'two from the kirkyard.

Mrs. Finlay met me at the door, her two we leases holding to her skirts; we Scotch are not great art showing what we feel, but my mothet could not have given me a warmer kiss, and the barrs put up their faces, too; they knew me fine, for we many a time had had a game together round the stack before the breaking out of the plague. Mrs. Finlay took me straight to the room Jess had had, but she had smarted it up with a now patch-work quut, and she showed me where my kist would stand behind the door, and that the drawers were empty (they smelled of the lavender Jess thought so much of) and ready for my clothes. And then she told me to mind I was one of themselves, and left me to myself a shire.

You could not be strange with the Finlays all is showed, and then a he told me to mind I was one of themselves, and left me to myself a shire.

You could not be strange with the Finlay and his son had then she told me to mind I was one of themselves, and set for the many for the shifting and his place in the shifting had been in the shifting and his of more place in the shifting had he will be shifted the

Nell on his knee and told her he hoped she was a good wean, and that come another year he would be expecting Grace and her at the Gatechism. "Love God, my child," he says, "love God," and then he says it to himself gain, "love God," under his breath, and "love God," under his breath, and "love God," agan till you could hear it no more, thinking, as it were, to himself, (Finlay told me afterwards that he preached so often on the love of God his brotther priests had christened him "El. John.") Well, when he had spoken to the children a bit, he said a word or two to sail that would "have hur Mr. McPherson himself if he had been there to hear.



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