

nacity wi' which my respected uncle, Gavin Glendinning o' Melrose, stuck to his pig-tail, or tie. "Na, Doctor!" quoth Gavin to the minister, wha was advising him to amputate the appendage. "Na, Doctor, it will gang wi' me to the kirk-yard! The savoury Ralph Erskine had a tie whilk reached half way doon to his latter end, and I canna' gang far wrang in following sic an orthodox example. When ye preach me as sappy and unctuous a sermon as the wershest o' Ralph's, I'll divorce my tail, but no' till then!"

DOCTOR.—Did the divorce ever take place?

LAIRD.—If ye had ever heard the then mess John o' Melrose hold forth, ye never would hae speered sic a needless question! My honest uncle died as he had lived, leaving strict injunctions in his will that the tie was to accompany him to the grave!

DOCTOR.—Let it repose in the coffin where it found a sanctuary!

LAIRD.—No' sae fast, auld Paregoric! The pig-tail never obtained permission into that grim ark! When the corpse was ganging to be kisted, it was discovered that the tie was sae stiff, that it couldna' be doubled up. Accordingly, Samuel Shavings, the undertaker, had to bore a hole in the head o' the coffin, through which the affair projected like a ratton's fud! Weel do I mind the graceless cheers o' the reprobate schuil laddies, at the sight o' the familiar pendulous wag-wagging frae below the mort-cloth!

DOCTOR.—If a' tales be true, that is no lie!

LAIRD.—Confound the vagabond! Does he mean to insinuate that a ruling elder could tell a lee!

DOCTOR.—Why, if Robert Burns is to be credited, personages of an ecclesiastical status, even more exalted, may be guilty of such a backsliding! Have you forgotten the pungent lines in "Death and Dr. Hornbook?"—

"Even ministers, they hae been kenn'd
In holy rapture,
Arousing whid, at times, to vend,
And naill't wi' Scripture!"

MAJOR.—Somewhat too much of this! I hereby throw down the baton, and proclaim this unprofitable duello at an end. Shut up, Sangrado! Not another word out of your head, Bonnie Braes, or the can of turtle soup which Mr. Leask sent this afternoon shall remain unbroached!

LAIRD.—But only consider the provocation! What will the Session say if they hear that I've

been accused o' lubricity, and the charge backed by Robert Burns?

MAJOR.—Peace, or look out for a Lenten vigil!

DOCTOR.—Not for many a long day have I read any book with such appetite as the one "captioned" (as they say in Hamilton) *Captain Canot: or Twenty Years of an African Slaver*.

MAJOR.—My impression, founded upon some partial newspaper extracts, was, that it was a trifle long-winded and common-place-ish.

DOCTOR.—Never were you more thoroughly off your eggs, than when you jumped to such a conclusion! The Captain, in spite of his grewsome trade, is a veritable brick—a veritable *soup of a juvenile*, as the Paddyism "broth of a boy," is translated at the Normal School! I do not use the language of exaggeration when I affirm that his journal is as entertaining and graphic as the fictions of Dan. Defoe!

LAIRD.—That's a big word!

DOCTOR.—Yes, but it is a true word! Canot possesses the rare faculty of making you see objects with his eyes. You become, *nolens volens*, an actor in the scenes which he describes, and a *particeps criminis* in his huxories of human flesh! With all my ante-slavery predilections, I had become an enthusiastic dealer in animated ebony, before I had half-finished the volume!

MAJOR.—Does the writer not draw drafts upon the bank of fancy?

DOCTOR.—There is abundance of evidence, both internal and external, to refute such a supposition. You instinctively feel that the man is telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I am as thoroughly convinced, as I am of my own identity, that he gives, in the words of the preface, "a true picture of aboriginal Africa, unstirred by progress, unmodified by reflected civilization, full of the barbarism that blood and tradition have handed down from the beginning, and embalmed in its prejudices, like the corpses of Egypt."

MAJOR.—Had the Captain any *brushes* with our cruisers in the course of his transactions?

DOCTOR.—Several. On one occasion, when sailing under the Portuguese flag, which, as he had no title to use it, constituted him a pirate in the eye of law, he fought with an English corvette. He was captured, after a dashing action, and as the sequel of the adventure furnishes a pleasing illustration of the good-heartedness of our blue-jackets, I shall quote it:—

"I was summoned to the cabin, where numer-