

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

RECONCILED.

"Did ye hear, sir, that Johnnie Meharry's hame?" said Widow Donaldson to the minister on one of his pastoral visitations.

"No; when did he arrive?"

"It's a week since he walked in one evenin' at day-le-gone, an' naebody kent what passed atween them, but the story goes that the mother's heafin has improved ever since, but that the father has never spoken a word tae him, guld nor bad."

"I think there's truth in the report, for I stepped over last night an' Mrs. Meharry was sittin' up in bed, lookin' bigly changed for the better. The boy was in the room, an' the fond-like way she followed him about wi' her 'een was over a'. I hae a notion she'll get better, a'though the doctor had given' her up."

"How has Johnnie fared since he left?" asked the minister; "does he appear to have prospered?"

"Accordin' tae his ain story, it wasnt' a'together a bod' o' roses. He fell in tae a job—for Johnnie can use his han's—but he says it was nae ordinar' work, an' it was sixteen hours tae the day. He was offered a section o' lan', if he could clear it, but he thoct it better tae 'clear out' an' come hame as soon as he saved money enough tae pay his passage."

"I'll look in at the Meharry's first opportunity," said the minister, as he took his leave.

"An' I dae hope, sir, that you'll be able tae get the father an' him reconciled, for, between them, they've just breakin' the mother's heart, an' yet everybody kens that Johnnie's the licht o' balth their 'een."

Mr. Cunningham was a shrewd man of the world, as well as a faithful pastor. He went to the Meharry's cottage expecting a certain amount of opposition, but determined to do his best as peacemaker in the Master's service.

It was the hour of gloaming on a late harvest evening, and all the surroundings of the farm steading bore evidence of industry and success. The well-filled haggard and comfortable byres, in which the cows were being milked, also the sleek horses clattering in slowly from the water trough, reflected great credit on the old farmer, who had increased steadily from a very small beginning, backed up by a wife of unusual energy and thrift. A bright glow of light came from the kitchen, and a duller gleam from behind the yellow blind in the bed-room window.

The kitchen was empty as Mr. Cunningham entered, but the farmer was soon expected, for his armchair was drawn up to the fireside, and on a small table was spread his evening meal.

The minister made his way into the bed-room where he found Mrs. Meharry sitting before the fire. Her countenance lit up as she welcomed him, and although she was wasted and worn out with much suffering, there was a look on her face which told that she was determined to battle with the disease for a while longer. She was all alone, thinking her own thoughts in the fire light, for the returned wanderer had gone to a neighboring cottage where there was a certain attraction which had something to do with his going away, and also possibly, with his coming back.

"I'm dwibly enough yet," said the mother, in answer to Mr. Cunningham's inquiries after her death, "but Johnnie's hame-comin' has done me mair guld than a' the doctor's medicine. The only thing that frets me is the want o' reconciliation between him an' his father. They have never exchange-

ed words yet, an' Hughie treats him as a perfect stranger. Oh, sir, its hard for a mother tae bear. Hughie's stiff, an' Johnnie's just a second edition o' him. It's fairly killin' me; but if they could only come tae an agreement, I feel that I could make a struggle tae waste through for a year or twa yet."

"Does Johnnie show any signs of submitting to his father's authority?" asked the minister.

"He's willin' tae gie in tae him in everything except as regards the lass; but he's determined tae marry Rosy Douglas, an' no other, an' tae that his father'll no gie in, altho' there's nothin' could be said against Rosy, except that she has nae fortune; but money's no' everything. It'll no' bring happiness. Guld kens, it has brocht little tae us."

"Hughie's an honest, God-fearin' man, an' naebody could say that he doesna lead a consestant life; but he's fond o' gatherin' money, an' terribly prejudiced in his ain opinion. He has a habit o' sayin' 'I may be wrang, but I'm sure I'm richt.'"

Meantime, Johnnie had come in from his work, peeped at his supper in silence, and hearing the minister's voice in the room, he made his way down.

"And so Johnnie has come, Hugh," said the minister.

"Ay, I see him steppin' about."

"I hope you gave him a word of welcome after his long absence."

"I didn't ask him tae come, nor I didn't tell him tae go."

"But the father in the parable threw his arms around his son's neck and kissed him."

"I'm no' o' an impulsive disposition."

"Well, few of us are in these cold Northern lands, and some allowance must be made for Eastern manners; but you might have grasped him by the hand, and expressed your pleasure at seeing him return."

"He disputed my authority, set off abroad, and stayed till it suited him tae come back; so how could I speak tae him till he expresses his sorrow for what he has done."

"Perhaps he is sorry at heart, Hugh, but finds it as hard to express his feelings as you yourself do. Besides, he may have heard stories which are not true. I, myself, was informed by a gossip that you had disowned him, and cut his name out of your will."

"How could I disown my ain son?" said the old man, in an uncertain voice, "an' wha's tae get a' that I hae gathered thegither but himsel', if he would only be wise an' tak' my advice. Is it no' for him that his mother an' me have been tollin' an' slavin' a' oor days, an' . . . an'—but his voice broke down completely, and the tears streamed down his rugged, weather-beaten cheeks. The minister's own eyes were not dry, for it is impossible to witness unmoved the bursting of the pent-up feelings of a strong man for his child—especially in one so silent and self-contained as Hughie Meharry. Could the young but fully realize the depth of unselfish parental love which often lies behind a cold exterior, surely they would more often deny themselves in order to please, and it may be, honor—the exacting, old-fashioned whims of those who would give their lives for their sakes. We all do like the chief butler, remember our faults in this respect at some time, but, alas! too often it is when the faithful hearts we have grieved lie silent and still at the bottom of the quiet grave.

"My dear Hugh," said the minister, wiping his eyes, and laying his hand kindly on the old man's shoulder, "don't I well know that Johnnie is the light of your eyes, and that you and his mother have sacrificed much on his behalf; but, in regard to one matter, are you sure that you are not asking too much at his hands? Is not the main point of disagreement that you

refuse your consent to his marriage with the girl of his choice, and a girl who is in every way suitable, except that she may not be the possessor of a fortune."

"Would ye blame me, Mr. Cunningham, for refusin' my consent tae his marryin' a penniless lass, when he might get one wi' a bit o' money at her back, which would yield them many a comfort?"

"What fortune had his mother when you married her, Hughie?"

HOW THE PUPPIES WERE NAMED.

Princess and her four puppies were to go the next day to the dog show and Uncle Fred felt sure that they would win a prize, but have a few puppies had no names, and he declared that they must have before they went.

"I'll give a dollar to anybody that will find me four good names," he said, and although everybody had been suggesting names for a week, they all felt to thinking and suggesting harder than ever, but none of the names suited him.

Mollie had come over that afternoon to take care of the baby. She could earn a dime in that way and to Mollie it was a great deal. It meant that she could have a new long pencil for school the next day and a new five-cent tablet, and that she would not have to go to Sabbath school next time without a penny as she often did when she had to depend upon her father to give her one.

"I should think you'd be trying awfully hard to think of names and get that dollar," she said to Janet, who had just come out of the house with her music roll ready to go for her music lesson.

"I am trying," said Janet. "Why don't you try, too?"

Mollie shook her head. "I've been trying, but I can't think of even one good one," she said. Mollie was ten, and she had never had a dollar or a half-dollar or even a quarter.

Up and down, up and down she wheeled baby in his go-cart until he grew tired. Then, to amuse him, she sat down and began to count the buttons on his jacket, as the children did at school: "Silk, satin, calico, rags, silk, satin, calico, rags." Baby laughed, so she kept on saying it over and over.

Presently Uncle Fred came out. "Silk, satin, calico, rags," Mollie was repeating.

"Why don't you ask me how I'd like to choose names for my puppies?" he asked suddenly.

"I didn't know they were puppies' names," said Mollie, timidly.

"I didn't, either," laughed Uncle Fred, "but they'll be the puppies' names right away if you say so, and I'll give you the prize."

"Oh, my!" and "Oh, thank you!" was all Mollie could say as the dollar was put into her hand, and a few minutes later Uncle Fred said to Princess:

"I'll be happy to have you win a prize to-morrow, but I'd rather make a child look as happy as Mollie did just now than to win the biggest prize in the world."

WORTH REMEMBERING.

It is bad to make remarks about the food at dinner.
To talk about things which only interest yourself.

To grumble about your home and relatives to outsiders.

To speak disrespectfully to anyone older than yourself.

To be rude to those who serve you either in shop or at home.

To dress shabbily in the morning because no one will see you.

To think first of your own pleasure when you are giving a party.

Nelson's signal was a grand one, "England expects every man to do his duty." Over the battlements of heaven a grander one is hung out. "God expects every man to do his duty."