

of it, where there were sunflowers and scarlet-runners growing; but it struck me that her mother was a very funny old woman—though I don't suppose she was so very old either. She wore her dress very short, showing a pair of blue stockings, and stout leather shoes, and had a blue and white checked apron on; a bright-colored handkerchief about her shoulders, and a black silk bonnet on her head, which she appeared to be in the habit of wearing all the time. She was very kind, however, and gave us some very nice bread and cream, and a bowl of milk apiece, which is all I remember about the visit.

Aggy McPherson, whose name I had heard mentioned the first morning I came to the school, was a fine, handsome, well-grown girl, two or three years older than myself, with a broad Scotch accent,—the only drawback to her personal appearance being a slight cast in one of her eyes, that were otherwise particularly fine, which gave her, when she laughed or was amused, a very comical look. Her way home lay the same as mine, which was the cause of our becoming very great friends; and she brought me home with her very often, which I enjoyed above all earthly things. The McPhersons, who lived about a mile from town, were Scotch farmers, and they lived in a style of munificence and dirt I have never seen equalled. They kept a great many cows, and were renowned for their bad butter, which no person that ever saw their milk-pans or cans—which I don't think they ever washed—would wonder at. But their kitchen-floor was a sight to behold. I have heard people talk of writing their names in dust; but, dear me, you could have carved your name with the poker on any part of the McPherson's kitchen-floor, which trifling circumstance, as it may naturally be supposed, gave the house a particularly disagreeable smell, or a smell that I have heard called particularly disagreeable, but which to me, in those days, was more grateful than the most delicious perfume. They kept about a dozen men, and I don't know how many

girls; but I know one—whom they called "Mera Onn"—was in the habit of washing the potatoes for dinner with a broom. Mr. McPherson was a great, big, good-natured-looking man, with sandy whiskers; and was, as were the whole family, kind and hospitable to the last degree. He always called me the "wee lassie," and would sometimes take me on his knee while he sang "If a body meet a body, coming through the rye." The mother was a little woman, and talked a great deal in a funny little gabbling way, but I never understood only two or three words she ever said, one of which was milk, which she called "mulk;" and another, skimmed milk, which she called "skump mulk;" and another, chickens, which she called "little besties," about forty of which were generally going chirping about the kitchen, which was likewise seldom inhabited by less than seven or eight dogs. The barn-yard swarmed with great, fat, lazy-looking fowls of all descriptions; and in the granary were great bins of peas, and oats, and wheat, with which Aggy, or "Ogg" as she was called at home—and as I afterwards got into the habit of calling her—would "while the weary hours away" by pitching me into them, head-foremost, as if I were a kitten, and trying to cover me up. Ogg had a twin-brother, named Jock, who was not nearly so large as she was. Jock had been ill of a fever for some months, and having become convalescent, the doctor had ordered him to be taken out for an airing every day, and as we now had our summer-holidays, Ogg and I took him out for a drive in the donkey-cart, every morning—he lying in the back on a feather-bed, underneath a blue cotton umbrella, while we sat in the front. I think Jock must have been a very sullen boy, for I don't remember ever hearing him speak, though he might not have felt well enough, poor fellow; and, indeed, his feelings were treated with precious little ceremony by Ogg and me. Ogg would go into every orchard we came to—which were a good many—to steal apples, though they had