

stair, an' the meenit she clapt an' o'e on me, she lut a great skreich—an' banged tac the door, an' began hulin' up the bedstead an' the chest o' drawers an' the wash-stand, an' piled them a' on tap o' ane anither tae barricade the door. Ralily, I cudna' help laughin' at the silly creatur—but I didna' want tae fricht her, sae I loots doon an' pittin' ma moo tae the key-hole I roars in till her "Hoots! ye silly glaikit woman; what are ye fleyed at? did ye never see an honest, gude-luckin' man a' yer days afore? Open the door—like a sensible woman—I've a book here—"

Afore I cud feenish what I was gaun tae say, I hearl something like the bell o' an alarm clock dirlin' awa for twa ree meenits an' then the woman she cries tae me "Hello! hello! is that the Central?"

Of course, I made answer at once through the key-hole.

"No," says I, "it's just me—I'm sellin' a book here—"

"Connect with number 24—Thompson's wholesale—," says she.

"No," says I, "nae connection wi' onybody but masel'. I'm the agent for this work. It's a book—" but just as I was gaun on she criet oot real glad-like:

"Oh! is that you, dear?" I didna' vera weel ken what tae think o' this.

"Yes," says I, "it's me—an' if ye'll just open the door an' come oot o' there—the very sicht o' me 'ill convince ye that I'm an honorable man."

"Come at once, dear," says she, "there's a man in the house."

"A man!" says I, "whaur is he? d'ye think he wad buy a book?"

"No," says she, "I think he must be an escaped lunatic—he acts so queer—I'm awfully frightened, and the girl has gone down town."

"Hoot—hoots," says I, "dinna' be feared, gin ony man offers tae lay a hand on ye when I'm here I'll lay his head open wi' my valcece."

I begood to see noo what made her sae feared, it was the man in the horse some-whaur, that she had locket hersel' in for fear o'.

"Oh, my darling! my darling! I am so frightened—to bring some of the force along with you," says she again—an' then the bell gaed dirl again.

Man, it just touched me tae the very roots o' ma heart, to hear that puir creatur ca'in' me her darl'n like that; I just felt as gin I had kent her a' ma days—an' I says—through the key-hole—

"Dinna be alarmed my bonny doo," says I, "I'll just sit doon on this sheeps-'oo' mat a' yer bed-room door here, till yer servant jass comes in—an' if the man tries tae come naur ye he'll hae tae stap ower ma dead body first," an' wi' that I just settled masel, doon comfortably on the mat wi' ma back up again the door, an' was just sittin' thinkin' hoo it macks a man's heart-strings dirle tae hear a woman say "my darlin'," when I hears a licht fit fleein' up the stair, an' afore I cud get up, a fellow sprang at ma throat an' thrappled me till I was black i' the face, an' very naur by wi' tae. I cudna' believe ma een when I saw twa big policemen busy clappin' a pair o' shackels on me—an' the man sayin' to them, "He's a desperate ruffin I am afraid—you'll better be careful how you handle that valise—he is very likely a dynamiter." The thoct o' me, a respectable Scotchman, bein' ta'en for a devilish dynamiter was mair than flesh an' bluid cud stand—every drap o' Hielan' bluid was up in a meenit, an' I'm no sure but what maybe I swore a wee—but says I, "Ye ill-minded deavils, d'ye ken wha yer speakin' aboot? Can a respectable book-agent no protect a puir helpless woman wi' his dead body, without bein' ta'en for an Irish dynamiter?" An' wi' that I macks a grab for ma valcece, but the moment I gat a hand o't, the twa peelers flew doon the stair like wildfire, an' we could hear

their muckle feet rinnin' awa doon the sidewalk. Weel, I gat a hand o' the valcece wi' ma shackled hands an' I turned oot ma books richt at the man's feet. "Noo," says I, "as sae's my name's Hugh Airlie—" "Hugh Airlie!" cries the man (an' I thoct his face was a kind o' familiar) "Hugh Airlie! Not Hugh Airlie of Cheekimin Tollgate, Scotland, surely?" "The very man," says I, "but wha may you be?"

"Why, don't you remember Tam Tamson, your old schoolmate, who used to go nest harryin' with you in Cheekimin woods." "Ma conscience! is that you, Tam?" says I. Weel, the upshot o' a' this is, I'm in a fine situation in Tamson an' Tamson's wholesale warehouse, but ye may be very sure I keep oot o' the road o' Tam's wife, for it was her speakin' to Tam through the telephone, a' the time I thought she was speakin' tae me.

Yer brither,  
HUGH AIRLIE.

ANTE-POSTHUMOUS DIARY AND CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR MR. GRIP,—In view of the uncertainty of life, and in view also of the lessons taught by the posthumous publications of letters of defunct literary men, I herewith send you the whole of my correspondence, literary and otherwise, together with my diary for ante-mortem publication, so that the public may have a chance of sizing me up before I go hence and be no more able to defend or explain myself; and als in order that, when I do go to "that bourne," I may be allowed to stay there in peace, and thus avoid the necessity of cursing him "who moves my bones." The public are hereby like Macduff challenged to come on, but as I never indulge in profanity, I shall avoid indicating precisely what shall happen to him who first cries "Hold, enough."

I trust that by thus taking the initiative in publishing all private correspondence before instead of after decease, the present fashion may be supplanted, to wit, that of waiting till the veil of flesh has been rent in order to lay bare to the world a fellow's inner man. Before this sort of thing became common a poet said:—

"God spares all beings but himself,  
That hideous sight—a naked human heart."

But then the poet was an innocent unsophisticated youth: and it never seemed to occur to him that man would be less merciful in this particular, or that people would be tolerated who would not hesitate to impale a dead human heart, and parade it aloft in the noonday sun for the amusement and criticism of the vulgar and uncharitable multitude. No, sir, I'd rather have it over now, and have the pleasure of hearing the comments thereon.

Yours ante-mortemly,  
OLIVER FORESTALLEM, Author.

SELECTIONS FROM DIARY.

Monday, Feb. 2nd.—Saw Mac to-day—told me to write up an article for the paper—anti-Scott of course—and he would pay me at the rate of two fifty a column. Fine fellow Mac. Came home and told my landlady that I would square up on Saturday—must try to spin out that anti-Scott article into two columns so as to produce five dollars.

Tuesday, 3rd.—Interviewed Shep. to-day—queer fellow Shep. Said he was besieged by literary hummers and poetic loafers—didn't know how to get rid of those who had already caught on—said if I could do shorthand and type-writing he might possibly give me a job by-and-by, but could hold out no hope—said he encouraged home industry by writing his own poetry. Without doubt a sublimely cantankerous creak, from my point of view.

Wednesday, 4th.—Sat up all night over that anti-Scott article—managed to spin out two columns—awfully tough work though, especi-

ally when one's sympathies are like mine all on the other side. Took it down personally—Mac said it would be all right—call on Saturday. Landlady's temperature below zero. Received the following piuk scented note this morning:—

"DEAR MR. FORESTALLEM,—We are getting up a surprise party on the 25th, and trust to have the pleasure of your company to it. The ladies are to provide refreshments, and the gentlemen will subscribe a dollar each for Violincello's Italian string band. Ever yours sincerely, MARCELLA EVANGELINE O'HOO-LIGAN."

Not much, Mary Ann! The very first dollar these talons close over after paying my board has got to go to my Hebrew friend Moses in exchange for a pair of second-hand breeches which I humbly opine will serve my purpose better than a string band. However I politely returned this note of declination:—

"MY DEAR MISS O'HOO-LIGAN,—Kindly accept my sincerest regrets at being unable to be present at your surprise party, a prior engagement having rendered that impossible. If, however, you will let me know how it comes off, I will use my influence with the press to have a full account of the proceedings published in the daily papers, with a view to sending them home to your friends in the old country, and will see that your own name is given due prominence in the report. Devotedly yours, OLIVER FORESTALLEM."

Thursday, 5th.—Another letter—not so pleasant this morning:—

"MR. FORESTALLEM,—I doant think as ow you air a gentleman anyhow, to keep a pore woman like me out of her money like this. Why don't you go and work like I do i darnd them socks of yours so as theres not much left of the fust originals, but no sree you won't fool me any mair and if you doant pony up that there twenty cents for washin you ow me you shant get your shirt on saturday. yours truly, SARAH JANE SMAIR."

Oh, well, I'll settle with the old dragon on Saturday when Mac pays me for that article. I wonder why they haven't printed it. Saw Miss C.—to-day looking lovelier than ever. If a fellow now could get a sit on the *Globe*—they say the Ed. is a splendid fellow—a good safe sit there now—ah! that were a consummation devoutly to be wished—I could then—well, we'll hope anyway. She certainly is lovely.

Friday, 6th.—Interviewed the *Globe* to-day—no go! How horribly pointed these successful men are—want to know exactly what you can do—they forget the time when they couldn't do much themselves. They are so puffed up with the continual contemplation of the infinitudeness of their own powers that, like Simon Stylites, they from the vastness of the altitudeness of the heights of their pillars look down with contemptuous serenity on poor devils who, like myself, are vainly endeavoring to climb a greasy pole on the top of which sits fortune. Said I might send in an article next week, but wouldn't promise to accept. I hate him. However I came home and wrote an article in such a way as wouldn't offend either party—Scott-Act or Prohibition—shewing up the claims of both sides, but taking care not to commit myself to either. The fact is I was mad—I knew he wouldn't accept it, and so I just wrote to let him see how well I could argue on either side. Then I mailed it saying "Good-bye, *Globe*." Landlady still freezing hard.

Saturday, 7th.—Called to receive cash for article from Mac, but couldn't find him in. Third time clerk told me with a grin that he was gone out of town. Felt sick—and came away—but immediately returned to ask when he would be back—was told, with another and broader grin, three weeks! Three weeks! ye gods!—for a moment the office