

change of visits between them. In truth, each was to be found in the house of her neighbour almost as often as in her own. It was a pleasant thing to see this neighbourly and Christian love.

We have said that neither John Brown nor Thomas Moffat had any children; neither had they, although both had been married for a good many years. To the former this circumstance, namely, the having no offspring, was a source of great regret: he would have given the world to have had a little Brown to dandle on his knee, to be the stay of his house and the inheritor of his possessions. It was a very natural feeling for a man who had something to leave.

On this score, Mr. Moffat had some sensations too, occasionally; but they were not altogether so strong as those of his friend, John Brown; for he had no possessions to transmit to his posterity: yet he did often wish that he had an heir, if not to his fortunes, at least to his virtues. A little Moffat would have been very acceptable to him: he would have made him, he often thought, one of the best weavers in the county. In all these longings after this particular blessing, the worthy spouses of these worthy men fully participated. But it was to no purpose; it was a thing, apparently, not destined to be. Yet they were all near the fruition; we cannot say of their hopes, for they had long ceased to have any hopes on this subject, but of their desires; for lo! unto each was a male child born; and, singular enough, almost at the same moment of time. But we must go a little into detail on this particular: it is necessary to our story; in fact, would be no story at all unless we did so.

Well, then, on a certain evening, just about ten of the clock, both Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Moffat severally contributed an instalment of their debt to the state, in the shape of a thumping boy. The same professional lady attended on both. This worthy person being of opinion that Mrs. Brown's kitchen was the more comfortable and warm of the two; that is, that it was more so than Mrs. Moffat's; and knowing the intimacy that subsisted between the latter and her neighbour, did not hesitate to run with Mrs. Moffat's infant, the instant it was born, into the said kitchen, for the reason already assigned. The little squaller of Mrs. Brown had been brought there also just a second before. Here the

infants were hurriedly consigned, by the midwife, to the care of two good neighbours, who had volunteered their services on the occasion, while she herself hastened to bestow the necessary attention on their mothers.

The two worthy matrons on whom the charge was devolved of fitting the youngsters to make a creditable first appearance on the stage of life, were not wanting in their duty. They hustled about most actively—soused the little fellows in a tub of warm water—screamed, splashed, laughed, and scuttled away with the greatest delight and good-will imaginable, and finally ended by decking or the little strangers in their first finery. By these two good women both laughed and screamed a great deal more than was necessary. There was an unnatural elevation in their joy. They, in short, exhibited most unequivocal symptoms of having partaken a little too largely in the hospitalities of the occasion. They had evidently taken a superfluous cup; but it was excusable under the circumstances—the more especially that it did not hinder them doing every justice to their precious charges, in the way of tending and dressing them. This latter operation they had just completed, when in bounced the happy, the delighted John Brown: he had been abroad when the joyous event above related had taken place; he had just been informed of it. In he bounced then, we say with a face radiant with joy, and demanded to see his young representative.

"Here it is, Mr. Brown!" shouted *both* the women; each at the same time thrusting to him her own particular charge.

"What!" exclaimed John in amazement—"two o' them! Are they baith mine?"

"No, no—just ane o' them; and *this* is it, and *this* is it," screamed again *both* the women, and each still pressing on him the infant she carried. The fact was, that, being somewhat oblivious, from the cause already hinted at, neither of them knew whose child it was she had; whether Brown's or Moffat's; and, to increase the perplexity of the case, the infants were as like as two peas.

"Mrs. Rhind, I believe ye've lost yer reason," said one of the women, addressing the other indignantly; "do ye no mind it was Mr. Brown's wean that was gien to me?"

"No, indeed, I do not," replied the person appealed to, with at least equal confidence.