

to begin, "though I verily believe I am ane o' the moderate men breathing, and although I seldom or never fashed my head about either Whig or Tory, I am firmly persuaded there's no a man living that has suffered mair frae baith parties: they a kicked me about as though I had been a sort o' political footba'. Ye must understand that I am ane o' the principal men in our toun-council, o' which my faither was a distinguished member afore me. By virtue o' my office, I had a vote for a member o' parliament to represent our ancient burgh; and it had been the advice o' my worthy faither to me, owre an' owre again—'Simon,' he used to say, 'if ye some day live to hae the honour o' being called to the council, remember my maxim—aye vote for the wining side. Mind ye this, if ye wish yer kail to be weel lithed, or to enjoy the respect o' yer neighbours.' Now, as I hae said, my faither was a very respectable man; he was meikle looked up to in the town, and his word, I may say, was the law o' the council; indeed, he had a most wonderfully impressive manner o' delivering himself! and when he began to speak, ye wad said it was a minister preaching; but, in the coorse o' nature, he died, having adhered to his maxim through life, and I succeeded him in the business. Now, it was some years after this, and after I had been called to the council, there was an election took place for the burgh. There were two candidates—a Mr. Wood, and a Captain Oliver belonging to the navy. They were both remarkably pleasant weel-spoken gentlemen; as to their politics I knew very little about them, for, as my faither used to observe, it was a very unbecoming thing for the like o' us, that had only ae vote, to ask ony gentleman about his principles. Weel, it was at this election that my persecutions began; and sorry am I to say that they had their beginning, too, in my own family. One day, I was in the shop serving some customers, and, before I was aware, Mr. Wood's carriage stopped at the door. For onything I ken, his politics was the same as those o' Captain Oliver; but, somehow or other, he was exceedingly popular in the toun, and and the ladies had '*Wood for ever!*' written on the wa's and window-shutters, wi' bits o' chalk. There was a crowd came rinnin', and cheered round about the carriage at the shop door; for Mr. Wood generally threw awa a handful or twa o' siller amongst them. I wad hae slipped into the parlour to been out o' the way, had it not been that folk were in

the shop, and I saw there was naething for me but to stand fire. Weel, as I'm telling ye, Mr. Wood and twa or three ither gentlemen came into the shop; and really he was a very pleazant, affable gentleman, wi' a great deal o' manners and condescension about him. I was much interested wi' his look, and a good deal at a loss what to say. There was nae pride about him whatever; but he just came in, and took my hand as familiarly as if I had been his equal, and we had been acquainted for twenty years.

'I have the honour of soliciting your vote and interest at the approaching election, Mr. Gourlay,' says he.

'Weel, really, sir,' says I, 'as my faither afore me used to observe, I'll tak the matter into consideration—it's best no to be in a hurry; but I'll be happy—that is, it will afford me a great deal o' pleasure—if I can oblige ye; but—I'm rather unprepared—ye hae ta'en me unawares.'

'Well, I trust I may reckon upon you as a friend,' said he—I shall be very proud o' Mr. Gourlay's support.'

'Why sir,' says I, 'as my worthy faither—And just as I said this, some o' the youngsters about the door set up a titter and a hiss. It was very provoking for a magistrate to be laughed at in his ain shop, by parcel o' idle, blackguard, half-grown laddies an', 'Ye young scoundrels,' says I, 'I'll put half-a-dizen o' ye into the blackhole.' And wi' this, the young persecutors hissed and tittered the mair, and set up a shout o' derision. It was vexatious beyond measure; and, as I was saying, I didna ken what to do, for there were folk in the shop; and, as Mr. Wood and the gentlemen that were wi' him, pressed me to say definitely whether I wad gie him a vote, I observed Persecution also shaking a neive at me frae the parlour! For, ye'll observe, that it was also my misfortune to be plagued wi' ane o' the sairest trials o' Job—an ill-tempered, domineering woman for a wife. She was my second wife, and mony time hae said, when she vexed me beyond what my spirit could bear, that I could gang to the kirkyard, and pick the remains o' my dear first partner frae the cold grave, bawby bane, could it restore her to my bosom again, or free me frae the persecution o' her that had succeeded her. Weel, as I was saying, while Mr. Wood and his friends were pressing me, I threw a glent at the parlour door, which was half glass, wi' a curtain ahint it, and got a glance o' Mrs. Gourlay.