

How I Won the Laird's Daughter.

BY DANIEL GORRIE.

CHAPTER I.

Soon after I obtained my diploma, and was dubbed M. D., an opening for a medical practitioner occurred in the pleasant village of St. Dunstan, situated on the beautiful banks of the Tweed. Knowing well that I might be forestalled by a day's delay, I bundled up my testimonials and letters of recommendation, and departed at once for the scene of action. The shadows of a calm October evening were drooping over the Eildon Hills, and the Tweed was murmuring peacefully along its winding course, when I entered the principal street of the village, and took up my quarters at the inn. After refreshing myself with such entertainment as the house afforded, I called in the landlord, told him the object of my visit, and inquired if any other medical gentleman had yet made their appearance. Mine host was a canny, cautious Scotchman, and manifested due deliberation in a matter of so much moment. He surveyed me quietly for a short time, and did not reply until he seemed satisfied with his scrutiny.

"Na, sir," he said at length; "ye're the first that's come to the town yet, and a' the folk are wearying for another doctor. Ye see, we canna tell what may happen. The shoemaker's wife took unco onweel last nicht, and, frail as he is himsel, puir man, he had to gang a the way to Melrose, for medical advice. Ye look young like, sir; hae ye been in any place afore?"

"No," I replied; "it is not very long since I passed."

"Ay, weel, that's no sae gude; we rather like a skeely man here."

Dr. Sommerville had a great deal of experience, and we were a' sorry when he left for Glasgow. "I am glad that the good people of St. Dunstan liked their last doctor so well," I rejoined somewhat nettled at the plain-spokenness of the worthy lord of the Cross-Keys. "But although my youth may be against me," I continued, "here are some testimonials which I hope may prove satisfactory, and I have several letters of recommendation besides to gentlemen in the village and neighborhood."

The landlord was a person whom I saw that it was necessary to gain over. He was vastly pleased when I recognized his importance by producing my testimonials for his inspection. It was amusing to observe the gravity and dignity with which he adjusted his spectacles across the bridge of his nose and proceeded to carefully inspect the documents. At intervals as he read he gave such running comments as "gude" "very gude" "excellent" "capital sir, capital!" I was glad to see the barometer rising so rapidly. After mine host had finished the perusal of the papers, he shook me heartily by the hand, and said, "Ye're the very man we want, sir; ye hae first rate certificates."

"So far, so good. It was a great thing to have gained the confidence and good will of so important a personage, and I felt desirous of making further conquests that evening."

"Do you think I might venture to call to-night upon any of the parties in the village to whom I have letters of recommendation?" I inquired.

"Surely, surely," responded the landlord; "the sooner the better. Just read me ower their names, sir, and I'll take ye round to their houses. We hae a better chance o' gettin' them in at night than through the day."

"Accompanied by the lord of the Cross-Keys, I accordingly visited the leading inhabitants of the village, and made what an expectant member of Parliament would consider a very satisfactory canvass. I was received with much courtesy and civility; and the minister of the parish to whom I had a letter of introduction from a brother clergyman in Edinburgh, paid me the most flattering attentions, and pressed me to take up my abode immediately at St. Dunstan. The ladies married and unmarried, with whom I entered into conversation, were all unanimous in expressing their desire that I should remain in their midst. Indeed, I have observed that the female sex invariably take the greatest interest in the settlement of ministers and doctors. I could easily understand why the unmarried ladies should prefer a single gentleman like myself; but I could not comprehend at the time why the mothers should take so much interest in a newly-fledged M. D. It struck me that the landlord of the inn must have committed a great mistake in describing Dr. Sommerville as the favorite of all classes.

To be continued.

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