

Selected Story.

How I Won the Laird's Daughter.

BY DANIEL GORRIE.

CHAPTER II.

(Continued.)

"It is an admirable animal, Mr. Barlas," I replied, always careful to avoid giving offence; "but the truth is, there is a friend of mine in Edinburgh who is great in horses, and who would never forgive me if I did not permit him to make the selection and purchase."

"Vera weel, doctor—vera weel," rejoined the landlord, professing contentment, although somewhat chagrined. "Ye may get a stronger and mair speerity beast, but tak my word for't ye'll no get ane to answer yer purpose better. It's an extraordinary sensible animal, an' kens a' the roads about the kintra-side. In the darkest winter nicht ye might fling the bridle on its neck, and it would bring ye hame to St. Dunstan safe an' sound. Ye can take anither thocht about it, doctor, an' I mun awa' an' gie the beast its supper."

A few weeks after the above confab with the sagacious landlord of the Cross-Keys, I was quietly domiciled in Oakbank Cottage, on the outskirts of St. Dunstan, and had commenced the routine work of a medical practitioner. Mrs. Johnston was duly installed as housekeeper; and a capital riding horse, which Mr. Barlas was compelled to allow "nicht do," arrived from the metropolis. I liked my cottage very much. It stood apart from the public road, and was quiet and secluded. Rows of poplar trees surrounded the green, and flower pots in front, and a tall beachen hedge girdled the sloping garden in the rear. The high banks of the Tweed, adorned with many-tinted foliage, swept along close at hand, and the strong deep gush of that noble river was borne abroad on every gust of wind. Oakbank Cottage was, in my estimation, the sweetest residence in and around St. Dunstan; and as I, like my predecessor, was fond of horticulture, I resolved to make the place look like a little paradise when the spring and summer months came round again. I was not long in getting into a good practice. There was not much opposition from other gentlemen in the district, and many miles I rode both by night and day. It always vexed the heart of my worthy housekeeper, Mrs. Johnson, when a special messenger called me away to a distance after night-fall; and there was no end to the instructions she gave me—M. D. though I was—about the best means of preventing sore throats and rheumatism. Mrs. Johnson had never listened to the learned prelection of medical professors at any of our universities; nevertheless, like many other sensible and sedate women, in her own sphere of life, she had managed to pick up no inconsiderable amount of sound medical knowledge.

I was soon on the best of terms with all the people of the village, for it will generally be found that while a clergyman has admirers and detractors among his own hearers, a doctor who is gifted with a modicum of amiability can easily make himself a favorite with all classes. Of course, when any person dies, the friend of the deceased will not unfrequently declaim against the imperfections of the medical treatment; but grumbings such as these are natural and pardonable, and fail to shake the general esteem in which the practitioner is held. The minister of the parish was a frequent visitor at Oakbank, and in order to strengthen our good fellowship, I became a member of his congregation. He was an upright and honest hearted man, although somewhat too polemical for my taste. I used to think that he was in the habit of airing his argumentative speeches in my presence before he delivered himself of them at the Presbytery meetings.

None of the people in the district seemed better satisfied than Laird Ramsay of the Haugh that I had located myself at St. Dunstan. He called one day at Oakbank, soon after my settlement, just as I was about to set out on a rural ride. The Laird was attired in the ordinary dress which he wore at the Haugh. The brown hat, the blue antique coat, the knee breeches, the long gaiters, and the yellow-striped vest, seemed to form a part of his eccentric character.

"Gude day t'ye, Dr. Wilson—gude day," said the Laird, as he shook me by the hand. "What way hae ye been sae lang in comin' ower my way? I'm wearyin' sair to get anither firlo' o' you queer humoursome stories oot o' ye. Can ye come ower to the Haugh the morn, and tak a bit check o' dinner wi' some freends that I'm just on the road to invest to meet you, doctor?"

"It will afford me much pleasure, Mr. Ramsay."

"That's richt—that's richt. Gie a' yer patients a double dram o' medicine the day an' that'll save ye trouble the morn. I'll no deteen ye longer i' the noon, since I see ye'er for takin' the road. Man, doctor, that's a capital horse ye've gotten. I'll try ye a steep-chase some day ould as I am."

Concluded in our next.

A physician of a neighboring town tells a good story of a rustic who called upon him one day and remarked, "Doctor, I hear ye have a skeleton in the house. May I see it?" "Certainly," said the doctor, whereupon he threw open his closet and revealed the bony structure. The rustic gazed at it open mouthed for a moment, and then exclaimed, "Good Lord, its as poor as a crow?"

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