

own seat beside him. The brother of my friend — a lad cast in nearly the same mould of form and feature, except perhaps that his frame, though muscular and strongly set, seemed in the main less formidably robust, and his countenance, though expressive, less decidedly intellectual — sat at my side. My friend had drawn in his seat beside his mother, — a well-formed, comely brunette, of about thirty-eight, whom I might almost have mistaken for his older sister, — and two or three younger members of the family were grouped behind her. The fire blazed cheerily within the wide and open chimney, and, throwing its strong light on the faces and limbs of the circle, sent our shadows flickering across the rafters and the wall behind. The conversation was animated and rational, and every one contributed his share. But I was chiefly interested in the remarks of the old man, for whom I already felt a growing veneration, and in those of his wonderfully gifted son.

“Unquestionably, Mr. Burns,” said the man in black, addressing the farmer, “politeness is but a very shadow, as the poet hath it, if the heart be wanting. I saw to-night, in a strictly polite family, so marked a presumption of the lack of that natural affection of which politeness is but the portraiture and semblance, that, truly, I have been grieved in my heart ever since.”

“Ah, Mr. Murdoch,” said the farmer, “there is ever more hypocrisy in the world than in the church, and that, too, among the class of fine gentlemen and fine ladies who deny it most. But the instance” —

“You know the family, my worthy friend,” continued Mr. Murdoch; “it is a very pretty one, as we say vernacularly, being numerous, and the sons highly genteel young men — the daughters not less so. A neighbor of the same very polite character, coming on a visit when I was