

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.
MR. WHITEHEAD'S WILL.

WHEN the wealthy middle-aged bachelor Samuel Scrope espoused the penniless young widow Eardley, who had one child of her first marriage living, a little boy of three years old, folks, as usual, expressed various opinions on the subject; while of course the happy couple, knowing nothing and caring less of what was said about them, in process of time shared the common fate, and, when gossiping had exhausted itself, were allowed to glide down the stream of time unheeded. Mrs Scrope presented her second husband likewise with a son, the nurse declaring that the child and his father were as like as two peas. This, perhaps, was not flattering to the baby, though the declaration might be based on truth—Mr Scrope being a fat, white flabby-looking personage, with half-closed eyes and a clean-shaven face, whereon stray hair was never permitted to rest, presenting, in short, the semblance of a huge overgrown flabby dabby baby.

The likeness between father and son continued to increase as the latter grew up, and long after Mrs Scrope was left a widow for the second time, continued to be pointed out by those who had known the deceased. And this likeness was not confined to outward appearance; for in disposition and character young Samuel greatly resembled his father—in excessive timidity, approaching to nervousness; in shy and embarrassed manner; in all sorts of old-womanish propensities—such as putting his feet in hot water, and taking basins of scalding gruel to cure colds, which, somehow, he was always catching; in fidgety neaness, and detestations of firearms and all offensive or defensive weapons—in these particulars he was indeed, as friends remarked, his father's own son. From his mother he inherited a love of money, of parsimonious saving and hoarding, a tolerable share of suspiciousness, and a large amount of prudence: a cold and perfectly unimpassioned temperament, calculating even his indulgences, and a rather obtuse brain, were singularly combined; and what he wanted in sense, he made up in deliberation and wariness. Such was Samuel Scrope the younger, the heir of his father's large fortune the idol of his doting mother, and the pampered, spoiled boy of the household.

She never could part with him for the purposes of education; he was too delicate for any School—it would kill Sam to be buffeted and rudely treated! So Sam had a Tutor at home, whose situation was a real sinecure, so far as teaching went—the young gentleman having it much his own way when and how his lessons were to be acquired and repeated. Mrs Scrope, like many weak mothers, cared not much for her son's acquirements, except those which barely sufficed as a passport through society in general. What did it matter, she said, for Samuel she said to toil and moid over books, when he had a large fortune ready made to enjoy? It was all right and proper that her eldest born, Francis Eardley should strive to win prizes and be a great scholar, because he had only his own exertions to depend upon; besides, Frank was highspirited and boisterous, had fine health and energies, and was altogether of a different nature from Sam. Of a different nature indeed!—brave, generous, self-denying, affectionate, and warm-hearted, Francis as little resembled his younger brother in disposition as in person, for that was pre-eminent graceful and agreeable. Sam's cowardice and sluggish intellect presented such a contrast to the bold, daring, and splendid abilities of Frank that even Mrs Scrope could not fail to see it, despite her partiality for the former; though why that partiality existed, it were hard to fathom, unless it arose from Sam's more closely resembling herself.

Frank was sent to a public school, and was a favorite with every one, making friends wherever he went; but at home, the home where his younger brother reigned paramount there grave faces always met him, there he was chided and rebuked by his mother, and avoided by the fat, pampered Sam, who looked askance on the fine youth, whose noble and manly bearing roused feelings of envy and dislike. What right had Frank to laugh and joke, and ride and sing, and conduct himself in so off-hand a way, when he never had a farthing in his pocket?—for Mrs Scrope kept poor Frank very low in pocket-money, though she had a moderate life jointure; and Sam, hands always in his pockets, turning over his gold, which he seldom changed, skulked about, with nothing to do and nothing to say, and feeling quite ill at ease before his gay, handsome brother.

Among the visitors at Scrope Hall was a Mr Whitehead, an elderly bachelor of grave and taciturn demeanour, reputed to be enormously wealthy, and of privileged eccentricity. A Miser in the literal sense of the term, sly, observant, and prying noislessly into the con-

cerns of everybody and everything, Mr. Whitehead visited from one house to another living in clover at them all. It was rumored that he was not quite sound in his mind, and that an early love-disappointment had turned his brain; however, those who now contemplated his dirty flaxen wig, and tall lank form, arrayed uniformly in threadbare black, found it difficult to realise the idea of a romantic passage in such a life and in such a being! Mammon was the God of his worship now, at all events. Mr Whitehead had been a crony of the deceased Mr Scrope, and it was apparent that he transferred to the Younger Samuel much of the approval and liking he had bestowed on the elder. At Scrope Hall, Mr Whitehead was always a welcome and favoured guest; his ways were in unison with their ways; and Samuel was so great a favourite with the sour-visaged old man, that Mrs Scrope indulged pleasant dreams of an accession to her darling's fortune. As to Frank, he had become Mr. Whitehead's adoration, for Frank would neither bend nor fawn, nor flatter nor learn.

There was another dwelling to which Mr. Whitehead had access, and whose inmates were of a very different character from those of Scrope Hall; and yet, strange to say, these two domiciles were the old bachelor's favourite resting-places, and he resorted from one to the other with infinite satisfaction. Many miles of hill and dale, rivers and woodlands, divided the hostile houses, and Miss Pamela Gordon had not seen Mrs Scrope face to face since the widowhood of the latter; but unspoken animosity existed between the ladies; and Mrs Scrope called Miss Pamela 'a masculine spinster!' while Miss Pamela denominated Mrs Scrope 'a screw!' Mr Whitehead heard what each said of the other, laughed in his sleeve, and enjoyed the good things at both houses. Perhaps, unconsciously to himself, the childless and lonely man found an attraction at Miss Pamela's pleasant home which he vainly sought for elsewhere; for Miss Pamela had a young niece resident with her, whose laughing dark eyes brought memories to the old man's heart he vainly essayed to dispel; and Elspeth Gordon became to Mr Whitehead a sort of loadstone, whose attraction it was not possible to resist. Yet who played such pranks with the cross old miser as little Ellie? Who cajoled him out of a silver crown so easily for the purposes of charity? Who said and did such impudent, and yet such tender and charming things as Ellie Gordon, the orphan niece of the strongminded Miss Pamela?

Miss Pamela Gordon was the half sister of Elspeth's father, who had married the only sister of Mr Scrope, to that gentleman's lasting and inexorable displeasure. Captain Gordon died soon after his ill-fated marriage, leaving his broken-hearted wife and infant daughter ill provided for. Mrs Gordon at length, in deep distress, appealed to her brother's widow for assistance, but Mrs Scrope turned a deaf ear to her request; she had Samuel to take of, and Francis to educate and provide for. The dying woman then turned towards her sister-in-law, Miss Pamela, as a last resource, for help in her extremity. Miss Pamela was considered a person not to be imposed upon, and by no means soft-hearted. She lived on a handsome life-annuity, a fact which she took care to render public; 'as it was better folks should all know,' she said 'that she had nothing to bequeath in her will and lived up to her income!' Miss Pamela, and her half-brother had never been very good friends; they had squabbled and differed on every possible and impossible topic; moreover, Miss Pamela had strongly set her face against his alliance with Mary Scrope, and she was in the secret of Mr Whitehead's romantic devotion to that lady, who, however, preferred the insinuating captain. Notwithstanding all these bygone reminiscences, when poor Mrs Gordon meekly entreated a small sum to extricate her from pressing difficulty, the good spinster, burying all the past in oblivion, set herself earnestly to the task of comforting and supporting the widow and fatherless; and at length received Ellie as her own child, into her own home, when Mrs Gordon sunk to rest in the grave. Mr Whitehead, in conversation with Miss Pamela, had recently begun to hint very strongly about the valuable qualities of Mr Samuel, and the good-for-nothing character of his half-brother—a proceeding which always set Miss Pamela in a blaze of indignation, while her appeals to Ellie brought a corresponding colour into that young lady's cheeks.

'I wonder what that old miser has taken in his head now?' thought Miss Pamela, as on one occasion of the kind she watched his retreating figure; 'he looks wonderfully bent and withered of late; he cannot last much longer. I hope he'll leave a legacy to poor Ellie, for her mother's sake. Ah, he was very fond of Mary Scrope. Who ever would believe such a being as he appears now, could ever have played the fool, and raved when she married poor Ned! Ellie is very like her mother, full of life and animation. Bless her she's a good dear girl; I don't know what I should do without her. She's a clever spirited puss, too, and after my own heart!' Some months subsequent to this period,

Mrs Scrope and her younger son sat sipping their breakfast coffee, and munching hot rolls. Sam's head being swaddled in flannel for the rheumatism; when the former, after a pause, pursued the tenor of their conversation, by saying, in a half-hesitating tone: 'After all, Sam, my dear, it's as nice a letter as one could expect from Miss Pamela Gordon; she has always been considered a most extraordinary person famous for doing out-of-the-way things, and not sticking at trifles. I confess, I don't quite understand the calm sweet tenor of her polite epistle; and I fell almost as if I stood on the brink of some powder magazine with a lighted candle in my hand. But that must be all my extreme nervousness; because you see, Sam, there is nothing to occasion misgiving, and all is fair and above ground. We have asked your cousin Elspeth here, as in duty bound—she is coming as a matter of course; and as a matter of course, you will receive her. Let me see—counting with her fingers—Elspeth Gordon is just twenty—a year younger than you, Sam, my dear, and some five months; and Mary Scrope that was has been dead about twelve years. Mary was a handsome, spirited girl.'

'Old Whitehead must have been very fond of her to make such a will,' broke in Sam with his mouth full and his face very red. 'I'm sure mother'd much rather remain single than be married—that I would; I know a wife will only bother me, and I shall be taking these eternal colds dancing after her—girls are so tiresome.'

'How do you know girls are so tiresome, Sam?' asked his mother sharply.

'Why, mother, responded Sam, looking rather sleepish, 'I've heard you say so scores of times.'

'Well, well, my dear, never mind responded Mrs Scrope soothingly. 'I dare to say Elspeth Gordon is a discreet maiden, though Mr Whitehead spoke of her as being a gay, laughing lass; and to do her justice, Miss Pamela is a clever woman, and has brought up the young miss well no doubt, and trained her to obedience and respect of her elders. I'll be bound she'll come here all blushes and tremors at her own rare good-luck! and Mrs Scrope paused as a kind of jealous pang shot through her maternal heart. Sam remained silent; his white flabby face and half-closed eyes affording no index as to the nature of his ruminations. Unaccustomed to the society of strangers, it may be supposed that Mrs Scrope and Sam felt a little nervous at the expected visit of a well-bred young lady placed in such extremely delicate and peculiar circumstances towards themselves, as Elspeth Gordon was. Mr Whitehead had departed to an other world, after only a few days' illness, soon after his last to Miss Pamela Gordon bequeathing the whole of his large fortune, without any deduction whatever, to Samuel Scrope, of Scrope Hall, on condition of the said Samuel Scrope marrying Elspeth Gordon, daughter of the late Captain Gordon and Mary his wife; the said marriage to take place within twelve months after the testator's decease. In the event of the said Samuel Scrope refusing to ratify the said condition, and rejecting the Lady, he forfeited the fortune, which then became Elspeth Gordon's. But if the lady rejected the gentleman, why then of course *vice versa*. Moreover, Mr Whitehead had provided for every contingency. If the couple, by mutual consent, refused to fulfil the stipulated conditions, the many scores of thousands went to enrich various charities, almost unheard of even by the most philanthropic. As to Elspeth Gordon refusing Sam, that was a thing Mr Whitehead never dreamed of; a penniless girl like the daughter of his lost Mary to cast fortune away—nay, two fortunes—was unheard of in the annals of romantic folly. So he secured her, as he considered, an excellent husband and a luxurious home. Then the idea of Samuel Scrope, prudent and money loving as he was known to be, refusing a pretty girl and a still prettier *douceur*, for any whim short of insanity, was far too wild and improbable a conjecture to gain footing in Mr Whitehead's calculation. Sam unimpassioned and cold as he was, would hardly reject a fine, lively, good-tampered young creature, by marrying whom he would insure to himself the possession of nearly £40,000.

Elspeth had received an invitation to Scrope Hall, for the purpose of being introduced to her cousin; and Miss Pamela, to Mrs Scrope's astonishment, had herself written to accept it in Ellie's name, at the same time wishing good-speed to the wooing!

The eventful day arrived; Sam had thrown aside his flannel wraps, and arrayed in a bright new coat, with well-oiled hair, was surveyed by his admiring mother with looks of unmitigated admiration.

'O mother,' he said, 'I am all in a flutter; I don't know what to say to her.'

'I dare to say she is more in a flutter than you, Sam, my dear; so let that comfort you. She won't meet your eyes, depend upon it; girls are always shy on such trying occasions as these.'

So endeavouring to rally her son's spirits, and to support his drooping courage, Mrs Scrope remarked that she every moment ex-

pected to hear the sound of carriage wheels approaching, as it was rather beyond the hour fixed for the arrival of their guest. The crack of a riding-whip was heard in the hall, the door of the apartment was flung open, and a lady, attired in a riding costume, rapidly entered exclaiming: 'Down, Juno! down, down, Peto!' as the two huge dogs leaped about her, creating confusion and dismay on all the beholders; for if Mrs Scrope and Sam hated one thing more than another, it was a dog.

With surprise and dismay painted on her countenance, Mrs Scrope, turning to the domestics, said in a hasty tone: 'Turn them out! turn out these troublesome creatures immediately!' But Miss Elspeth Gordon—for it was she—peremptorily exclaimed: 'I should strongly advise nobody to meddle with my dogs; they are savage, and will bite strangers, unless left alone, and never obey any one except me and Tom.' Shrinking from contact with the unruly animals, and in the utmost consternation, Mrs Scrope surveyed her young visitor. A tall, finely-formed, though slender figure, was set off by tightly-fitting habit; while a pair of green spectacles of antiquated make, aided by a slouching hat, concealed the upper portion of the stranger's face. The mouth, however, displayed a set of dazzling white teeth, although the voice proceeding from that mouth uttered wonderful things for a timid young lady, but with a remarkable soft and musical modulation. Turning suddenly around towards Sam, who had retreated to the further end of the room, the owner of the green specs, regarding him fixedly for a few moments, advanced with extended hand, saying: 'We won't wait for a formal introduction, Cousin Samuel, will we? Come don't be shy; shake hands and be friends. Now Juno, now Peto—here, let me introduce you to your new master.'

But poor Sam was desperately afraid of big dogs, and he looked so scared and miserable that the gay lady indulged in an immoderate fit of laughter, which she vainly endeavoured to control. Recovering herself with difficulty, she said with much suavity and gentleness: 'You'll get used to them in time, Cousin Sam; I cannot live without them!'

'And how did you come, my dear?' said Mrs Scrope, willing to get away from the subject. 'Sam and I were listening for the sound of carriage-wheels on the avenue, but we heard none.'

'Carriage-wheels, indeed!' cried Ellie Gordon contemptuously, and flourishing her whip; 'as if I should come to see my intended in so stupid a fashion. Not I, indeed. I rode over on Vixen, my beautiful mare, with Tom at my heels, and Juno and Peto, for company! With uplifted hands and eyes, Mrs Scrope repeated the words: 'rode over on Vixen! Why, it is a good eighty miles from hence to Miss Pamela's and you rode, over on horseback!'

'To be sure! what of that?' Forty miles a day; and slept last night at the Ellistons.—Bob and James Elliston rode part of the way with me to-day, but I didn't want them, even through Hanging Wood; for look here, Ma'am, I never travel without these; you and I will have a practice, Sam; and so saying the young lady drew forth from a concealed pocket a pair of small elegantly-finished pistols, pointing one in Sam's face. He recoiled, saying in a scarcely audible voice: 'I hope, Miss, they're not loaded?'

'Why, Sam, what would be the use of pistols if they were not loaded?' replied she smiling; and adding in a under-tone, 'except to frighten fools with.'

'I think, my dear,' said Mrs Scrope, coming between the pair, and gently turning aside his hand which grasped the offensive weapon, 'that you had better lay them aside now, with your travelling-dress; there are no robbers or ruffians here to molest you.'

'Thank you, Ma'am,—thank you,' quickly replied Ellie: 'I prefer wearing my habit; and if you've no objections, I'll return these pretty dears to my pocket—replacing the pistols—it's all use you know—all use.'

[To be continued.]

AMERICAN TRAVEL.

THE late celebrated Mr. Clay once told the following anecdote to a friend of ours:—Travelling, in early manhood, in a public conveyance in a South-Eastern State, he found himself in the company of three other persons, consisting of a young lady and gentlemen, her husband, and of a person muffled up in a cloak whose countenance was concealed, and who appeared to be indulging in a *tele-a-tele* with Morpheus. Suddenly a big, brawny Kentuckian, got into the coach smoking a cigar, and frowned fiercely around, as much as to say, 'I'm half horse, half alligator; the yaller flower of the forest, all brimstone but the head and ears, and that's aquafortia.' In fact he looked as savage as a meat-axe, and puffed forth huge volumes of smoke, without reference to the company within, especially of the lady, who manifested certain timid symptoms of annoyance. Presently, after some whispering, the gentleman with her, in the politest accents, requested the stranger not to smoke, as it annoyed his companion. The