The ISLE of the WINDS

By S. R. CROCKETT

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CHAPTER I.

I Meet My Father.

"Come in hither, Joe Janet! Here you will see at one eye-blink the whole cursed pack kenneled, the lying priest that slandered me, the fatted English calf that disinherited me, and the gap-toothed old hound that begat me—and did me other disservice besides!"

These are the first words that I ever remember hearing my father speak—clearly, that is, for I must have both seen and heard him often enough in my innocency before that I grew word-conscious.

I can recall the scene yet as clear in my mind's eye—aye, clearer than the dinner I have this day eaten or the pattern on the laced-silk waistcoat which lies folded in the drawer at my elbow.

It was in the wide kitchen or house place of James Brydson's change house or common wayside inn which sits on the brae overlooking the little Scottish town of New Milns. A low door it had, to enter which your head had to bow and your feet simultaneously to descend till with a crick and double twist of the spine presently you found yourself within, and after the sunshine blinking and sneezing in the bluish smother of the peat reek that billowed and bellied between you and the thatch. But Brydson's inn was mostly frequented by weavers, and they had bowed backs anyway. So its peculiarity of access mattered little, though now and then a gentleman or hill farmer broke his head on the crossbeam.

I remember I was sitting on a creeple stool by the peat fire warming my feet at the red glow and admiring the glinting of the little flames on my new silver shoe buckles. I had gone thither from the lodge Yett, which was my mother's dwelling, clinging to my grandfather's hand. As I went my feet had hardly touched the ground, so firm a hold he took of my wrist and such long strides as he conquered the ground withal. Sir James Stansfield of New Milns, he was called, a fine, upstanding, well-regarded man as any in that country, reverent of demeanor, gracious of speech and exceeding seemly to the eye with his broad-brimmed hat, wide-skirted coat of fine blue cloth, white silk undercoat, white stockings and the silver-buckled shoes that were copies in great of mine. There was no finer gentleman in all the southlands of Scotland than my grandfather.

He seemed at once to ennoble and to illuminate that smoky little hostelry as he sat in the high-backed elbow-chair and tapped the bare boards lightly with his glove tips. With him were Mr. John Bell, preacher of the gospel, in whose discourse my grandfather sometimes delighted (at other times he would laugh heartily at his simplicity), and Umphray Spurway, the old manufacturer—a great red Englishman from Yorkshire, at whose laugh you seemed to see the rafters dirl as he threw back his head and blattered applause with his palm on the white-scoured deal of the inn table.

To these three gentlemen, sitting at their wine in the change house kitchen of New Milns that snowy December night in the year of our Lord's grace 17— there entered a fourth, and with him presently a fifth, at sight of whom silence fell upon the men and constraint upon the women folk. James Brydson, the landlord, was out upon his occasions, and I mind nothing of him. But Mistress Brydson, the landlady, sat in the corner by a flickering cruisie lamp defily and silently as a spider spinning a web across a window pane, and, smiling good humoredly all the while, she glanced up and caught the eye of this one and that among her guests, proud, I ween, that Sir James himself did not disdain to leave his great furnished house to sit with his guests in her kitchen. A proud woman, as all might see, was Lucky Brydson, smiling and becking at her ease as the white bone knitting pins clicked and twinkled in the cross lights. Shyly and at times slyly whispering, nodding and confiding secrecies to each other, as girls will, her two daughters, Elspie and Margit, stood by the door of the inner room, where the entrance to the cellar was. I suppose they were bonny enough rosy-cheeked wenches. I was not yet of an age to note or care. But this I know, that Elspie was kind to me, and often gave me fine farles of cake with honey in the comb spread thereon liberally. I had no fault to find with Elspeth Brydson that night or any night, but sat composedly munching my piece and dusting the crumblings from my hosen, lest, when I returned to New Milns, my grannie's eye should note that I had been eating between meals; a heinous sin in the decalogue of Lady Griselda Stansfield, which must indeed have been written upon two tables of stone.

The talk had been brisk and merry all the evening, and such of it as I can remember now goes to show how debonnair and kind my grandfather was when he escaped from his wife's leading strings for an hour, unbinding his wits and ungirding his waistband in a place where mirth was not counted ungodliness and laughter compared (with trite asperity) to the crackling of thorns under a pot.

"Ha, Elspie, lass," he had cried, when he came in, crooking a finger to the elder

He Seemed to Ennoble the Hostelry.

maid by the inner door, "come hither to my knee. Nay, what, never bashful? Why, 'tis but yesterday that you would have run to it and climbed for kisses. And to day you are as welcome—every whit!"

Whereat right merrily Umphray Spurway, the Englishman, laughed, but not so the minister, Mr. John Bell.

The girl came slowly forward, lifting the corner of her white apron with one hand and picking blushfully at it with the other.

Sir James lifted one of the tall candlesticks and held it up, so that its light fell on the perturbed face and shrinking figure of this tall slip of a lass.

"Ods fish!" he cried, "this will never do. I must go find a match for you, my lady. You grow overly handsome. We will have heads cracked, and all the young gamecocks of the neighborhood tearing at each other's combs for your sake. I am a magistrate, and I will not have the lads quarreling in my parish if I can help it. Mistress Brydson, I must have this pretty Elspeth of yours shackled and handcuffed ere she begin to breed ill-blood among our youth."

The girl tossed her head and bridled like a willful country beauty.

"I desire not to be wedded," she said, biting at a strand of her flowing dark hair, as if she had a spite at it; "it is a poor business, besides——"

"Bravo! well said, my lass," said the Englishman, smiting his knee; "'tis an opinion I have always held myself."

"Hush, Umphray! Besides what, Elspie?" persisted Sir James, wishing to hear how the lass would finish her sentence.

"Besides," she hesitated, "there are many wed who would give all they possess to be unwed again. I want, not to make one more."

Sir James laughed outright, while his two friends discreetly looked hard at the table.

"A shrewd lass; and, faith," he said "very true—very true. I know some such myself. But all the same, it is not well becoming in my jurisdiction that such a pretty one should lack an husband, so long as Umphray Spurway, great English lout that he is, hath neither wife to keep him warm anights nor bairn to heir his goods and go clad in cloth of his weaving. Look to it, man! Look to it!"

At this the great red Englishman laughed, being well pleased, as all men do when they are rallied concerning women.

"Ah, Sir James," he said, speaking with a curious burr in his utterance, "had I lands and houses, mills and water powers like you, I had not so long been eating the bread of an hireling's baking. Elspie here is a pretty lass and an honest, but I wot well she knows her value far too well to have aught to say to an old graybeard Englishman!"

By this the lass had recovered from her first daunting and found the sharp tongue wherewith to hold her own which comes naturally to women bred and born in inns and hostelries.

"Never before have I gotten the chance to say either yea or nay to that, Master Umphray Spurway," she said, dropping her pinafore and standing with her hands behind her a little defiantly; "but, after all, 'tis better late than after dark,' as the saying is!"

Sir James laughed loud and hearty, and even the minister chuckled over his cup of wine.

"There you have it to the hilt, Umphray," cried Sir James. "'Tis a fair challenge. Speer her, man. We will be your witnesses, bonny lass!"

"And by mine office I will wed you here across the table if you get him to agree!" added the minister, speaking for the first time.

Umphray Spurway made an attempt to recover himself. He laid down the small brown-bowled witch's pipe he had been contentedly smoking.

"Well, my lass," he said, "listen to me. Tell us whether you would prefer to have me or my 'prentice, Henry Bowman, with whom I saw you so canty at the gable-end today. He is a limber lad and likely of his face."

"Mean you for a husband or for a lad to court me?" queried the girl, as prompt as an echo at the wood's edge.

"For a husband of course," quoth Sir James before the other could reply.

"Then I choose Umphray Spurway, the cloth merchant," cried Elspie Brydson. "Lads' bonny faces make lasses bare downsittings!"

"A wise lass—remarkable," mused Sir James, nodding slyly to the company at large. Then turning to the Englishman, he went on like one giving good and welcome advice: "I do not think that ye could do better, Umphray. Think of it, man!"

And it was while the cloth weaver hummed and hawed and shifted his legs first over one knee and then over the other, thumbing the dottle all the time into the bowl of his pipe, that I first heard my father's words, as I have reported them at the beginning.

"Come your ways in here, my Joe Janet!"

I saw a tall, swart-visaged man standing erect by the outer door and reaching back a hand to one who stood without on the steps half bowed to enter, yet reluctant to descend. Philip Stansfield was of a fiery visage, with eyes a little bloodshot, his cheeks mottled like day-old butcher's meat on a stall, and all his gay clothing tashed and frayed at sleeve and braiding. Yet through all disguises it was the face my mother looked at every night when she rose, sobbing, from saying her prayers and opened a little leathern case which lay beside her Bible on the service stand of her bed room. I had looked at it a thousand times when she was in the garden or gone up to the great house, and, though no one had ever told me, I knew that the man I looked upon was my father.

He stood on the threshold with a naturally gallant air, one hand on the hilt of his sword and the other, as I say, reached back to pull his companion within.

She came, shame-red and smirking, a smooth-faced, apple-cheeked youngish woman, slatternly, careless of dress, short of skirt and lavish of shoulder, a blue ribbon cris-crossing loosely over her breast and only half holding her bodice together. This woman laughed a nervous, fleering laugh when she found herself in face of the grave trio seated at the table, who turned with one accord to look at her. Yet a moment after she seemed to care nothing for them, and centered her disdainful attention upon the women on the other side of the inn kitchen. As I say, she was indeed very buxom and hoydenish of feature, but (this I learned afterward) there was no steadfast or housewifely look in her eyes. And that, after all, is the way to tell a good woman.

The young man with the haughty air and handsome damaged countenance took his hand from his sword and pointed scornfully at the table.

"Look, Janet," he cried, "look well at them. There sit all the three. For a silver groat I would send them all to hell—aye, and swing for them in the Grass Mercat in the morning, Janet!"

The rosy mirth of the wine heat had ebbed quickly from my grandfather's lips. He gripped the table to steady himself—not that he was in the least overcome with fear or apprehension, but that he might worthily say that which he had to say.

"Philip," he murmured, and then put his fingers to the goffered frill of his neckerchief. "Philip, my lad, you are my eldest son. Will you not take warning and lead a new life? Gladly would I forgive you for the sake of the bairn I learned to say his prayers kneeling at my knee. Put away this wicked, wanton woman that has made you live like a beast. Return to your wife. She greets for you. She prays for you. Look upon this bairn——"

My grandfather had now his hand upon my head, for I had run to him at the first sight of my father. He would have said more. I could hear his heart thumping in his side and his breath wheezing dryly in his throat. But at this moment the woman broke in shrill revilings, demanding furiously who he was thus to filch from her her good name.

"I would have you know that I am an honest man's wife!" She shouted the words at him like throwing stones.

Sir James' eyes were steady on her face.

"Said you by any chance," he inquired gravely, 'a man's honest wife?'"

He dropped his words quietly as a fisher drops a bait into a pool.

At which the woman swore a horrid oath and turned away as if to escape the questioning eyes of those present. She even made as if to leave her companion's side and go over to the other side of the fireplace, where Mistress Brydson still sat knitting with her daughters gathered in beside her like chickens when the hawk hovers. But the women folk of the house, readily divining her intent, gathered the skirts of their kirtles closely about them and swept off into the inner room. The door slamming in her face, and with a heartsick little laugh the woman returned to the side of her paramour. There was no weakness in his attitude.

F.....p Stansfield stood browbeating all that were in the inn kitchen except perhaps Umphray Spurway, the Englishman, who sat sipping his stone ale contemptuously and smiling in a way that was a vast admiration to me to behold.

CHAPTER II.

The Lassie Bairn.

Then the minister-man uprose and lifted his hand with great appearance of solemnity, which made the Englishman cough behind his palm. For Master Bell began to exhort the young man and the woman to repent and put away their sin, citing instances of well accredited reformations both from Scripture and (as he added) from the records of profane history.

But this timely and improving rebuke did the young man no good. Nay, it even made him more angry than before, such is the hardness of the human heart.

"Out upon you, canting hound," he cried, breaking in on the preacher's sermonizing. "I tell you plainly that had I as muckle to fill my belly as a groat a day, I would never trouble my father again."

"Come this night only to the great house," continued Mr. Bell, "bide to supper and the worship of the family altar. Then will I beseech for you a new heart. I feel that for this very purpose I have been sent to New Milns from the wicked city of Edinburgh."

"The devil fly away with my father and you both—to Edinburgh if he will! Think you I would frequent his table to have him forever grinning at me like a sheep's head on the tongs? Ye dog in bandstrings" there he broke out in sudden fury). "What is your concern in the matter? Know you to whom ye speak?"

Philip Stansfield suddenly left the woman's side. He strode across to where I stood trembling at my grandfather's elbow, clutching his coat sleeve.

"And so this puker is my son—the bantam that hath disinherited his own father. I will have no more folly. I will take him and he shall learn to chop wood and scour pots for them that really love me. He hath a face like a dish clout and, I doubt not, the spirit of a sheep maggot. I will train him better. Faith, we will see if the law of the land will deny a son to his own father."

What would now have happened I know not, for at his son's threat Sir James sat still and, as it were, bereft of speech. But Umphray Sparway, who up to this time had been listening with a smile on his lips, suddenly whipped a pair of pistols out of his pockets and laid them bended on the table before him.

"Enough and to spare of ill-talk," he said. "Out of this house with you on the instant, Philip Stansfield, you debauched man and blasphemer of your father!"

The young man was bold enough, but the pisto's daunted him sorely, and with a shrill cry of fear his companion clasped his arm to draw him away.

"As for you, Janet Mark," Spurway continued, speaking to the woman, "you shall be whipped from here to Moreham—aye, if I have to lay on the lashes myself!"

At which, after a volley of oaths from Philip Stansfield and a snarling like that of a trapped wild beast from his companion, the pair went forth into the night, vowing vengeance upon us all.

The three gentlemen sat a long time silent without touching the wine, which remained nor so much as emptying their glasses. Then Umphray Spurway rose.

"Let us take the boy home to his mother," he said.

And with that he handed one of the pistols to Sir James, reserving the other for himself. The minister placed himself next to my grandfather on the inner side, and commended his life and work to God in moving words. I thought he might have spared a prayer for my grandfather and me, but he did not.

In this order we were just about to go up the steps of Brydson's change house and adventure forth into the night, when of a sudden before us there appeared the strangest little figure.

A lassie bairn stood at the door, barring the way—a girl of six years or thereby. Her head was a tangle of light brown curls, which the firelight netted with gold. Her eyes danced light. Her mouth smiled red. She herself seemed to smile and dance as if she could hardly keep her feet still. I thought she looked kindly and pretty and little more than a babe, but at sight of her the women folk of the house came running indignantly forward to thrust her forth.

"My mither—where have ye put my mither?" cried the child.

"Oot o' this, deil'st brat!" they anspered as with one voice, and would have driven her forth into the night with their hands, but that she seemed to flit before them up the steps and to disappear in the darkness. After a moment's hesitation Umphray Spurway followed, and we all found ourselves in the crisp silence of the winter's night. I looked all about me for the little figure in the dress of red soldier's blanket, but I saw her not. It was cold and a stray pellet of hail or two spat in our faces, for the frost was too keen to let the snow come down with any freedom, though the sough of the wind from the north told us that it was not far away.

For several hundred yards beyond the circle of the yellow lights of the change house windows the street of the village of New Milns is bounded by the kirkyard wall. As we passed along I think we all looked up apprehensively to it. And I for one felt certain all that, while Philip Stansfield's gun barrel would be peering down upon us from its long, irregular ridge.

But what we made out was quite different. Again we saw the little girl. She stood erect upon it, just by the lintel of the gate post, her blanket-swathed figure blotting out a slim belt of stars. Again we heard her voice speaking to us, as she had done on the steps of the inn.

"My mither! Ill men, what have ye done with my mither?"

"Go home, little one," cried Sir James; "go home where you belong. 'Tis no seemly hour for a bairn to be sitting on the wall of the kirkyaird."

"I want my mither! I will not go home without my mither!"

The answer came down to us with a strange lilt to it as if the speaker were speaking and dancing, too. Then, after a pause—

"And I'm no sittin', I'm standin'. I want my mither."

"We do not know your mither, nor where she is," said Sir James. "Go home when you are bidden, like a good lass. And if ye are feared to gang, tell your mither that I said ye were no to be lickit this time for bidin' oot late."

"And wha are ye that bids folks that gate?" said the elf's voice from the wall shrewdly.

"I am Sir James Stansfield," said my grandfather, simply. Whereat from the kirk dyke came peal on peal of the strangest, merriest laughter, like bells on harness heard across the snow.

"Why do you laugh at my name, bairn?" my grandfather asked, with a certain sternness.

The laugh stopped short, as if cut off with shears.

"Because my mither laughs like that when she lays out your washin'," she answered.

"Lays out my washing?" said my grandfather, uncertainly.

"Aye," returned the chi'd; "when my mither folds up the linen sheets she aye laughs when she comes to the hindmost one. 'This is Sir James Stansfield's winding sheet,' she says. And then she laughs, and so I laugh, too, though I do not ken what for."

And again there came the sound of childish mirth from the top of the kirkyard wall. Then, all suddenly, the little dark figure disappeared, and the sound of her laughter tinkled away irregularly into the distance, coming back to us, now clear, now faint, till it was heard no more. And looking through the bars of the kirk yet, we could see it flitting like a snowflake across the tombstones toward the vault of the Stansfields.

I SAW A TALL, SMART-VISAGED MAN BY THE OUTER DOOR.

I think I never felt my bonnet lift off my head more plainly than that night. Even the minister beside me was groaning and quaking.

"Who is this devil's bairn?" he asked of Umphray Spurway. "I will have her indicted at the presbytery for a witch."

"Some chance bairn—the child of an evil mother," said my grandfather.

"In my country," said Umphray Spurway, drily, "we would call her 'God's child.' That is little Anna Mark!"

CHAPTER III.

The Great House of New Milns.

That night they took me not back to my mother's house, which was the Lodge Yett at the end of the avenue which leads to the south from the mansion house, my grandfather not wishing, for reasons of his own, to be parted from me. But when we came right to the door of the great house of New Milns, Sir James said to John Bell, the minister, "Sir, I would ask you to go down to the lodge and say to this lad's mother that he is to bide here this night, so that she may not expect him. Also bid Caleb Clinkaberry, her manservant, make all fast and keep his musket loaded. Tell him this apart. He will know the reason why."

Clearly the minister did not like his mission. Young as I was I could see that, for the place was lonely and the road dark. But he feared my grandfather, as I think now, because he was the patron of several good parishes, and he as yet both unbenched and expectant.

Then Sir James let himself in with a key which he took from a belt at his waist, and Umphray Spurway and I preceded him into the hall, a wide place where there was armor and old swords and a great brass-faced clock ticking composedly in a corner. A lamp stood ready lighted, and the place smelt habitable and home-like. It was good to be once more within walls, though even now I could not get the thought of the witch child out of my head.

My grandfather's old serving man, Robin Green, came to take his master's overcoat, letting Umphray Spurway and myself shift for ourselves.

"Her leddyship has gone to bed," he said, "she wearied waiting for you."

"Did she ken that I was at the change house?" asked Sir James, a little anxious, it seemed to me.

"I telled her leddyship that ye were ga'en wi' the minister to a meetin'. I condescended not on particulars either o' time or place, necessity not being laid upon me."

Sir James was visibly relieved.

"I will not forget this, Robin," he said, making his wonted grimace of pain as the servitor eased his coat over his rheumatic shoulder.

"There is a fire in your ain bedroom, nevertheless," said Robin; "her leddyship bade me say that she wished not to be disturbit."

At this Sir James clapped his hands suddenly together.

"Come ben, Umphray; come your ways ben!" he said, heartily. "Robin, put a fire in the parlor—not her ladyship's parlor, but the other."

"There is a guid fire in the east room, sir," answered the old man gravely, as if saying his prayers; "I lichtit it as soon as her leddyship gaed up to her bed. Also I took ben the guardevine and—"

"Robin," said my grandfather with equal gravity, "your wages are raised a pound in the half year."

"I thank ye kindly, sir," said the man, nodding with simple gravity.

"Tak' that bairn with ye, Robin," added Sir James, his eye suddenly falling on me; "or, stay, let him have some supper in the parlor first, and then lay him in the blue room that is next to mine."

At these words, glad to be rid of my grandfather for a little, I went gladly with Robin to his pantry. It had the word "Stillroom" printed legibly on the door, and smelt of cheese. Here Robin would not let me bide long, saying that it was cold and unfired; but putting a tumbler of milk and a liberal wedge of pastry upon a tray, he took my hand and led me back into the lighted parlor, which, like most of the rooms in the old house of New Milns, had old arras about the walls. The curtains were drawn close. The fire Robin Green had lighted was sparkling and spelking over the great iron dogs. Billets of birch were piled up beside it, and Sir James sat tossing first one and then another upon the heap absent-mindedly, talking all the while to the English cloth merchant.

As soon as Robin saw this he sat down the tray on the table, and, going over to his master, he took the billet of wood out of his hand and led him back to the table. Sir James looked at the birch faggot, then at the hand on his arm. The old servitor was firm and respectful. So without intermitting his discourse for a moment my grandfather permitted himself to be led back to the table and installed opposite the great oaken guardevine, which, with the silver-capped square bottles and shining ladles and rummers, looked most comfortable and appetizing.

Then Robin Green went back to the hearth, and, stooping over the fire, he carefully removed the entire armful of faggots which Sir James had tossed on, blowing out each if it had caught, and laying it at the side, so that presently the whole room was full of the acrid bite of wood smoke, and the tears began to run down my cheeks into the milk I was drinking.

But Sir James continued his story without stopping to notice Robin Green, and as he talked the tears ran down his cheeks also, but whether from the pity of the tale he was telling or because of the woodreek I know not.

My grandfather had compounded a steaming glassful for his guest and then for himself, but so absorbed was he in his narrative that he quite forgot at the end of the operation to add the spirit to Umphray Spurway's glass—an omission which the Englishman immediately repaired without comment, reaching his hand for the decanter and pouring in the rich yellow liquid with a liberal hand, all the time looking Sir James in the eye and nodding at the proper places in the story, as if that were his sole concern.

My grandfather, after having bidden me haste and dispatch my supper, because it was late and my mother would wish me in bed, presently forgot all about me, and proceeded with his argument. Still talking, he rose from his seat, and, going to one of the shelves which went about the deep window seat, he took from that which was readiest to his hand a little book covered in crimson leather, and with the pages grown yellow with age and handling.

"This," he said, holding it up, "is now my chief comfort. No, Master Spurway, it is not the Bible. Her ladyship—yes, certainly, she is a comfort, but of a mild nature, and, as one might say, occasional in action. But, sir, I would have you know that this is Burton, his 'Melancholy.' or the right edition, before he grew c umsy. 'At Oxford: Printed by John Litchfield and James Short for Henry Cripps; Anno Dom. 1621.' By that you may know it. Without this written cordial I can neither live merry hour nor sleep quiet night. Having Burton's fellowship, even though my son strive after my death, I can go on merrily toward heaven, as, indeed, sayeth mine author."

Then Umphray Spurway, with a curious smile on his face, asked my grandfather if it became him as an elder of the kirk to pass his time with Burton, who, after all, was little better than a pagan (or at least an Episcopalian), when he might be in meditation upon "Naphtali" or "Lex Rex"—or, if he minded not these, at the least casting up in his mind the points of Mr. John Bell's Sabbath sermon upon a suitable passage in Canticles.

To which my grandfather replied that to his thinking there was more egg meat in one page of honest Burton than in all the songs of Solomon the king.

At which saying my own heart was troubled, and even Umphray Spurway covered his face with his hand.

"Wait, Umphray," he went on, "only wait, my nimble bachelor, till you are a man with a family and know something about the matter. What comfort will you find in a home that is one continual strife of tongues, your sons waiting for you without your gate, wishful for your death, their teeth bared to bite, your wife peevish of face, bitter of speech?"

In answer to this outburst Umphray Spurway said no word, but held out his hand across the table and he smiled no more behind his palm. Sir James took it and held it hard in both of his.

"I will not make a stranger of you, Umphray," he said; "it is not debts that trouble me. You have put me out of the reach of that. It is that one of my sons hates me. Ye have heard his best word of me this night. My second, to whom I had thought to leave the bulk of my money, now every night comes home disguised in drink and rails upon me worse than the other. My wife cries out constantly that I have been well served for being so long overlenient with the children."

"Speaking of your son Philip," said Umphray Spurway quietly, "have you tried all ways with him—the severe as well as the indulgent?"

"Aye," answered my grandfather hopelessly, "all ways. I sent him abroad to take service as a common soldier in the Scots' Dutch regiments. I thought this would settle him. But in a month he was in prison; and when, through the influence of our ambassador at The Hague, I got him released in another month I had news that he has been condemned to death at Treves. Then, when I had provided money to bribe his jailers and bring him home, he only breaks out more and more furiously, so that I never know when I go down to mine own

Flitting Like a Snowflake.

dining hall whether I will get the contents of a musket or a decent meal of meat into my wame!"

At this moment we heard a noise in the passageway, and both of the gentlemen rose to their feet, my grandfather pale and perturbed, Umphray Spurway with his hand again in his coat tail pocket, where he had put his pistols.

But, after all, it was only the minister, Mr. John Bell, who came in hastily and sank into a chair, all shaken and for the moment unable to speak.

"What is't? What is't?" said my grandfather, bending over him anxiously.

Umphray Spurway went to the door and looked down the passage. Then he came back and compounded a stout rummer of strong waters, the which, when the minister had sipped at a while, the power of speech returned to him, and he lifted up his hands to heaven and rolled his eyes.

"Let the doors be barred, the windows looked to, for a man of blood goes about the house this night. Almost he has made an end of me, but mercifully his hand has withholden and I escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare."

"Speak plain, man," said my grandfather; "who or what molested you?"

The minister feebly waved a hand to intimate that he would speak more as he could, and presently, with many fallings away and applications to the rummer, he began to tell his tale.

"As I came back by the fir plantation, after leaving behind me the house of the lodge, where I had delivered your message faithfully, I came upon Philip Stansfield in the way with a drawn sword in his hand.

"'Dog!' cried he in a terrible voice, 'down on your marrow bones, dog! Ye have mumbled too many indulgences. Ye shall have none from me. Tell me what ye did in my wife's house at this time of night. Oh, nay, lie not to me. That will not serve you. I know the way of your cloth with female saints. Out with it, dog, or by the devil's dice box I will forthwith disembowel you with this sword!'

"So, seeing him thus urgent, to keep the peace I gat down on my knees and told him all.

"'Bides Umphray Spurway at the great house this night?' he asked me.

"I told him that I knew not as to that, adding that I was a poor son of the kirk, and that I looked to him to spare my life.

"'What money have ye cozened from the old greyhound this week?' he cried. 'Out with it! Empty your pockets!'

"I told him that I had not on me the value of one doit, but that he was welcome to my poor prayers. At this he laughed a wicked, ribald laugh. 'Poor prayers, indeed,' he said, spurning me painfully with his foot. 'A coward's prayers are poor prayers indeed! Rise up, brave saint! Go to your patron and bid him prepare for a longish journey. My service to the cloth weaver. My filial duty to my honored father.'

"With that the young man laughed and went out of my sight, with the naked sword yet over his shoulder, and so, rising up, I ran hither so soon as the blood came back to my heart."

"You hear, Umphray?" said Sir James, looking across at the Englishman.

"I will go and seek Master Philip," said the man from Yorks, taking out his pistols and bending them in his hand.

Still do I remember that procession down the long passage to the outer door, my grandfather leading the way with a candle in the great silver candlestick. Then came Umphray, the Englishman, his face grim and set, striding on with his heavy footfall. Behind him, again, were the minister and myself, fearful, I trow, to go, but still more fearful of being left in the parlor alone. I mind the shooting back of the bolts one by one, the whining noise of the hinges, the widening of the black crack when the door opened and the night looked in, the expectation in my heart that I should see the face of a fiend look out of the blackness. Then I heard Umphray stride down the steps. My grandfather's candle shone a moment on a stretch of white, glistening snow, over which the wind moaned. Then the heavy door clanged, the bolts were shot and Sir James turned and found me at his feet.

He gave a little start at sight of me.

"Philip," he said, in a strange tone; "my boy Philip!"

Then, with a long sigh, he added: "And now he seeks my life."

In a little he recalled his mind from the past in which it had been wandering.

"You must to bed instantly," he said. "There is a fire in the blue room. It is next to mine, so you will not be feared to be alone. Tonight you shall lodge there and tomorrow—we will send you back to your mother. Good night to you, Master Bell—this way, son Philip."

(To be continued.)

[1] Of the truth of this part of Philip Stansfield's strange narrative any reader may assure himself by turning to the series of "State Trials" in So., vol. —, p. —. A part of the history has already been referred to by the present editor in the first volume of Chapman's Magazine, p. 128 seq.

IN THE CHURCHES

Mr. G. W. F. Swartzell of this city has been elected a member of the board of directors of the National City Evangelization Union. Among other Washingtonians who are prominent in the organization are Bishop Hurst and Mr. Alexander Ashley.

Speaking of the society, a member said: "The wide range of influence exerted by this voluntary organization of Methodism is indicated by the fact that it has branches in Washington, Baltimore, Boston, New Bedford, Providence, Brooklyn, New York, Jersey City, Philadelphia, Camden, Scranton, Allegheny, Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, Binghamton, Erie, Denver, Columbus, Milwaukee, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Newark, Paterson and a number of other cities.

"At this time local societies have been organized in forty-five cities, and of these nearly forty are effectively operating in the direction of church extension and church sustentation or distinctive mission work. It is estimated that during the past year the various local societies have raised for church work $180,000.

It is understood efforts will soon be made in this city to establish one or more local chapters of the Brotherhood of St. Paul. It is stated that although the organization has been in existence but a few years its membership is very large. It has the indorsement of many bishops, college presidents and pastors who have tested the efficiency of its work. The work of this organization is primarily spiritual. It aims to secure, hold and use men for Christ and the church. Its emblem is a hand holding up a cross. It is said that very great financial aid has been extended to churches by these chapters. Several chapters in country churches have cared for lighting and fuel for the church or have assisted in meeting the pastor's salary. A number of chapters run entertainment courses; many conduct cottage prayer meetings and in summer open-air services in neglected districts. Especially do the chapters seek to be real fraternities.

The call of Rev. Dr. Purvis, who is well known in this city, but who, for several years has been a professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J., to the pastorate of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, has excited much interest among Presbyterians in Washington, especially in view of the fact that Dr. Purvis is likely to accept the call. A gentleman who knows the minister well had this to say of him:

"Dr. Purvis is one of the most learned men in America in Bible letters, and combined with his rare erudition there is a charm of person and manner about him that wins him friends wherever he goes. He is a native of Philadelphia, and was educated at the University of Pennsylvania. After his graduation in '872 he entered the theological school at Princeton, where he took a four years' course. He was for some years pastor of one of the leading Presbyterian churches in Baltimore. During his residence there he frequently came to Washington and thus became known to many of the leading members of the denomination in this section.

"In 1888 he was appointed professor of church history at Princeton, and he has been a professor in that institution ever since. During his career he has preached in many pulpits and is highly esteemed in the Presbyterian Church throughout the United States."

It is understood that Jack Cook, a thirteen-year-old English boy, now in this country as an evangelist, will in the near future pay a visit to Washington and preach in some of the churches here. The boy has been preaching for about two years, and, it is said, the success which has attended his efforts has been phenomenal. In one church in Chicago, where he preached for fourteen days, 200 persons professed conversion, and, it is said, that equally as great results have been obtained in Boston, New York and other cities where the boy has labored. He is accompanied by his father, who assists in the services. He began his preaching in Manchester, England, where he was born, and from that place he made a tour of the country. He arrived in the United States several months ago.

Through Bishop Satterlee, President McKinley has tendered an appointment as chaplain in the army to Rev. W. W. Brander, assistant rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Baltimore. It is understood Mr. Brander will accept the appointment and leave for the Philippines in a few weeks. The new appointee was born in Richmond, Va., and is a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and Theological Seminary, Va., a few miles from Washington. Soon after being ordained he received a charge in Brunswick county, Va., where he remained one year, and then spent three years in another part of the state. For the past two years he has been located in Baltimore.

Steps are being taken by leading Episcopalians throughout the country to ascertain if a change cannot be made in the method of distributing the funds, amounting to some $400,000, which are raised for church mission purposes. A prominent minister said concerning the matter:

"After deducting $21,700 for expenses and advertising the amount is appropriated by the board of managers to dioceses and missionary jurisdictions in bulk. Thereafter the board neither has nor claims any control over it.

"Of course, it goes without saying that it is honestly expended, but what the average rector wants is some assurance, better than any he has now, that the money which his people are ready to give will be expended to some good purpose so far as results are concerned. At present he has grave doubts on this point. He has a suspicion that in certain large areas of the church's territory the church is being presented to the people by a lot of feeble ecclesiastics whose work is not worth paying for."

A circular received here asks the aid of church members in forming branches of a "Don't Society," the headquarters of which are in Brooklyn, N. Y.

At present the parent society is rather unassuming, but its founders believe it will grow large and prosperous. Its motto is "Down with Sunday newspapers, Sunday street cars, Sunday letters and other Sunday institutions."

"The Society of the Five Dont's" is the name of the organization. Here are the five dont's to which all members pledge themselves for one year or longer: "Don't ride simply for pleasure on Sunday, don't (save in an ocean voyage) ride in a public conveyance on Sunday, don't read a Sunday newspaper on Sunday, don't buy anything on Sunday, except in an emergency, and don't mail letters on Sunday."

The theory upon which it is expected to abolish Sunday newspapers, street cars, the mailing of letters and similar abominations is this: "After enough persons join the societies to make the running of cars unprofitable, they will cease to be operated; that the newspapers will cease to inflict themselves on the public when the membership grows large enough to take away all the readers; that places where goods are sold on Sunday will close after people cease to buy, and that the United States mail service will take Sunday off every week when the people stop mailing letters on Sunday."

The thoughts of members of the Methodists Protestant Churches, here as well as elsewhere throughout the United States, have been centered this week in the work of the committee appointed by the last general conference of the denomination to revise the "discipline" of the church, which was in session in Baltimore.

It is understood that no important changes were made in the administrative law of the church, and the members of the committee devoted themselves principally in putting some of the so called ambiguous language into clearer phrases. One section thus treated was that which gives the trustees of a church authority to buy, sell, lease or dispose of property upon the consent of two-thirds of the members of a church at a special meeting called for the purpose. This section was found to be of doubtful meaning, from the fact that it created impression that the action indicated could be taken upon the consent of two-thirds of the qualified members present at such a meeting.

This view of the section would, it is said, make it conflict with the constitution, which expressly provides that such action could be taken only upon the consent of two-thirds of the qualified members of a church, meaning all those over twenty-one years old.

To make this section clearer and less liable to be misconstrued it was decided to insert in the revised discipline the section of the constitution bearing on the subject, with the addition that two-thirds of the qualified members of a church would be required to vote on the proposition before it could become effective. If less than the two-thirds voted it would not be binding, and according to the spirit of the constitution could not be carried out.

It was arranged that about two months previous to the meeting of the next general conference of the church, which will be held at Atlantic City during May next, slips of the revised discipline will be sent by the committee to the representatives-elect for their consideration. This course will, it is believed, prevent a long and wearisome debate over the revision, as those who are to finally pass upon the matter will have had ample time to consider all the changes and come prepared to vote upon them.

A Curious Chilean Custom.

Corr. Chicago Record.

Monday is a dies non in Chile. People have learned by long experience that they can expect little from their servants and employes on that day. They call it "San Lunes"—sobering up day. A manufacturer goes to his shop Monday morning to find that only a few of his hands have reported for duty, and even they are in a seedy condition. In some establishments, in places where labor is plenty, the hands who are absent on Monday get no work during the week, but this rule cannot be applied in most of the cities, because labor is so scarce that employers are at the mercy of their help and are compelled to tolerate their delinquencies.

The mistress of a household allows her servants a Sunday off in turn, but seldom expects them to report for duty on Monday, and is never surprised to receive a message from the police station. Carpenters, masons and other mechanics seldom work more than five days in a week, for the reasons I have given, and there is a proverb that the shoeshops are never open on Monday.

The same customs attend the celebration of legal holidays, and it requires five days for the people of Chile to express the patriotic emotions inspired by the "Diez y Ocho de Settembre"—the 18th of September—or the "daisy ocho," as it is familiarly called—the anniversary of Chilean independence. Everybody prepares for it. Houses are freshly painted, flagpoles are raised over every roof, bonfires burn on the surrounding mountains, fiestas are held in every park and plaza, special masses are sung in the churches, all the banks, business houses and manufacturing establishments are closed, schools are dismissed, labor is suspended on all the plantations, and everybody, young or old, great and small, engages in the festivities with a zeal and enthusiasm that is seldom seen elsewhere.

THE CYCLIST IN AFRICA.

From Fliegende Blaetter.