

Scottish sketches eBook

Scottish sketches by Amelia Edith Huddleston Barr

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Scottish sketches eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	7
Page 1.....	9
Page 2.....	11
Page 3.....	13
Page 4.....	15
Page 5.....	17
Page 6.....	19
Page 7.....	21
Page 8.....	23
Page 9.....	25
Page 10.....	27
Page 11.....	29
Page 12.....	31
Page 13.....	33
Page 14.....	35
Page 15.....	37
Page 16.....	39
Page 17.....	41
Page 18.....	42
Page 19.....	44
Page 20.....	46
Page 21.....	48
Page 22.....	50

Page 23.....	51
Page 24.....	53
Page 25.....	55
Page 26.....	57
Page 27.....	58
Page 28.....	60
Page 29.....	62
Page 30.....	64
Page 31.....	66
Page 32.....	68
Page 33.....	70
Page 34.....	71
Page 35.....	72
Page 36.....	74
Page 37.....	76
Page 38.....	78
Page 39.....	80
Page 40.....	82
Page 41.....	84
Page 42.....	85
Page 43.....	86
Page 44.....	88
Page 45.....	90
Page 46.....	92
Page 47.....	94
Page 48.....	96

Page 49.....	98
Page 50.....	100
Page 51.....	102
Page 52.....	104
Page 53.....	106
Page 54.....	107
Page 55.....	109
Page 56.....	110
Page 57.....	112
Page 58.....	114
Page 59.....	116
Page 60.....	118
Page 61.....	120
Page 62.....	122
Page 63.....	124
Page 64.....	126
Page 65.....	128
Page 66.....	130
Page 67.....	132
Page 68.....	134
Page 69.....	135
Page 70.....	136
Page 71.....	137
Page 72.....	139
Page 73.....	141
Page 74.....	143

Page 75.....	145
Page 76.....	146
Page 77.....	148
Page 78.....	150
Page 79.....	151
Page 80.....	153
Page 81.....	155
Page 82.....	156
Page 83.....	158
Page 84.....	160
Page 85.....	161
Page 86.....	163
Page 87.....	164
Page 88.....	165
Page 89.....	167
Page 90.....	169
Page 91.....	171
Page 92.....	173
Page 93.....	175
Page 94.....	177
Page 95.....	179
Page 96.....	181
Page 97.....	183
Page 98.....	185
Page 99.....	187
Page 100.....	189

Page 101.....	191
Page 102.....	192
Page 103.....	193
Page 104.....	195
Page 105.....	197
Page 106.....	199
Page 107.....	201
Page 108.....	203
Page 109.....	205
Page 110.....	207
Page 111.....	209
Page 112.....	211
Page 113.....	213
Page 114.....	215
Page 115.....	217
Page 116.....	219

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
CRAWFORD'S SAIR STRAIT.	1
CHAPTER I.	1
CHAPTER II.	5
CHAPTER III.	8
CHAPTER IV.	11
CHAPTER V.	14
CHAPTER VI.	18
CHAPTER VII.	21
CHAPTER VIII.	24
CHAPTER IX.	27
CHAPTER X.	31
JAMES BLACKIE'S REVENGE.	36
CHAPTER I.	36
CHAPTER II.	40
CHAPTER III.	43
CHAPTER IV.	46
CHAPTER V.	51
CHAPTER VI.	55
FACING HIS ENEMY.	59
CHAPTER I.	59
CHAPTER II.	62
CHAPTER III.	66
CHAPTER IV.	70
CHAPTER V.	73
CHAPTER VI.	77
CHAPTER VII.	79
CHAPTER VIII.	82
CHAPTER IX.	85
ANDREW CARGILL'S CONFESSION.	88
CHAPTER I.	88
CHAPTER II.	92
ONE WRONG STEP.	97
CHAPTER I.	97
CHAPTER II.	100
CHAPTER III.	103
CHAPTER IV.	104
CHAPTER V.	107
CHAPTER VI.	109

LILE DAVIE.

112

Page 1

CRAWFORD'S SAIR STRAIT.

CHAPTER I.

Alexander Crawford sat reading a book which he studied frequently with a profound interest. Not the Bible: that volume had indeed its place of honor in the room, but the book Crawford read was a smaller one; it was stoutly bound and secured by a brass lock, and it was all in manuscript. It was his private ledger, and it contained his bank account. Its contents seemed to give him much solid satisfaction; and when at last he locked the volume and replaced it in his secretary, it was with that careful respect which he considered due to the representative of so many thousand pounds.

He was in a placid mood, and strangely inclined to retrospection. Thoughtfully fingering the key which locked up the record of his wealth, he walked to the window and looked out. It was a dreary prospect of brown moor and gray sea, but Crawford loved it. The bare land and the barren mountains was the country of the Crawfords. He had a fixed idea that it always had been theirs, and whenever he told himself—as he did this night—that so many acres of old Scotland were actually his own, he was aggressively a Scotchman.

“It is a bonnie bit o’ land,” he murmured, “and I hae done as my father Laird Archibald told me. If we should meet in another warld I’ll be able to gie a good account o’ Crawford and Traquare. It is thirty years to-night since he gave me the ring off his finger, and said, ‘Alexander, I am going the way o’ all flesh; be a good man, and *grip tight*.’ I hae done as he bid me; there is L80,000 in the Bank o’ Scotland, and every mortgage lifted. I am vera weel pleased wi’ mysel’ to-night. I hae been a good holder o’ Crawford and Traquare.”

His self-complacent reflections were cut short by the entrance of his daughter. She stood beside him, and laid her hand upon his arm with a caressing gesture. No other living creature durst have taken that liberty with him; but to Crawford his daughter Helen was a being apart from common humanity. She was small, but very lovely, with something almost Puritanical in her dainty, precise dress and carefully snooded golden hair.

“Father!”

“Helen, my bird.”

“Colin is coming home. I have just had a letter from him. He has taken high honors in Glasgow. We’ll both be proud of Colin, father.”

“What has he done?”

“He has written a prize poem in Latin and Greek, and he is second in mathematics.”

“Latin and Greek! Poor ghostlike languages that hae put off flesh and blood lang syne. Poetry! Warse than nonsense! David and Solomon hae gien us such sacred poetry as is good and necessary; and for sinfu’ love verses and such vanities, if Scotland must hae them, Robert Burns is mair than enough. As to mathematics, there’s naething against them. A study that is founded on figures is to be depended upon; it has nae flights and fancies. You ken what you are doing wi’ figures. When is this clever fellow to be here?”

Page 2

“He is coming by the afternoon packet to-morrow. We must send the carriage to meet it, for Colin is bringing a stranger with him. I came to ask you if I must have the best guest-room made ready.”

“Wha for?”

“He is an English gentleman, from London, father.”

“And you would put an Englishman in the room where the twa last Stuarts slept? I’ll not hear tell o’ it. I’m not the man to lift a quarrel my fathers dropped, but I’ll hae no English body in Prince Charlie’s room. Mind that, noo! What is the man’s name?”

“Mr. George Selwyn.”

“George Selwyn! There’s nae Scotch Selwyns that I ken o’. He’ll be Saxon altogether. Put him in the East room.”

Crawford was not pleased at his son bringing any visitor. In the first place, he had important plans to discuss and carry out, and he was impatient of further delay. In the second, he was intensely jealous of Helen. Every young man was a probable suitor, and he had quite decided that Farquharson of Blair was the proper husband for her. Crawford and Blair had stood shoulder to shoulder in every national quarrel, and a marriage would put the two estates almost in a ring fence.

But he went the next day to meet the young men. He had not seen his son for three years, and the lad was an object very near and dear to his heart. He loved him tenderly as his son, he respected him highly as the future heir of Crawford and Traquare. The Crawfords were a very handsome race; he was anxious that this, their thirteenth representative, should be worthy, even physically, of his ancestors. He drew a long sigh of gratification as young Colin, with open hands, came up to him. The future laird was a noble-looking fellow, a dark, swarthy Highlandman, with glowing eyes, and a frame which promised in a few years to fill up splendidly.

His companion was singularly unlike him. Old Crawford had judged rightly. He was a pure Saxon, and showed it in his clear, fresh complexion, pale brown hair, and clear, wide-open blue eyes. But there was something about this young man which struck a deeper and wider sympathy than race—he had a heart beating for all humanity. Crawford looked at him physically only, and he decided at once, “There is no fear of Helen.” He told himself that young Farquharson was six inches taller and every way a far “prettier man.” Helen was not of this opinion. No hero is so fascinating to a woman as the man mentally and spiritually above her, and whom she must love from a distance; and if Crawford could have known how dangerous were those walks over the springy heather and through the still pine woods, Mr. Selwyn would have taken them far more frequently alone than he did.

But Crawford had other things to employ his attention at that time, and indeed the young English clergyman was far beyond his mental and spiritual horizon; he could not judge him fairly. So these young people walked and rode and sailed together, and Selwyn talked like an apostle of the wrongs that were to be righted and the poor perishing souls that were to be redeemed. The spiritual warfare in which he was enlisted had taken possession of him, and he spoke with the martial enthusiasm of a young soldier buckling on his armor.

Page 3

Helen and Colin listened in glowing silence, Helen showing her sympathy by her flushing cheeks and wet eyes, and Colin by the impatient way in which he struck down with his stick the thistles by the path side, as if they were the demons of sin and ignorance and dirt Selwyn was warring against. But after three weeks of this intercourse Crawford became sensible of some change in the atmosphere of his home. When Selwyn first arrived, and Crawford learned that he was a clergyman in orders, he had, out of respect to the office, delegated to him the conduct of family worship. Gradually Selwyn had begun to illustrate the gospel text with short, earnest remarks, which were a revelation of Bible truth to the thoughtful men and women who heard them.

The laird's "exercises" had often been slipped away from, excuses had been frequent, absentees usual; but they came to listen to Selwyn with an eagerness which irritated him. In our day, the gospel of Christ has brought forth its last beautiful blossom—the gospel of humanity. Free schools, free Bibles, Tract and City Missions, Hospitals and Clothing Societies, loving helps of all kinds are a part of every church organization. But in the time of which I am writing they were unknown in country parishes, they struggled even in great cities for a feeble life.

The laird and his servants heard some startling truths, and the laird began to rebel against them. A religion of intellectual faith, and which had certain well-recognized claims on his pocket, he was willing to support, and to defend, if need were; but he considered one which made him on every hand his brother's keeper a dangerously democratic theology.

"I'll hae no socialism in my religion, any more than I'll hae it in my politics, Colin," he said angrily. "And if yon Mr. Selwyn belongs to what they call the Church o' England, I'm mair set up than ever wi' the Kirk o' Scotland! God bless her!"

They were sitting in the room sacred to business and to the memory of the late Laird Archibald. Colin was accustomed to receive his father's opinions in silence, and he made no answer to this remark. This time, however, the laird was not satisfied with the presumed assent of silence; he asked sharply, "What say ye to that, son Colin?"

"I say God bless the Kirk of Scotland, father, and I say it the more heartily because I would like to have a place among those who serve her."

"What are ye saying now?"

"That I should like to be a minister. I suppose you have no objections."

"I hae vera great objections. I'll no hear tell o' such a thing. Ministers canna mak money, and they canna save it. If you should mak it, that would be an offence to your congregation; if ye should save it, they would say ye ought to hae gien it to the poor."

There will be nae Dominie Crawford o' my kin, Colin. Will naething but looking down on the warld from a pulpit sarve you?"

Page 4

"I like art, father. I can paint a little, and I love music."

"Art! Painting! Music! Is the lad gane daft? God has gien to some men wisdom and understanding, to ithers the art o' playing on the fiddle and painting pictures. There shall be no painting, fiddling Crawford among my kin, Colin."

The young fellow bit his lip, and his eyes flashed dangerously beneath their dropped lids. But he said calmly enough,

"What is your own idea, father? I am twenty-two, I ought to be doing a man's work of some kind."

"Just sae. That is warld-like talk. Now I'll speak wi' you anent a grand plan I hae had for a long time." With these words he rose, and took from his secretary a piece of parchment containing the plan of the estate. "Sit down, son Colin, and I'll show you your inheritance." Then he went carefully over every acre of moor and wood, of moss and water, growing enthusiastic as he pointed out how many sheep could be grazed on the hills, what shooting and fishing privileges were worth, *etc.* "And the best is to come, my lad. There is coal on the estate, and I am going to open it up, for I hae the ready siller to do it."

Colin sat silent; his cold, dissenting air irritated the excited laird very much.

"What hae ye got to say to a' this, Colin?" he asked proudly, "for you'll hae the management o' everything with me. Why, my dear son, if a' goes weel—and it's sure to—we'll be rich enough in a few years to put in our claim for the old Earldom o' Crawford, and you may tak your seat in the House o' Peers yet. The old chevalier promised us a Dukedom," he said sadly, "but I'm feared that will be aboon our thumb—"

"Father, what are you going to do with the clansmen? Do you think Highlandmen who have lived on the mountains are going to dig coal? Do you imagine that these men, who, until a generation or two ago, never handled anything but a claymore, and who even now scorn to do aught but stalk deer or spear salmon, will take a shovel and a pickaxe and labor as coal-miners? There is not a Crawford among them who would do it. I would despise him if he did."

"There is a glimmer o' good sense in what you say, Colin. I dinna intend any Crawford to work in my coal mine. Little use they would be there. I'll send to Glasgow for some Irish bodies."

"And then you will have more fighting than working on the place; and you'll have to build a Roman-catholic chapel, and have a Roman priest in Crawford, and you ken whether the Crawfords will thole *that* or not."

“As to the fighting, I’ll gie them no chance. I’m going to send the Crawfords to Canada. I hae thought it all out. The sheilings will do for the others; the land I want for sheep grazing. They are doing naething for themsel’s, and they are just a burden to me. It will be better for them to gang to Canada. I’ll pay their passage, and I’ll gie them a few pounds each to start them. You must stand by me in this matter, for they’ll hae to go sooner or later.”

Page 5

"That is a thing I cannot do, father. There is not a Laird of Crawford that was not nursed on some clanswoman's breast. We are all kin. Do you think I would like to see Rory and Jean Crawford packed off to Canada? And there is young Hector, my foster-brother! And old Ailsa, your own foster-sister! Every Crawford has a right to a bite and a sup from the Crawford land."

"That is a' bygone nonsense. Your great-grandfather, if he wanted cattle or meal, could just take the clan and go and harry some Southern body out o' them. That is beyond our power, and it's an unca charge to hae every Crawford looking to you when hunting and fishing fails. They'll do fine in Canada. There is grand hunting, and if they want fighting, doubtless there will be Indians. They will hae to go, and you will hae to stand by me in this matter."

"It is against my conscience, sir. I had also plans about these poor, half-civilized, loving kinsmen of ours. You should hear Selwyn talk of what we might do with them. There is land enough to give all who want it a few acres, and the rest could be set up with boats and nets as fishers. They would like that."

"Nae doubt. But I don't like it, and I wont hae it. Mr. Selwyn may hae a big parish in London, but the Crawfords arena in his congregation. I am king and bishop within my ain estate, Colin." Then he rose in a decided passion and locked up again the precious parchment, and Colin understood that, for the present, the subject was dismissed.

CHAPTER II.

At the very time this conversation was in progress, one strangely dissimilar was being carried on between George Selwyn and Helen Crawford. They were sitting in the sweet, old-fashioned garden and Selwyn had been talking of the work so dear to his heart, but a silence had fallen between them. Then softly and almost hesitatingly Helen said "Mr. Selwyn, I cannot help in this grand evangel, except with money and prayers. May I offer you L300? It is entirely my own, and it lies useless in my desk. Will you take it?"

"I have no power to refuse it. 'You give it to God, durst I say no?' But as I do not return at once, you had better send it in a check to our treasurer." Then he gave her the necessary business directions, and was writing the address of the treasurer when the laird stopped in front of them.

"Helen, you are needed in the house," he said abruptly; and then turning to Selwyn, he asked him to take a walk up the hill. The young man complied. He was quite unconscious of the anger in the tone of the request. For a few yards neither spoke; then the laird, with an irritable glance at his placid companion, said, "Mr. Selwyn, fore-

speaking saves after-speaking. Helen Crawford is bespoke for young Farquharson of Blair, and if you have any hopes o' wiving in my house—"

"Crawford, thank you for your warning, but I have no thoughts of marrying any one. Helen Crawford is a pearl among women; but even if I wanted a wife, she is unfit for my helpmate. When I took my curacy in the East End of London I counted the cost. Not for the fairest of the daughters of men would I desert my first love—the Christ-work to which I have solemnly dedicated my life."

Page 6

His voice fell almost to a whisper, but the outward, upward glance of the inspired eyes completely disconcerted the aggressive old chieftain. His supposed enemy, in some intangible way, had escaped him, and he felt keenly his own mistake. He was glad to see Colin coming; it gave him an opportunity of escaping honorably from a conversation which had been very humiliating to him. He had a habit when annoyed of seeking the sea-beach. The chafing, complaining waves suited his fretful mood, and leaving the young men, he turned to the sea, taking the hillside with such mighty strides that Selwyn watched him with admiration and astonishment.

"Four miles of that walking will bring him home in the most amiable of moods," said Colin. And perhaps it would, if he had been left to the sole companionship of nature. But when he was half way home he met Dominie Tallisker, a man of as lofty a spirit as any Crawford who ever lived. The two men were close friends, though they seldom met without disagreeing on some point.

"Weel met, dominie! Are you going to the Keep?"

"Just so, I am for an hour's talk wi' that fine young English clergyman you hae staying wi' you."

"Tallisker, let me tell you, man, you hae been seen o'er much wi' him lately. Why, dominie! he is an Episcopal, and an Arminian o' the vera warst kind."

"Hout, laird! Arminianism isna a contagious disease. I'll no mair tak Arminianism from the Rev. George Selwyn than I'll tak Toryism fra Laird Alexander Crawford. My theology and my politics are far beyond inoculation. Let me tell you that, laird."

"Hae ye gotten an argument up wi' him, Tallisker? I would like weel to hear ye twa at it."

"Na, na; he isna one o' them that argues. He maks downright assertions; every one o' them hits a body's conscience like a sledge-hammer. He said that to me as we walked the moor last night that didna let me sleep a wink."

"He is a vera disagreeable young man. What could he say to you? You have aye done your duty."

"I thought sae once, Crawford. I taught the bairns their catechism; I looked weel to the spiritual life o' young and old; I had aye a word in season for all. But maybe this I ought to hae done, and not left the other undone."

"You are talking foolishness, Tallisker, and that's a thing no usual wi' you."

"No oftener wi' me nor other folk. But, laird, I feel there must be a change. I hae gotten my orders, and I am going to obey them. You may be certain o' that."

"I didna think I would ever see Dominie Tallisker taking orders from a disciple o' Arminius—and an Englishman forbye!"

"I'll tak my orders, Crawford, from any messenger the Lord chooses to send them by. And I'll do this messenger justice; he laid down no law to me, he only spak o' the duty laid on his own conscience; but my conscience said 'Amen' to his—that's about it. There has been a breath o' the Holy Ghost through the Church o' England lately, and the dry bones o' its ceremonials are being clothed upon wi' a new and wonderfu' life."

Page 7

"Humff!" said the laird with a scornful laugh as he kicked a pebble out of his way.

"There is a great outpouring at Oxford among the young men, and though I dinna agree wi' them in a' things, I can see that they hae gotten a revelation."

"Ou, ay, the young ken a' things. It is aye young men that are for turning the world upside down. Naething is good enough for them."

The dominie took no notice of the petulant interruption. "Laird," he said excitedly, "it is like a fresh Epiphany, what this young Mr. Selwyn says—the hungry are fed, the naked clothed, the prisoners comforted, the puir wee, ragged, ignorant bairns gathered into homes and schools, and it is the gospel wi' bread and meat and shelter and schooling in its hand. That was Christ's ain way, you'll admit that. And while he was talking, my heart burned, and I bethought me of a night-school for the little herd laddies and lasses. They could study their lessons on the hillside all day, and I'll gather them for an hour at night, and gie them a basin o' porridge and milk after their lessons. And we ought not to send the orphan weans o' the kirk to the warkhouse; we ought to hae a hame for them, and our sick ought to be better looked to. There is many another good thing to do, but we'll begin wi' these, and the rest will follow."

The laird had listened thus far in speechless indignation. He now stood still, and said,

"I'll hae you to understand, Dominie Tallisker, that I am laird o' Crawford and Traquare, and I'll hae nae such pliskies played in either o' my clachans."

"If you are laird, I am dominie. You ken me weel enough to be sure if this thing is a matter o' conscience to me, neither king nor kaiser can stop me. I'd snap my fingers in King George's face if he bid me 'stay,' when my conscience said 'go,'" and the dominie accompanied the threat with that sharp, resonant fillip of the fingers that is a Scotchman's natural expression of intense excitement of any kind.

"King George!" cried the laird, in an ungovernable temper, "there is the whole trouble. If we had only a Charles Stuart on the throne there would be nane o' this Whiggery."

"There would be in its place masses, and popish priests, and a few private torture-chambers, and whiles a Presbyterian heretic or twa burned at the Grass-market. Whiggery is a grand thing when it keeps the Scarlet Woman on her ain seven hills. Scotland's hills and braes can do weel, weel without her."

This speech gave the laird time to think. It would never do to quarrel with Tallisker. If he should set himself positively against his scheme of sending his clan to Canada it would be almost a hopeless one; and then he loved and respected his friend. His tall, powerful frame and his dark, handsome face, all aglow with a passionate conviction of

right, and an invincible determination to do it, commanded his thorough admiration. He clasped his hands behind his back and said calmly,

Page 8

"Tallisker, you'll be sorry enough for your temper erelong. You hae gien way mair than I did. Ye ken how you feel about it."

"I feel ashamed o' mysel', laird. You'll no lay the blame o' it to my office, but to Dugald Tallisker his ain sel'. There's a deal o' Dugald Tallisker in me yet, laird; and whiles he is o'er much for Dominie Tallisker."

They were at the gate by this time, and Crawford held out his hand and said,

"Come in, dominie."

"No; I'll go hame, laird, and gie mysel' a talking to. Tell Mr. Selwyn I want to see him."

CHAPTER III.

Alas, how often do Christ's words, "I come not to bring peace, but a sword," prove true. George Selwyn went away, but the seed he had dropped in this far-off corner of Scotland did not bring forth altogether the peaceable fruits of righteousness. In fact, as we have seen, it had scarcely begun to germinate before the laird and the dominie felt it to be a root of bitterness between them. For if Crawford knew anything he knew that Tallisker would never relinquish his new work, and perhaps if he yielded to any reasonable object Tallisker would stand by him in his project.

He did not force the emigration plan upon his notice. The summer was far advanced; it would be unjustifiable to send the clan to Canada at the beginning of winter. And, as it happened, the subject was opened with the dominie in a very favorable manner. They were returning from the moors one day and met a party of six men. They were evidently greatly depressed, but they lifted their bonnets readily to the chief. There was a hopeless, unhappy look about them that was very painful.

"You have been unsuccessful on the hills, Archie, I fear."

"There's few red deer left," said the man gloomily. "It used to be deer and men; it is sheep and dogs now."

After a painful silence the dominie said,

"Something ought to be done for those braw fellows. They canna ditch and delve like an Irish peasant. It would be like harnessing stags in a plough."

Then Crawford spoke cautiously of his intention, and to his delight the dominie approved it.

“I’ll send them out in Read & Murray’s best ships. I’ll gie each head o’ a family what you think right, Tallisker, and I’ll put L100 in your hands for special cases o’ help. And you will speak to the men and their wives for me, for it is a thing I canna bear to do.”

But the men too listened eagerly to the proposition. They trusted the dominie, and they were weary of picking up a precarious living in hunting and fishing, and relying on the chief in emergencies. Their old feudal love and reverence still remained in a large measure, but they were quite sensible that everything had changed in their little world, and that they were out of tune with it. Some few of their number had made their way to India or Canada, and there was a vague dissatisfaction which only required a prospect of change to develop. As time went on, and the laird’s plan for opening the coal beds on his estate got known, the men became impatient to be gone.

Page 9

In the early part of March two large ships lay off the coast waiting for them, and they went in a body to Crawford Keep to bid the chief “farewell.” It was a hard hour, after all, to Crawford. The great purpose that he had kept before his eyes for years was not at that moment sufficient. He had dressed himself in his full chieftain’s suit to meet them. The eagle’s feather in his Glengary gave to his great stature the last grace. The tartan and philibeg, the garters at his knee, the silver buckles at his shoulder, belt, and shoon, the jewelled mull and dirk, had all to these poor fellows in this last hour a proud and sad significance. As he stood on the steps to welcome them, the wind colored his handsome face and blew out the long black hair which fell curling on his shoulders.

Whatever they intended to say to him, when they thus saw him with young Colin by his side they were unable to say. They could only lift their bonnets in silence. The instincts and traditions of a thousand years were over them; he was at this moment the father and the chief of their deepest affection. One by one they advanced to him. He pressed the hands of all. Some of the older men—companions of his youth in play and sport—he kissed with a solemn tenderness. They went away silently as they came, but every heart was full and every eye was dim. There was a great feast for them in the clachan that night, but it was a sombre meeting, and the dominie’s cheerful words of advice and comfort formed its gayest feature.

The next day was calm and clear. The women and children were safely on board soon after noon, and about four o’clock the long boats left the shore full of men. Tallisker was in the front one. As they pulled away he pointed silently to a steep crag on the shingly beach. The chief stood upon it. He waved his bonnet, and then the long-pent feelings of the clan found vent in one long, pitiful Gallic lament, *O hon a rie! O hon a rie!* For a few moments the boats lay at rest, no man was able to lift an oar. Suddenly Tallisker’s clear, powerful voice touched the right chord. To the grand, plaintive melody of St. Mary’s he began the 125th Psalm,

“They in the Lord that firmly trust
shall be like Sion hill,
Which at no time can be removed,
but standeth ever still.

As round about Jerusalem
the mountains stand alway;
The Lord his folk doth compass so
from henceforth and for aye.”

And thus singing together they passed from their old life into a new one.

Colin had been indignant and sorrowful over the whole affair. He and Helen were still young enough to regret the breaking of a tie which bound them to a life whose romance cast something like a glamour over the prosaic one of more modern times. Both would,

in the unreasonableness of youthful sympathy, have willingly shared land and gold with their poor kinsmen; but in this respect Tallisker was with the laird.

Page 10

"It was better," he said, "that the old feudal tie should be severed even by a thousand leagues of ocean. They were men and not bairns, and they could feel their ain feet;" and then he smiled as he remembered how naturally they had taken to self-dependence. For one night, in a conversation with the oldest men, he said, "Crawfords, ye'll hae to consider, as soon as you are gathered together in your new hame, the matter o' a dominie. Your little flock in the wilderness will need a shepherd, and the proper authorities maun be notified."

Then an old gray-headed man had answered firmly, "Dominie, we will elect our ain minister. We hae been heart and soul, every man o' us, with the Relief Kirk; but it is ill living in Rome and striving wi' the pope, and sae for the chief's sake and your sake we hae withheld our testimony. But we ken weel that even in Scotland the Kirk willna hirple along much farther wi' the State on her back, and in the wilderness, please God, we'll plant only a Free Kirk."

The dominie heard the resolve in silence, but to himself he said softly, "*They'll do! They'll do!* They'll be a bit upsetting at first, maybe, but they are queer folk that have nae failings."

A long parting is a great strain; it was a great relief when the ships had sailed quite out of sight. The laird with a light heart now turned to his new plans. No reproachful eyes and unhappy faces were there to damp his ardor. Everything promised well. The coal seam proved to be far richer than had been anticipated, and those expert in such matters said there were undoubted indications of the near presence of iron ore. Great furnaces began to loom up in Crawford's mental vision, and to cast splendid lustres across his future fortunes.

In a month after the departure of the clan, the little clachan of Traquare had greatly changed. Long rows of brick cottages, ugly and monotonous beyond description, had taken the place of the more picturesque sheilings. Men who seemed to measure everything in life with a two-foot rule were making roads and building jetties for coal-smacks to lie at. There was constant influx of strange men and women—men of stunted growth and white faces, and who had an insolent, swaggering air, intolerably vulgar when contrasted with the Doric simplicity and quiet gigantic manhood of the mountain shepherds.

The new workers were, however, mainly Lowland Scotchmen from the mining districts of Ayrshire. The dominie had set himself positively against the introduction of a popish element and an alien people; and in this position he had been warmly upheld by Farquharson and the neighboring proprietors. As it was, there was an antagonism likely to give him full employment. The Gael of the mountains regarded these Lowland "working bodies" with something of that disdain which a rich and cultivated man feels for kin, not only poor, but of contemptible nature and associations. The Gael was poor truly, but he held himself as of gentle birth. He had lived by his sword, or by the care of

cattle, hunting, and fishing. Spades, hammers, and looms belonged to people of another kind.

Page 11

Besides this great social gulf, there were political and religious ones still wider. That these differences were traditional, rather than real, made no distinction. Man have always fought as passionately for an idea as for a fact. But Dominie Tallisker was a man made for great requirements and great trusts. He took in the position with the eye of a general. He watched the two classes passing down the same streets as far apart as if separated by a continent, and he said, with a very positive look on his face, "These men are brethren and they ought to dwell in unity; and, God helping Dugald Tallisker, they will do it, yes, indeed, they will."

CHAPTER IV.

In a year after the departure of the clan, the clachans of Crawford and Traquare had lost almost all traces of their old pastoral character. The coal pit had been opened, and great iron furnaces built almost at its mouth. Things had gone well with Crawford; the seam had proved to be unusually rich; and, though the iron had been found, not on his land, but on the extreme edge of Blair, he was quite satisfied. Farquharson had struck hands with him over it, and the Blair iron ore went to the Crawford furnaces to be smelted into pig iron.

Crawford had grown younger in the ardent life he had been leading. No one would have taken him to be fifty-five years old. He hardly thought of the past; he only told himself that he had never been as strong and clear-headed and full of endurance, and that it was probable he had yet nearly half a century before him. What could he not accomplish in that time?

But in every earthly success there is a Mordecai sitting in its gate, and Colin was the uncomfortable feature in the laird's splendid hopes. He had lounged heartlessly to and from the works; the steady, mechanical routine of the new life oppressed him, and he had a thorough dislike for the new order of men with whom he had to come in contact. The young Crawfords had followed him about the hills with an almost canine affection and admiration. To them he was always "the young laird." These sturdy Ayrshire and Galloway men had an old covenanting rebelliousness about them. They disputed even with Dominie Tallisker on church government; they sang Robert Burns' most democratic songs in Crawford's very presence.

Then Colin contrasted them physically with the great fellows he had been accustomed to see striding over the hills, and he despised the forms stunted by working in low seams and unhealthy vapors and the faces white for lack of sunshine and grimy with the all-pervading coal dust. The giants who toiled in leather masks and leather suits before the furnaces suited his taste better. When he watched them moving about amid the din and flames and white-hot metal, he thought of Vulcan and Mount Aetna, and thus threw over them the enchantments of the old Roman age. But in their real life the men disappointed him. They were vulgar and quarrelsome; the poorest Highland gillie had a

vein of poetry in his nature, but these iron-workers were painfully matter of fact; they could not even understand a courtesy unless it took the shape of a glass of whiskey.

Page 12

It was evident to the laird that the new life was very distasteful to his heir; it was evident to the dominie that it was developing the worst sides of Colin's character. Something of this he pointed out to Helen one morning. Helen and he had lately become great friends, indeed, they were co-workers together in all the new labors which the dominie's conscience had set him. The laird had been too busy and anxious about other matters to interfere as yet with this alliance, but he promised himself he would do so very soon. Helen Crawford was not going to nurse sick babies and sew for all the old women in the clachan much longer. And the night-school! This was particularly offensive to him. Some of the new men had gone there, and Crawford was sure he was in some way defrauded by it. He thought it impossible to work in the day and study an hour at night. In some way he suffered by it.

"If they werna in the schoolroom they would be in the Change House," Tallisker had argued.

But the laird thought in his heart that the whiskey would be more to his advantage than the books. Yet he did not like to say so; there was something in the dominie's face which restrained him. He had opened the subject in that blustering way which always hides the white feather somewhere beneath it, and Tallisker had answered with a solemn severity,

"Crawford, it seems to be your wark to mak money; it is mine to save souls. Our roads are sae far apart we arena likely to run against each other, if we dinna try to."

"But I don't like the way you are doing your wark; that is all, dominie."

"Mammon never did like God's ways. There is a vera old disagreement between them. A man has a right to consider his ain welfare, Crawford, but it shouldna be mair than the twa tables o' the law to him."

Now Tallisker was one of those ministers who bear their great commission in their faces. There was something almost imperial about the man when he took his stand by the humblest altar of his duty. Crawford had intended at this very time to speak positively on the subject of his own workers to Tallisker. But when he looked at the dark face, set and solemn and full of an irresistible authority, he was compelled to keep silence. A dim fear that Tallisker would say something to him which would make him uncomfortable crept into his heart. It was better that both the dominie and conscience should be quiet at present.

Still he could not refrain from saying,

"You hae set yoursel' a task you'll ne'er win over, dominie. You could as easy mak Ben-Cruchan cross the valley and sit down by Ben-Appin as mak Gael and Lowlander call each other brothers."

“We are told, Crawford, that mountains may be moved by faith; why not, then, by love?
I am a servant o’ God. I dinna think it any presumption to expect impossibilities.”

Page 13

Still it must be acknowledged that Tallisker looked on the situation as a difficult one. The new workers to a man disapproved of the Established Church of Scotland. Perhaps of all classes of laborers Scotch colliers are the most theoretically democratic and the most practically indifferent in matters of religion. Every one of them had relief and secession arguments ready for use, and they used them chiefly as an excuse for not attending Tallisker's ministry. When conscience is used as an excuse, or as a weapon for wounding, it is amazing how tender it becomes. It pleased these Lowland workers to assert a religious freedom beyond that of the dominie and the shepherd Gael around them. And if men wish to quarrel, and can give their quarrel a religious basis, they secure a tolerance and a respect which their own characters would not give them. Tallisker might pooh-pooh sectional or political differences, but he was himself far too scrupulous to regard with indifference the smallest theological hesitation.

One day as he was walking up the clachan pondering these things, he noticed before him a Highland shepherd driving a flock to the hills. There was a party of colliers sitting around the Change House; they were the night-gang, and having had their sleep and their breakfast, were now smoking and drinking away the few hours left of their rest. Anything offering the chance of amusement was acceptable, and Jim Armstrong, a saucy, bullying fellow from the Lonsdale mines, who had great confidence in his Cumberland wrestling tricks, thought he saw in the placid indifference of the shepherd a good opportunity for bravado.

"Sawnie, ye needna pass the Change House because we are here. We'll no hurt you, man."

The shepherd was as one who heard not.

Then followed an epithet that no Highlander can hear unmoved, and the man paused and put his hand under his plaid. Tallisker saw the movement and quickened his steps. The word was repeated, with the scornful laugh of the group to enforce it. The shepherd called his dog—

"Keeper, you tak the sheep to the Cruchan corrie, and dinna let are o' them stray."

The dumb creature looked in his face assentingly, and with a sharp bark took the flock charge. Then the shepherd walked up to the group, and Jim Armstrong rose to meet him.

"Nae dirks," said an old man quietly; "tak your hands like men."

Before the speech was over they were clinched in a grasp which meant gigantic strength on one side, and a good deal of practical bruising science on the other. But before there was an opportunity of testing the quality of either the dominie was between the men. He threw them apart like children, and held each of them at arm's length,

almost as a father might separate two fighting schoolboys. The group watching could not refrain a shout of enthusiasm, and old Tony Musgrave jumped to his feet and threw his pipe and his cap in the air.

Page 14

“Dugald,” said the dominie to the shepherd, “go your ways to your sheep. I’ll hae nae fighting in my parish.

“Jim Armstrong, you thrawart bully you, dinna think you are the only man that kens Cumberland cantrips. I could fling you mysel’ before you could tell your own name;” and as if to prove his words, he raised an immense stone, that few men could have lifted, and with apparent ease flung it over his right shoulder. A shout of astonishment greeted the exploit, and Tony Musgrave—whose keen, satirical ill-will had hitherto been Tallisker’s greatest annoyance—came frankly forward and said, “Dominie, you are a guid fellow! Will you tak some beer wi’ me?”

Tallisker did not hesitate a moment.

“Thank you, Tony. If it be a drink o’ good-will, I’ll tak it gladly.”

But he was not inclined to prolong the scene; the interference had been forced upon him. It had been the only way to stop a quarrel which there would have been no healing if blood had once been shed. Yet he was keenly alive to the dignity of his office, and resumed it in the next moment. Indeed, the drinking of the glass of good-will together was rather a ceremonial than a convivial affair. Perhaps that also was the best. The men were silent and respectful, and for the first time lifted their caps with a hearty courtesy to Tallisker when he left them.

“Weel! Wonders never cease!” said Jim Armstrong scornfully. “To see Tony Musgrave hobnobbing wi’ a black-coat! The deil must ‘a’ had a spasm o’ laughing.”

“Let the deil laugh,” said Tony, with a snap of his grimy fingers. Then, after a moment’s pause, he added, “Lads, I heard this morning that the dominie’s wheat was spoiling, because he couldna get help to cut it. I laughed when I heard it; I didna ken the man then. I’m going to-morrow to cut the dominie’s wheat; which o’ you will go wi’ me?”

“I!” and “I!” and “I!” was the hearty response; and so next day Traquare saw a strange sight—a dozen colliers in a field of wheat, making a real holiday of cutting the grain and binding the sheaves, so that before the next Sabbath it had all been brought safely home.

CHAPTER V.

But during these very days, when the dominie and his parishioners were drawing a step closer to each other, the laird and his son were drifting farther apart. Crawford felt keenly that Colin took no interest in the great enterprises which filled his own life. The fact was, Colin inherited his mother’s, and not his father’s temperament. The late Lady Crawford had been the daughter of a Zetland Udaller, a pure Scandinavian, a descendant of the old Vikings, and she inherited from them a poetic imagination and a

nature dreamy and inert, though capable of rousing itself into fits of courage that could dare the impossible. Colin would have led a forlorn hope or stormed a battery; but the bare ugliness and monotony of his life at the works fretted and worried him.

Page 15

Tallisker had repeatedly urged a year's foreign travel. But the laird had been much averse to the plan. France, in his opinion, was a hotbed of infidelity; Italy, of popery; Germany, of socialistic and revolutionary doctrines. There was safety only in Scotland. Pondering these things, he resolved that marriage was the proper means to "settle" the lad. So he entered into communication with an old friend respecting his daughter and his daughter's portion; and one night he laid the result before Colin.

Colin was indignant. He wanted to marry no woman, and least of all women, Isabel McLeod.

"She'll hae L50,000!" said the laird sententiously.

"I would not sell myself for L50,000."

"You'd be a vera dear bargain at half the price to any woman, Colin. And you never saw Isabel. She was here when you were in Glasgow. She has the bonniest black e'en in Scotland, and hair like a raven's wing."

"When I marry, sir, I shall marry a woman like my mother: a woman with eyes as blue as heaven, and a face like a rose. I'll go, as you did, to Shetland for her."

"There isna a house there fit for you to take a wife from, Colin, save and except the Earl's ain; and his daughter, the Lady Selina, is near thirty years old."

"There are my second cousins, Helga and Saxa Vedder."

Then the laird was sure in his own heart that Tallisker's advice was best. France and Italy were less to be feared than pretty, portionless cousins. Colin had better travel a year, and he proposed it. It hurt him to see how eagerly his heir accepted the offer. However, if the thing was to be done, it was best done quickly. Letters of credit suitable to the young laird's fortune were prepared, and in less than a month he was ready to begin his travels. It had been agreed that he should remain away one year, and if it seemed desirable, that his stay might even be lengthened to two. But no one dreamed that advantage would be taken of this permission.

"He'll be hamesick ere a twelvemonth, laird," said the dominie; and the laird answered fretfully, "A twelvemonth is a big slice o' life to fling awa in far countries."

The night before Colin left he was walking with his sister on the moor. A sublime tranquillity was in the still September air. The evening crimson hung over the hills like a royal mantle. The old church stood framed in the deepest blue. At that distance the long waves broke without a sound, and the few sails on the horizon looked like white flowers at sea.

“How beautiful is this mansion of our father!” said Helen softly. “One blushes to be caught worrying in it, and yet, Colin, I fear to have you go away.”

“Why, my dear?”

“I have a presentiment that we shall meet no more in this life. Nay, do not smile; this strange intelligence of sorrow, this sudden trembling in a soul at rest, is not all a delusion. We shall part to-morrow, Colin. Oh, darling brother, where shall we meet again?”

Page 16

He looked into the fair, tender face and the eager, questioning eyes, and found himself unable to reply.

“Remember, Colin! I give you a rendezvous in heaven.”

He clasped her hand tightly, and they walked on in a silence that Colin remembered often afterwards. Sometimes, in dreams, to the very end of his life, he took again with Helen that last evening walk, and his soul leaned and hearkened after hers. “I give you a rendezvous in heaven!”

In the morning they had a few more words alone. She was standing looking out thoughtfully into the garden. “Are you going to London?” she asked suddenly.

“Yes.”

“You will call on Mr. Selwyn?”

“I think so.”

“Tell him we remember him—and try to follow, though afar off, the example he sets us.”

“Well, you know, Helen, I may not see him. We never were chums. I have often wondered why I asked him here. It was all done in a moment. I had thought of asking Walter Napier, and then I asked Selwyn. I have often thought it would have pleased me better if I had invited Walter.”

“Sometimes it is permitted to us to do things for the pleasure of others, rather than our own. I have often thought that God—who foresaw the changes to take place here—sent Mr. Selwyn with a message to Dominie Tallisker. The dominie thinks so too. Then how glad you ought to be that you asked him. He came to prepare for those poor people who as yet were scattered over Ayrshire and Cumberland. And this thought comforts me for you, Colin. God knows just where you are going, dear, and the people you are going to meet, and all the events that will happen to you.”

The events and situations of life resemble ocean waves—every one is alike and yet every one is different. It was just so at Crawford Keep after Colin left it. The usual duties of the day were almost as regular as the clock, but little things varied them. There were letters or no letters from Colin; there were little events at the works or in the village; the dominie called or he did not call. Occasionally there were visitors connected with the mines or furnaces, and sometimes there were social evening gatherings of the neighboring young people, or formal state dinners for the magistrates and proprietors who were on terms of intimacy with the laird.

For the first year of Colin's absence, if his letters were not quite satisfactory, they were condoned. It did not please his father that Colin seemed to have settled himself so

completely in Rome, among “artists and that kind o’ folk,” and he was still more angry when Colin declared his intention of staying away another year. Poor father! How he had toiled and planned to aggrandize this only son, who seemed far more delighted with an old coin or an old picture than with the great works which bore his name. In all manner of ways he had made it clear to his family that in the dreamy, sensuous atmosphere of Italian life he remembered the gray earnestness of Scottish life with a kind of terror.

Page 17

Tallisker said, "Give him his way a little longer, laird. To bring him hame now is no use. People canna thole blue skies for ever; he'll be wanting the moors and the misty corries and the gray clouds erelong." So Colin had another year granted him, and his father added thousand to thousand, and said to his heart wearily many and many a time, "It is all vexation of spirit."

At the end of the second year Crawford wrote a most important letter to his son. There was an opening for the family that might never come again. All arrangements had been made for Colin to enter the coming contest for a seat in Parliament. The Marquis of B—— had been spoken to, and Crawford and he had come to an understanding. Crawford did not give the particulars of the "understanding," but he told Colin that his "political career was assured." He himself would take care of the works. Political life was open to his son, and if money and influence could put him in the House of Peers, money should not be spared.

The offer was so stupendous, the future it looked forward to so great, Crawford never doubted Colin's proud, acquiescence. That much he owed to a long line of glorious ancestors; it was one of the obligations of noble birth; he would not dare to, neglect it.

Impatiently he waited Colin's answer. Indeed, he felt sure Colin would answer such a call in person. He was disappointed when a letter came; he had not known, till then, how sure he had felt of seeing his son. And the letter was a simple blow to him. Very respectfully, but very firmly, the proposition was declined. Colin said he knew little of parties and cabals, and was certain, at least, that nothing could induce him to serve under the Marquis of B——. He could not see his obligations to the dead Crawfords as his father did. He considered his life his own. It had come to him with certain tastes, which he meant to improve and gratify, for only in that way was life of any value to him.

The laird laid the letter in Tallisker's hands without a word. He was almost broken-hearted. He had not yet got to that point where money-making for money's sake was enough. Family aggrandizement and political ambition are not the loftiest motives of a man's life, but still they lift money-making a little above the dirty drudgery of mere accumulation. Hitherto Crawford had worked for an object, and the object, at least in his own eyes, had dignified the labor.

In his secret heart he was angry at Colin's calm respectability. A spendthrift prodigal, wasting his substance in riotous living, would have been easier to manage than this young man of aesthetic tastes, whose greatest extravagance was a statuette or a picture. Tallisker, too, was more uneasy than he would confess. He had hoped that Colin would answer his father's summons, because he believed now that the life he was leading was unmanning him. The poetical element in his character was usurping an undue mastery. He wrote to Colin very sternly, and told him plainly that a poetic pantheism was not a whit less sinful than the most vulgar infidelity.

Page 18

Still he advised the laird to be patient, and by no means to answer Colin's letter in a hurry. But only fixed more firmly the angry father's determination. Colin must come home and fulfil his wish, or he must time remain away until he returned as master. As his son, he would know him no more; as the heir of Crawford, he would receive at intervals such information as pertained to that position. For the old man was just in his anger; it never seemed possible to him to deprive Colin of the right of his heritage. To be the 13th Laird of Crawford was Colin's birthright; he fully recognized his title to the honor, and, as the future head of the house, rendered him a definite respect.

Of course a letter written in such a spirit did no good whatever. Nothing after it could have induced Colin to come home. He wrote and declined to receive even the allowance due to him as heir of Crawford. The letter was perfectly respectful, but cruelly cold and polite, and every word cut the old man like a sword.

For some weeks he really seemed to lose all interest in life. Then the result Tallisker feared was arrived at. He let ambition go, and settled down to the simple toil of accumulation.

CHAPTER VI.

But Crawford had not a miser's nature. His house, his name, his children were dearer, after all, to him than gold. Hope springs eternal in the breast; in a little while he had provided himself with a new motive: he would marry Helen to young Farquharson, and endow her so royally that Farquharson would gladly take her name. There should be another house of Crawford of which Helen should be the root.

Helen had been long accustomed to consider Hugh Farquharson as her future husband. The young people, if not very eager lovers, were at least very warm and loyal friends. They had been in no hurry to finish the arrangement. Farquharson was in the Scot's Greys; it was understood that at his marriage he should resign his commission, so, though he greatly admired Helen, he was in no hurry to leave the delights of metropolitan and military life.

But suddenly Crawford became urgent for the fulfilment of the contract, and Helen, seeing how anxious he was, and knowing how sorely Colin had disappointed him, could no longer plead for a delay. And yet a strange sadness fell over her; some inexplicable symptoms as to her health led her to fear she would never be Farquharson's wife; the gay wedding attire that came from Edinburgh filled her with a still sorrow; she could not appropriate any part of it as her own.

One day when the preparations were nearly finished, Tallisker came up to the Keep. Helen saw at once that he was moved by some intense feeling, and there was a red spot on his cheeks which she had been accustomed to associate with the dominie's

anger. The laird was sitting placidly smoking, and drinking toddy. He had been telling Helen of the grand house he was going to build on the new estate he had just bought; and he was now calmly considering how to carry out his plans on the most magnificent scale, for he had firmly determined there should be neither Keep nor Castle in the North Country as splendid as the new Crawfords' Home.

Page 19

He greeted Tallisker with a peculiar kindness, and held his hand almost lovingly. His friendship for the dominie—if he had known it—was a grain of salt in his fast deteriorating life. He did not notice the dominie's stern preoccupation, he was so full of his own new plans. He began at once to lay them before his old friend; he had that very day got the estimates from the Edinburgh architect.

Tallisker looked at them a moment with a gathering anger. Then he pushed them passionately away, saying in a voice that was almost a sob, "I darena look at them, laird; I darena look at them! Do you ken that there are fourteen cases o' typhus in them colliers' cottages you built? Do you remember what Mr. Selwyn said about the right o' laborers to pure air and pure water? I knew he was right then, and yet, God forgive me! I let you tak your ain way. Six little bits o' bairns, twa women, and six o' your pit men! You must awa to Athol instantan for doctors and medicines and brandy and such things as are needfu'. There isna a minute to lose, laird."

Helen had risen while he was speaking with a calm determination that frightened her father. He did not answer Tallisker, he spoke to her: "Where are you going, Helen?"

"Down to the village; I can do something till better help is got."

"Helen Crawford, you'll bide where you are! Sit still, and I'll do whatever Tallisker bids me."

Then he turned angrily to the dominie.

"You are aye bringing me ill tidings. Am I to blame if death comes?"

"Am I my brother's keeper? It's an auld question, laird. The first murderer of a' asked it. I'm bound to say you are to blame. When you gie fever an invite to your cotters' homes, you darena lay the blame on the Almighty. You should hae built as Mr. Selwyn advised."

"Dominie, be quiet. I'm no a bairn, to be hectored o'er in this way. Say what I must do and I'll do it—anything in reason—only Helen. I'll no hae her leave the Keep; that's as sure as deathe. Sit down, Helen. Send a' the wine and dainties you like to, but don't you stir a foot o'er the threshold."

His anger was, in its way, as authoritative as the dominie's. Helen did as she was bid, more especially as Tallisker in this seconded the laird.

"There is naething she could do in the village that some old crone could not do better."

It was a bitterly annoying interruption to Crawford's pleasant dreams and plans. He got up and went over to the works. He found things very bad there. Three more of the men had left sick, and there was an unusual depression in the village. The next day the

tidings were worse. He foresaw that he would have to work the men half time, and there had never been so many large and peremptory orders on hand. It was all very unfortunate to him.

Tallisker's self-reproaches were his own; he resented them, even while he acknowledged their truth. He wished he had built as Selwyn advised; he wished Tallisker had urged him more. It was not likely he would have listened to any urging, but it soothed him to think he would. And he greatly aggravated the dominie's trouble by saying,

Page 20

"Why did ye na mak me do right, Tallisker? You should hae been mair determined wi' me, dominie."

During the next six weeks the dominie's efforts were almost superhuman. He saw every cottage whitewashed; he was nurse and doctor and cook. The laird saw him carrying wailing babies and holding raving men in his strong arms. He watched over the sick till the last ray of hope fled; he buried them tenderly when all was over. The splendor of the man's humanity had never shown itself until it stood erect and feared not, while the pestilence that walked in darkness and the destruction that wasted at noon-day dogged his every step.

The laird, too, tried to do his duty. Plenty of people are willing to play the Samaritan without the oil and the twopence, but that was not Crawford's way. Tallisker's outspoken blame had really made him tremble at his new responsibilities; he had put his hand liberally in his pocket to aid the sufferers. Perhaps at the foundation of all lay one haunting thought—Helen! If he did what he could for others, Helen would safer. He never audibly admitted that Helen was in any danger, but—but—if there should be danger, he was, he hoped, paying a ransom for her safety.

In six weeks the epidemic appeared to have spent itself. There was a talk of resuming full hours at the works. Twenty new hands had been sent for to fill vacant places. Still there was a shadow on the dominie's face, and he knew himself there was a shadow on his heart. Was it the still solemnity of death in which he had lately lived so much? Or was it the shadow of a coming instead of a departing sorrow?

One afternoon he thought he would go and sit with Helen a little while. During his close intimacy with the colliers he had learned many things which would change his methods of working for their welfare; and of these changes he wished to speak with Helen. She was just going for a walk on the moor, and he went with her. It was on such a September evening she had walked last with Colin. As they sauntered slowly, almost solemnly home, she remembered it. Some impulse far beyond her control or understanding urged her to say, "Dominie, when I am gone I leave Colin to you."

He looked at her with a sudden enlightenment. Her face had for a moment a far-away death-like predestination over it. His heart sank like lead as he looked at her.

"Are you ill, Helen?"

"I have not been well for two weeks."

He felt her hands; they were burning with fever.

"Let us go home," she said, and then she turned and gave one long, mournful look at the mountains and the sea and the great stretch of moorland. Tallisker knew in his

heart she was bidding farewell to them. He had no word to say. There are moods of the soul beyond all human intermeddling.

The silence was broken by Helen. She pointed to the mountains. "How steadfast they are, how familiar with forgotten years! How small we are beside them!"

Page 21

"I don't think so," said Tallisker stoutly. "Mountains are naething to men. How small is Sinai when the man Moses stands upon it!"

Then they were at the Keep garden. Helen pulled a handful of white and golden asters, and the laird, who had seen them coming, opened the door wide to welcome them. Alas! Alas! Though he saw it not, death entered with them. At midnight there was the old, old cry of despair and anguish, the hurrying for help, where no help was of avail, the desolation of a terror creeping hour by hour closer to the hearthstone.

The laird was stricken with a stony grief which was deaf to all consolation. He wandered up and down wringing his hands, and crying out at intervals like a man in mortal agony. Helen lay in a stupor while the fever burned her young life away. She muttered constantly the word "Colin;" and Tallisker, though he had no hope that Colin would ever reach his sister, wrote for the young laird.

Just before the last she became clearly, almost radiantly conscious. She would be alone with her father, and the old man, struggling bravely with his grief, knelt down beside her. She whispered to him that there was a paper in the jewel-box on her table. He went and got it. It was a tiny scrap folded crosswise. "Read it, father, when I am beyond all pain and grief. I shall trust you, dear." He could only bow his head upon her hands and weep.

"Tallisker!" she whispered, and he rose softly and called him. The two men stood together by her side.

"Is it well, my daughter?" said the dominie, with a tone of tender triumph in his voice. "You fear not, Helen, the bonds of death?"

"I trust in those pierced hands which have broken the bonds of death. Oh! the unspeakable riches!"

These were her last words. Tallisker prayed softly as the mystical gray shadow stole over the fair, tranquil face. It was soon all over.

"She had outsoared the shadow of our night,
And that unrest which men misname delight."

The bridal robes were folded away, the bridegroom went back to his regiment, the heartsore father tried to take up his life again. But it seemed to him to have been broken in two by the blow; and besides this, there was a little strip of paper which lay like a load upon his heart. It was the paper he had taken from Helen's dying fingers, and it contained her last request:

"Father, dear, dear father, whatever you intended to give me—I pray you—give it to God's poor.

"Helen."

CHAPTER VII.

Page 22

The dominie had felt certain that Colin would answer his letter in person, but after a long silence he received it back again. Colin had left Rome, and left no trace behind him. The laird knew that Tallisker had written, and he too had been hoping and expecting. But he received the news of his son's disappearance without remark. Life for some time was a dreary weight to him, he scarce felt as if he could lift it again. Hope after hope had failed him. He had longed so to be a rich man, had God in his anger granted him his wish? And was no other thing to prosper with him? All the same he clung to his gold with a deeper affection. When all other vices are old avarice is still young. As ambition and other motives died out, avarice usurped their places, and Tallisker saw with a feeling half angry, and half pitiful, the laird's life dwindling down to this most contemptible of all aims. He kept his duty as proprietor constantly before the laird, but he no longer seemed to care that people should say, "Crawford's men have the best laborers' cottages in Scotland."

"I hae made up my mind, Tallisker," said fretfully, "the warld thinks more o' the who mak money than o' those who gie it awa." Certainly this change was not a sudden one; for two years after Helen's death it was coming slowly forward, yet there were often times when Tallisker hoped that it was but a temptation, and would be finally conquered. Men do not lose the noble savor of humanity in a moment. Even on the downward road good angels wait anxiously, and whisper in every better moment to the lapsing soul, "Return!"

But there was a seed of bitterness in Crawford's heart, that was poisoning the man's spiritual life—a little bit of paper, yet it lay like a great stone over his noblest feelings, and sealed them up as in a sepulchre. Oh, if some angel would come and roll it away! He had never told the dominie of Helen's bequest. He did not dare to destroy the slip of paper, but he hid it in the most secret drawer of his secretary. He told himself that it was only a dying sentiment in Helen to wish it, and that it would be a foolish superstition in him to regard it. Perhaps in those last moments she had not understood what she was asking.

For a little while he found relief in this suggestion; then he remembered that the request must have been dictated before the fever had conquered her strength or judgment. The words were clearly written in Helen's neat, precise manner; there was not a hesitating line in the whole. She had evidently written it with care and consideration. No one could tell how that slip of paper haunted him. Even in the darkness of its secret hiding-place his spiritual eyes saw it clearly day and night.

To give to the poor all he had intended to give to Helen! He could not! He could not! He could not do it! Helen could not have known what she was asking. He had meant, in one way or another, to give her, as the founder of the new line of Crawfords, at least one hundred thousand pounds. Was it reasonable to scatter hither and yon such a large sum, earned, as he told himself pitifully, "by his ain wisdom and enterprise!"

Page 23

The dominie knew nothing of this terrible struggle going on ever in the man's soul who sat by his side. He saw that Crawford was irritable and moody, but he laid the blame of it on Colin. Oh, if the lad would only write, he would go himself and bring him back to his father, though he should have to seek him at the ends of the earth. But four years passed away, and the prodigal sent no backward, homeward sign. Every night, then, the laird looked a moment into the dominie's face, and always the dominie shook his head. Ah, life has silences that are far more pathetic than death's.

One night Crawford said, almost in a whisper,

"He'll be dead, Tallisker."

And Tallisker answered promptly,

"He'll come hame, laird."

No other words about Colin passed between the two men in four years. But destiny loves surprises. One night Tallisker laid a letter on the table.

"It is for you, laird; read it."

It was a singular letter to come after so long a silence, and the laird's anger was almost excusable.

"Listen, Tallisker; did e'er you hear the like?

"*Dear father:* I want, for a very laudable purpose, L4,000. It is not for myself in any way. If you will let me have it, I will trouble you with the proper explanations. If not, they will not be necessary. I have heard that you are well. I pray God to continue his mercy to you.

"Your dutiful son,

"*Colin Crawford.*'

"*'Laudable purpose!'*" cried the unhappy father, in a passion. "The lad is altogether too laudable. The letter is an insult, Tallisker. I'll ne'er forgive him for it. Oh, what a miserable father I am!"

And the dominie was moved to tears at the sight of his old friend's bitter anguish.

Still he asserted that Colin had meant it to be a kind letter.

“Dinna tak want o’ sense for want o’ affection laird. The lad is a conceited prig. He’s set up wi’ himsel’ about something he is going to do. Let him hae the money. I would show him you can gie as grandly as he can ask loftily.”

And, somehow, the idea pleased the laird. It was something that Colin had been obliged to ask him for money at all. He sat down and wrote out a check for the amount. Then he enclosed it with these words:

“*Son Colin Crawford*: I send you what you desire. I am glad your prospects are sae laudable; maybe it may enter your heart, some day, to consider it laudable to keep the Fifth Command. Your sister is dead. Life is lonely, but I thole it. I want nae explanations.

“Your father,

“*Alex. Crawford.*”

“What’s the address, Tallisker?”

“Regent’s Place, London.”

Page 24

The answer arrived in due time. It was as proper as a letter could be. Colin said he was just leaving for America, but did not expect to be more than six months there. But he never said a word about coming to Crawford. Tallisker was downright angry at the young man. It was true his father had told him he did not wish to see him again, but that had been said under a keen sense of family wrong and of bitter disappointment. Colin ought to have taken his father's ready response to his request as an overture of reconciliation. For a moment he was provoked with both of them.

"You are a dour lot, you Crawfords; ane o' you is prouder than the ither."

"The Crawfords are as God made them, dominie."

"And some o' them a little warse."

Yet, after all, it was Colin Tallisker was really angry at. For the present he had to let his anger lie by. Colin had gone, and given him no address in America.

"He is feared I will be telling him his duty, and when he comes back that is what I shall do, if I go to London to mak him hear me."

For a moment the laird looked hopefully into the dominie's face, but the hope was yet so far off he could not grasp it. Yet, in a dim, unacknowledged way it influenced him. He returned to his money-making with renewed vigor. It was evident he had let the hope of Colin's return steal into his heart. And the giving of that L4,000 Tallisker considered almost a sign of grace. It had not been given from any particularly noble motive; but any motive, not sinful, roused in opposition to simple avarice, was a gain. He was quite determined now to find Colin as soon as he returned from America.

In rather less than six months there were a few lines from Colin, saying that the money sent had been applied to the proper purpose, and had nobly fulfilled it. The laird had said he wanted no explanations, and Colin gave him none.

Tallisker read the letter with a half smile.

"He is just the maist contrary, conceited young man I e'er heard tell o'. Laird, as he wont come to us, I am going to him."

The laird said nothing. Any grief is better than a grief not sure. It would be a relief to know all, even if that "all" were painful.

CHAPTER VIII.

Tallisker was a man as quick in action as in resolve; the next night he left for London, it was no light journey in those days for a man of his years, and who had never in all his

life been farther away from Perthshire than Edinburgh. But he feared nothing. He was going into the wilderness after his own stray sheep, and he had a conviction that any path of duty is a safe path. He said little to any one. The people looked strangely on him. He almost fancied himself to be Christian going through Vanity Fair.

He went first to Colin's old address in Regent's Place. He did not expect to find him there, but it might lead him to the right place. Number 34 Regent's Place proved to be a very grand house. As he went up to the door, an open carriage, containing a lady and a child, left it. A man dressed in the Crawford tartan opened the door.

Page 25

"Crawford?" inquired Tallisker, "is he at home?"

"Yes, he is at home;" and the servant ushered him into, a carefully-shaded room, where marble statues gleamed in dusk corners and great flowering plants made the air fresh and cool. It as the first time Tallisker had ever seen a calla lily and he looked with wonder and delight at the gleaming flowers. And somehow he thought of Helen. Colin sat in a great leathern chair reading. He did not lift his head until the door closed and he was sensible the servant had left some one behind. Then for a moment he could hardly realize who it was; but when he did, he came forward with a glad cry.

"Dominie! O Tallisker!"

"Just so, Colin, my dear lad. O Colin, you are the warst man I ever kenned. You had a good share o' original sin to start wi', but what wi' pride and self-will and ill-will, the old trouble is sairly increased."

Colin smiled gravely. "I think you misjudge me, dominie." Then refreshments were sent for, and the two men sat down for a long mutual confidence.

Colin's life had not been uneventful. He told it frankly, without reserve and without pride. When he quarrelled with his father about entering Parliament, he left Rome at once, and went to Canada. He had some idea of joining his lot with his own people there. But he found them in a state of suffering destitution. They had been unfortunate in their choice of location, and were enduring an existence barer than the one they had left, without any of its redeeming features. Colin gave them all he had, and left them with promises of future aid.

Then he went to New York. When he arrived, there was an intense excitement over the struggle then going on in the little republic of Texas. He found out something about the country; as for the struggle, it was the old struggle of freedom against papal and priestly dominion. That was a quarrel for which Scotchmen have always been ready to draw the sword. It was Scotland's old quarrel in the New World, and Colin went into it heart and soul. His reward had been an immense tract of the noble rolling Colorado prairie. Then he determined to bring the Crawfords down, and plant them in this garden of the Lord. It was for this end he had written to his father for L4,000. This sum had sufficed to transplant them to their new home, and give them a start. He had left them happy and contented, and felt now that in this matter he had absolved his conscience of all wrong.

"But you ought to hae told the laird. It was vera ill-considered. It was his affair more than yours. I like the thing you did, Colin, but I hate the way you did it. One shouldna be selfish even in a good wark."

"It was the laird's own fault; he would not let me explain."

“Colin, are you married?”

“Yes. I married a Boston lady. I have a son three years old. My wife was in Texas with me. She had a large fortune of her own.”

Page 26

"You are a maist respectable man, Colin, but I dinna like it at all. What are you doing wi' your time? This grand house costs something."

"I am an artist—a successful one, if that is not also against me."

"Your father would think sae. Oh, my dear lad, you hae gane far astray from the old Crawford ways."

"I cannot help that, dominie. I must live according to my light. I am sorry about father."

Then the dominie in the most forcible manner painted the old laird's hopes and cruel disappointments. There were tears in Colin's eyes as he reasoned with him. And at this point his own son came into the room. Perhaps for the first time Colin looked at the lad as the future heir of Crawford. A strange thrill of family and national pride stirred his heart. He threw the little fellow shoulder high, and in that moment regretted that he had flung away the child's chance of being Earl of Crawford. He understood then something of the anger and suffering his father had endured, and he put the boy down very solemnly. For if Colin was anything, he was just; if his father had been his bitterest enemy, he would, at this moment, have acknowledged his own aggravation.

Then Mrs. Crawford came in. She had heard all about the dominie, and she met him like a daughter. Colin had kept his word. This fair, sunny-haired, blue-eyed woman was the wife he had dreamed about; and Tallisker told him he had at any rate done right in that matter. "The bonnie little Republican," as he called her, queened it over the dominie from the first hour of their acquaintance.

He stayed a week in London, and during it visited Colin's studio. He went there at Colin's urgent request, but with evident reluctance. A studio to the simple dominie had almost the same worldly flavor as a theatre. He had many misgivings as they went down Pall Mall, but he was soon reassured. There was a singular air of repose and quiet in the large, cool room. And the first picture he cast his eyes upon reconciled him to Colin's most un-Crawford-like taste.

It was "The Farewell of the Emigrant Clan." The dominie's knees shook, and he turned pale with emotion. How had Colin reproduced that scene, and not only reproduced but idealized it! There were the gray sea and the gray sky, and the gray granite boulder rocks on which the chief stood, the waiting ships, and the loaded boats, and he himself in the prow of the foremost one. He almost felt the dear old hymn thrilling through the still room. In some way, too, Colin had grasped the grandest points of his father's character. In this picture the man's splendid physical beauty seemed in some mysterious way to give assurance of an equally splendid spiritual nature.

Page 27

"If this is making pictures, Colin, I'll no say but what you could paint a sermon, my dear lad. I hae ne'er seen a picture before." Then he turned to another, and his swarthy face glowed with an intense emotion. There was a sudden sense of tightening in his throat, and he put his hand up and slowly raised his hat. It was Prince Charlie entering Edinburgh. The handsome, unfortunate youth rode bareheaded amid the Gordons and the Murrays and a hundred Highland noblemen. The women had their children shoulder high to see him, the citizens, bonnets up, were pressing up to his bridle-rein. It stirred Tallisker like a peal of trumpets. With the tears streaming down his glowing face, he cried out,

"How daur ye, sir! You are just the warst rebel between the seas! King George ought to hang you up at Carlisle-gate. And this is painting! This is artist's wark! And you choose your subjects wisely, Colin: it is a gift the angels might be proud o'." He lingered long in the room, and when he left it, "Prince Charlie" and the "Clan's Farewell" were his own. They were to go back with him to the manse at Crawford.

CHAPTER IX.

It was, upon the whole, a wonderful week to Tallisker; he returned home with the determination that the laird must recall his banished. He had tried to induce Colin to condone all past grievances, but Colin had, perhaps wisely, said that he could not go back upon a momentary impulse. The laird must know all, and accept him just as he was. He had once been requested not to come home unless he came prepared to enter into political life. He had refused the alternative then, and he should refuse it again. The laird must understand these things, or the quarrel would probably be renewed, perhaps aggravated.

And Tallisker thought that, in this respect, Colin was right. He would at any rate hide nothing from the laird, he should know all; and really he thought he ought to be very grateful that the "all" was so much better than might have been.

The laird was not glad. A son brought down to eat the husk of evil ways, poor, sick, suppliant, would have found a far readier welcome. He would gladly have gone to meet Colin, even while he was yet a great way off, only he wanted Colin to be weary and footsore and utterly dependent on his love. He heard with a grim silence Tallisker's description of the house in Regent's Place, with its flowers and books, its statues, pictures, and conservatory. When Tallisker told him of the condition of the Crawfords in Canada, he was greatly moved. He was interested and pleased with the Texan struggle. He knew nothing of Texas, had never heard of the country, but Mexicans, Spaniards, and the Inquisition were one in his mind.

"That at least was Crawford-like," he said warmly, when told of Colin's part in the struggle.

But the subsequent settlement of the clan there hurt him terribly. "He should hae told me. He shouldna hae minded what I said in such a case. I had a right to know. Colin has used me vera hardly about this. Has he not, Tallisker?"

Page 28

"Yes, laird, Colin was vera wrong there. He knows it now."

"What is he doing in such a grand house? How does he live?"

"He is an artist—a vera great one, I should say."

"He paints pictures for a living! He! A Crawford o' Traquare! I'll no believe it, Tallisker."

"There's naught to fret about, laird. You'll ken that some day. Then his wife had money."

"His wife! Sae he is married. That is o' a piece wi' the rest. Wha is she?"

"He married an American—a Boston lady."

Then the laird's passion was no longer controllable, and he said some things the dominie was very angry at.

"Laird," he answered, "Mrs. Colin Crawford is my friend. You'll no daur to speak any way but respectful o' her in my presence. She is as good as any Crawford that ever trod the heather. She came o' the English Hampdens. Whar will ye get better blood than that?"

"No Hampdens that ever lived—"

"Whist! Whist, laird! The Crawfords are like a' ither folk; they have twa legs and twa hands."

"He should hae married a Scots lass, though she had carried a milking-pail."

"Laird, let me tell you there will be nae special heaven for the Gael. They that want to go to heaven by themsel's arena likely to win there at a'. You may as well learn to live with ither folk here; you'll hae to do it to a' eternity."

"If I get to heaven, Dominie Tallisker, I'll hae special graces for the place. I'm no going to put mysel' in a blazing passion for you to-night. Yon London woman has bewitched you. She's wanting to come to the Keep, I'll warrant."

"If ye saw the hame she has you wouldna warrant your ain word a minute longer, laird. And I'm sure I dinna see what she would want to hae twa Crawfords to guide for. One is mair than enough whiles. It's a wonder to me how good women put up wi' us at all!"

"*Humff!*" said the laird scornfully. "Too many words on a spoiled subject."

"I must say one mair, though. There is a little lad, a bonnie, brave, bit fellow, your ain grandson, Crawford."

"An American Crawford!" And the laird laughed bitterly. "A foreigner! an alien! a Crawford born in England! Guid-night, Tallisker! We'll drop the subject, an it please you."

Tallisker let it drop. He had never expected the laird to give in at the first cry of "Surrender." But he reflected that the winter was coming, and that its long nights would give plenty of time for thought and plenty of opportunities for further advocacy. He wrote constantly to Colin and his wife, perhaps oftener to Mrs. Crawford than to the young laird, for she was a woman of great tact and many resources, and Tallisker believed in her.

Page 29

Crawford had said a bitter word about her coming to the Keep, and Tallisker could not help thinking what a blessing she would be there; for one of Crawford's great troubles now was the wretchedness of his household arrangements. The dainty cleanliness and order which had ruled it during Helen's life were quite departed. The garden was neglected, and all was disorder and discomfort. Now it is really wonderful how much of the solid comfort of life depends upon a well-arranged home, and the home must depend upon some woman. Men may mar the happiness of a household, but they cannot make it. Women are the happiness makers. The laird never thought of it in this light, but he did know that he was very uncomfortable.

"I canna even get my porridge made right," he said fretfully to the dominie.

"You should hae a proper person o'er them ne'er-do-weel servants o' yours, laird. I ken one that will do you."

"Wha is she?"

"A Mrs. Hope."

"A widow?"

"No, not a widow, but she is not living with her husband."

"Then she'll ne'er win into my house, dominie."

"She has good and sufficient reasons. I uphold her. Do you think I would sanction aught wrong, laird?"

No more was said at that time, but a month afterwards Mrs. Hope had walked into the Keep and taken everything in her clever little hands. Drunken, thieving, idle servants had been replaced by men and women thoroughly capable and efficient. The laird's tastes were studied, his wants anticipated, his home became bright, restful, and quiet. The woman was young and wonderfully pretty, and Crawford soon began to watch her with a genuine interest.

"She'll be ane o' the Hopes o' Beaton," he thought; "she is vera like them."

At any rate he improved under her sway, for being thoroughly comfortable himself, he was inclined to have consideration for others.

One afternoon, as he came from the works, it began to snow. He turned aside to the manse to borrow a plaid of Tallisker. He very seldom went to the manse, but in the keen, driving snow the cheerful fire gleaming through the window looked very inviting. He thought he would go in and take a cup of tea with Tallisker.

“Come awa in, laird,” cried old Janet, “come awa in. You are a sight good for sair e’en. The dominie will be back anon, and I’ll gie ye a drap o’ hot tay till he comes.”

So the laird went in, and the first thing he saw was Colin’s picture of “The Clan’s Farewell.” It moved him to his very heart. He divined at once whose work it was, and he felt that it was wonderful. It must be acknowledged, too, that he was greatly pleased with Colin’s conception of himself.

“I’m no a bad-looking Crawford,” he thought complacently; “the lad has had a vera clear notion o’ what he was doing.”

Personal flattery is very subtle and agreeable. Colin rose in his father’s opinion that hour.

Page 30

Then he turned to Prince Charlie. How strange is that vein of romantic loyalty marbling the granite of Scotch character! The common-place man of coal and iron became in the presence of his ideal prince a feudal chieftain again. His heart swelled to that pictured face as the great sea swells to the bending moon. He understood in that moment how his fathers felt it easy to pin on the white cockade and give up everything for an impossible loyalty.

The dominie found him in this mood. He turned back to every-day life with a sigh.

"Weel, dominie, you are a man o' taste. When did you begin buying pictures?"

"I hae no money for pictures, laird. The artist gave me them."

"You mean Colin Crawford gave you them."

"That is what I mean."

"Weel, I'm free to say Colin kens how to choose grand subjects. I didna think there was so much in a picture. I wouldna dare to keep that poor dear prince in my house. I shouldna be worth a bawbee at the works. It was a wonderfu' wise step, that forbidding o' pictures in the kirks. I can vera weel see how they would lead to a sinfu' idolatry."

"Yes, John Knox kent well the temper o' the metal he had to work. There's nae greater hero-worshippers than Scots folk. They are aye making idols for themsel's. Whiles it's Wallace, then it's Bruce or Prince Charlie; nay, there are decent, pious folk that gie Knox himsel' a honoring he wouldna thank them for. But, laird, there is a mair degraded idolatry still—that o' gold. We are just as ready as ever the Jews were to fall down before a calf, an' it only be a golden one."

"Let that subject alane, dominie. It will tak a jury o' rich men to judge rich men. A poor man isna competent. The rich hae straits the poor canna fathom."

And then he saw in light as clear as crystal a slip of paper hid away in a secret drawer.

Just at this moment a little lad bairn entered the room; a child with bright, daring eyes, and a comically haughty, confident manner. He attracted Crawford's attention at once.

"What's your name, my wee man?"

"Alexander is my name."

"That is my name."

"It is not," he answered positively; "don't say that any more."



"Will you hae a sixpence?"

"Yes, I will. Money is good. It buys sweeties."

"Whose boy is that, dominie?"

"Mrs. Hope's. I thought he would annoy you. He is a great pleasure to me."

"Let him come up to the Keep whiles. I'll no mind him."

When he rose to go he stood a moment before each picture, and then suddenly asked,

"Whar is young Crawford?"

"In Rome."

"A nice place for him to be! He'd be in Babylon, doubtless, if it was on the face o' the earth."

When he went home he shut himself in his room and almost stealthily took out that slip of paper. It had begun to look yellow and faded, and Crawford had a strange fancy that it had a sad, pitiful appearance. He held it in his hand a few moments and then put it back again. It would be the new year soon, and he would decide then. He had made similar promises often; they always gave him temporary comfort.

Page 31

Then gradually another element of pleasure crept into his life—Mrs. Hope's child. The boy amused him; he never resented his pretty, authoritative ways; a queer kind of companionship sprang up between them. It was one of perfect equality every way; an old man easily becomes a little child. And those who only knew Crawford among coals and pig iron would have been amazed to see him keeping up a mock dispute with this baby.

CHAPTER X.

One day, getting towards the end of December, the laird awoke in a singular mood. He had no mind to go to the works, and the weather promised to give him a good excuse. Over the dreary hills there was a mournful floating veil of mist. Clouds were flying rapidly in great masses, and showers streaming through the air in disordered ranks, driven furiously before a mad wind—a wind that before noon shook the doors and windows, and drove the bravest birds into hiding.

The laird wandered restlessly up and down.

"There is the dominie," cried Mrs. Hope, about one o'clock. "What brings him here through such a storm?"

Crawford walked to the door to meet him. He came striding over the soaking moor with his plaid folded tightly around him and his head bent before the blast. He was greatly excited.

"Crawford, come wi' me. The Athol passenger packet is driving before this wind, and there is a fishing smack in her wake."

"Gie us some brandy wi' us, Mrs. Hope, and you'll hae fires and blankets and a' things needfu' in case O' accident, ma'am." He was putting on his bonnet and plaid as he spoke, and in five minutes the men were hastening to the seaside.

It was a deadly coast to be on in a storm with a gale blowing to land. A long reef of sharp rocks lay all along it, and now the line of foaming breakers was to any ship a terrible omen of death and destruction. The packet was almost helpless, and the laird and Tallisker found a crowd of men waiting the catastrophe that was every moment imminent.

"She ought to hae gien hersel' plenty o' sea room," said the laird. He was half angry to see all the interest centred on the packet. The little fishing cobbie was making, in his opinion, a far more sensible struggle for existence. She was managing her small resources with desperate skill.

“Tallisker,” said the laird, “you stay here with these men. Rory and I are going half a mile up the coast. If the cobbie drives on shore, the current will take a boat as light as she is over the Bogie Rock and into the surf yonder. There are doubtless three or four honest men in her, quite as weel worth the saving as those stranger merchant bodies that will be in the packet.”

So Crawford and Rory hastened to the point they had decided on, and just as they reached it the boat became unmanageable. The wind took her in its teeth, shook her a moment or two like a thing of straw and rags, and then flung her, keel upwards, on the Bogie Rock. Two of the men were evidently good swimmers; the others were a boy and an old man. Crawford plunged boldly in after the latter. The waves buffeted him, and flung him down, and lifted him up, but he was a fine surf swimmer, and he knew every rock on that dangerous coast. After a hard struggle, all were brought safe to land.

Page 32

Then they walked back to where the packet had been last seen. She had gone to pieces. A few men waited on the beach, picking up the dead, and such boxes and packages as were dashed on shore. Only three of all on board had been rescued, and they had been taken to the Keep for succor and rest.

The laird hastened home. He had not felt as young for many years. The struggle, though one of life and death, had not wearied him like a day's toil at the works, for it had been a struggle to which the soul had girded itself gladly, and helped and borne with it the mortal body. He came in all glowing and glad; a form lay on his own couch before the fire. The dominie and Mrs. Hope were bending over it. As he entered, Mrs. Hope sprang forward—

“Father!”

“Eh? Father? What is this?”

“Father, it is Colin.”

Then he knew it all. Colin stretched out a feeble hand towards him. He was sorely bruised and hurt, he was white and helpless and death-like.

“Father!”

And the father knelt down beside him. Wife and friend walked softly away. In the solemn moment when these two long-parted souls met again there was no other love that could inter-meddle.

“My dear father—forgive me!”

Then the laird kissed his recovered son, and said tenderly,

“Son Colin, you are all I have, and all I have is yours.”

“Father, my wife and son.”

Then the old man proudly and fondly kissed Hope Crawford too, and he clasped the little lad in his arms. He was well pleased that Hope had thought it worth while to minister to his comfort, and let him learn how to know her fairly.

“But it was your doing, Tallisker, I ken it was; it has your mark on it.” And he grasped his old friend's hand with a very hearty grip.

“Not altogether, laird. Colin had gone to Rome on business, and you were in sair discomfort, and I just named it to Mrs. Hope. After a' it was her proposal. Naeboddy but a woman would hae thought o' such a way to win round you.”



Perhaps it was well that Colin was sick and very helpless for some weeks. During them the two men learned to understand and to respect each other's peculiarities. Crawford himself was wonderfully happy; he would not let any thought of the past darken his heart. He looked forward as hopefully as if he were yet on the threshold of life.

O mystery of life! from what depths proceed thy comforts and thy lessons! One morning at very early dawn Crawford awoke from a deep sleep in an indescribable awe. In some vision of the night he had visited that piteous home which memory builds, and where only in sleep we walk. Whom had he seen there? What message had he received? This he never told. He had been "spoken to."

Tallisker was not the man to smile at any such confidence. He saw no reason why God's messengers should not meet his children in the border-land of dreams. Thus he had counselled and visited the patriarchs and prophets of old. He was a God who changeth not; and if he had chosen to send Crawford a message in this way, it was doubtless some special word, for some special duty or sorrow. But he had really no idea of what Crawford had come to confess to him.

Page 33

"Tallisker, I hae been a man in a sair strait for many a year. I hae not indeed hid the Lord's talent in a napkin, but I hae done a warse thing; I hae been trading wi' it for my ain proper advantage. O dominie, I hae been a wretched man through it all. Nane ken better than I what a hard master the deil is."

Then he told the dominie of Helen's bequest. He went over all the arguments with which he had hitherto quieted his conscience, and he anxiously watched their effect upon Tallisker. He had a hope even yet that the dominie might think them reasonable. But the table at which they sat was not less demonstrative than Tallisker's face; for once he absolutely controlled himself till the story was told. Then he said to Crawford,

"I'll no tak any responsibility in a matter between you and your conscience. If you gie it, gie it without regret and without holding back. Gie it cheerfully; God loves a cheerful giver. But it isna wi' me you'll find the wisdom to guide you in this matter. Shut yoursel' in your ain room, and sit down at the foot o' the cross and think it out. It is a big sum to gie away, but maybe, in the face o' that stupendous Sacrifice it willna seem so big. I'll walk up in the evening, laird; perhaps you will then hae decided what to do."

Crawford was partly disappointed. He had hoped that Tallisker would in some way take the burden from him—he had instead sent him to the foot of the cross. He did not feel as if he dared to neglect the advice; so he went thoughtfully to his own room and locked the door. Then he took out his private ledger. Many a page had been written the last ten years. It was the book of a very rich man. He thought of all his engagements and plans and hopes, and of how the withdrawal of so large a sum would affect them.

Then he took out Helen's last message, and sat down humbly with it where Tallisker had told him to sit. Suddenly Helen's last words came back to him, "Oh! the unspeakable riches!" What of? The cross of Christ—the redemption from eternal death—the promise of eternal life! Sin is like a nightmare; when we stir under it, we awake. Crawford sat thinking until his heart burned and softened, and great tears rolled slowly down his cheeks and dropped upon the paper in his hands. Then he thought of the richness of his own life—Colin and Hope, and the already beloved child Alexander—of his happy home, of the prosperity of his enterprises, of his loyal and loving friend Tallisker. What a contrast to the Life he had been told to remember! that pathetic Life that had not where to lay its head, that mysterious agony in Gethsemane, that sublime death on Calvary, and he cried out, "O Christ! O Saviour of my soul! all that I have is too little!"

When Tallisker came in the evening, Hope noticed a strange solemnity about the man. He, too, had been in the presence of God all day. He had been praying for his friend. But as soon as he saw Crawford he knew how the struggle had ended. Quietly they grasped each other's hand, and the evening meal was taken by Colin's side in pleasant cheerfulness. After it, when all were still, the laird spoke:

Page 34

“Colin and Hope, I hae something I ought to tell you. When your sister Helen died she asked me to gie her share o’ the estate to the poor children of our Father. I had intended giving Helen L100,000. It is a big sum, and I hae been in a sair strait about it. What say you, Colin?”

“My dear father, I say there is only one way out of that strait. The money must be given as Helen wished it. Helen was a noble girl. It was just like her.”

“Ah, Colin, if you could only tell what a burden this bit o’ paper has been to me! I left the great weight at the foot o’ the cross this morning.” As he spoke the paper dropped from his fingers and fell upon the table. Colin lifted it reverently and kissed it. “Father,” he said, “may I keep it now? The day will come when the Crawfords will think with more pride of it than of any parchment they possess.”

Then there was an appeal to Tallisker about its disposal. “Laird,” he answered, “such a sum must be handled wi’ great care. It is not enough to gie money, it must be gien wisely.” But he promised to take on himself the labor of inquiry into different charities, and the consideration of what places and objects needed help most. “But, Crawford,” he said, “if you hae any special desire, I think it should be regarded.”

Then Crawford said he had indeed one. When he was himself young he had desired greatly to enter the ministry, but his father had laid upon him a duty to the family and estate which he had accepted instead.

“Now, dominie,” he said, “canna I keep aye a young man in my place?”

“It is a worthy thought, Crawford.”

So the first portion of Helen’s bequest went to Aberdeen University. This endowment has sent out in Crawford’s place many a noble young man into the harvest-field of the world, and who shall say for how many centuries it will keep his name green in earth and heaven! The distribution of the rest does not concern our story. It may safely be left in Dominie Tallisker’s hands.

Of course, in some measure it altered Crawford’s plans. The new house was abandoned and a wing built to the Keep for Colin’s special use. In this portion the young man indulged freely his poetic, artistic tastes. And the laird got to like it. He used to tread softly as soon as his feet entered the large shaded rooms, full of skilful lights and white gleaming statues. He got to enjoy the hot, scented atmosphere and rare blossoms of the conservatory, and it became a daily delight to him to sit an hour in Colin’s studio and watch the progress of some favorite picture.

Page 35

But above all his life was made rich by his grandson. Nature, as she often does, reproduced in the second generation what she had totally omitted in the first. The boy was his grandfather over again. They agreed upon every point. It was the laird who taught Alexander to spear a salmon, and throw a trout-line, and stalk a deer. They had constant confidences about tackle and guns and snares. They were all day together on the hills. The works pleased the boy better than his father's studio. He trotted away with his grandfather gladly to them. The fires and molten metal, the wheels and hammers and tumult, were all enchantments to him. He never feared to leap into a collier's basket and swing down the deep, black shaft. He had also an appreciative love of money; he knew just how many sixpences he owned, and though he could give if asked to do so, he always wanted the dominie to give him a good reason for giving. The child gave him back again his youth, and a fuller and nobler one than he himself had known.

And God was very gracious to him, and lengthened out this second youth to a green old age. These men of old Gaul had iron constitutions; they did not begin to think themselves old men until they had turned fourscore. It was thirty years after Helen's death when Tallisker one night sent this word to his life-long friend,

"I hae been called, Crawford; come and see me once more."

They all went together to the manse. The dominie was in his ninety-first year, and he was going home. No one could call it dying. He had no pain. He was going to his last sleep

"As sweetly as a child,
Whom neither thought disturbs nor care encumbers,
Tired with long play, at close of summer's day
Lies down and slumbers."

"Good-by, Crawford—for a little while. We'll hae nae tears. I hae lived joyfully before my God these ninety years; I am going out o' the sunshine into the sunshine. Crawford, through that sair strait o' yours you hae set a grand, wide-open door for a weight o' happiness. I am glad ye didna wait. A good will is a good thing, but a good life is far better. It is a grand thing to sow your ain good seed. Nae ither hand could hae done it sae well and sae wisely. Far and wide there are lads and lasses growing up to call you blessed. This is a thought to mak death easy, Crawford. Good-night, dears."

And then "God's finger touched him and he slept."

Crawford lived but a few weeks longer. After the dominie's death he simply sat waiting. His darling Alexander came home specially to brighten these last hours, and in his company he showed almost to the last hour the true Crawford spirit.



“Alexander,” he would say, “you’ll ding for your ain side and the Crawfords always, but you’ll be a good man; there is nae happiness else, dear. Never rest, my lad, till ye sit where your fathers sat in the House o’ Peers. Stand by the State and the Kirk, and fear God, Alexander. The lease o’ the Cowden Knowes is near out; don’t renew it. Grip tight what ye hae got, but pay every debt as if God wrote the bill. Remember the poor, dear lad. Charity gies itsel’ rich. Riches mak to themselves wings, but charity clips the wings. The love o’ God, dear, the love o’ God—that is the best o’ all.”

Page 36

Yes, he had a sair struggle with his lower nature to the very last, but he was constantly strengthened by the conviction of a “Power closer to him than breathing, nearer than hands or feet.” Nine weeks after the dominie’s death they found him sitting in his chair, fallen on that sleep whose waking is eternal day. His death was like Tallisker’s—a perfectly natural one. He had been reading. The Bible lay open at that grand peroration of St. Paul’s on faith, in the twelfth of Hebrews. The “great cloud of witnesses,” “the sin which doth so easily beset us,” “Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith”—these were probably his last earthly thoughts, and with them he passed into

“That perfect presence of His face
Which we, for want of words, call heaven.”

James Blackie’s Revenge.

JAMES BLACKIE’S REVENGE.

CHAPTER I.

Few people who have travelled will deny that of all cities Glasgow is apparently the least romantic. Steeped in wet, white mist, or wrapped in yellow fog vapor, all gray stone and gray sky, dirty streets, and sloppy people, it presents none of the features of a show town. Yet it has great merits; it is enterprising, persevering, intensely national, and practically religious; and people who do not mind being damp have every chance to make a good living there. Even the sombre appearance of the dark gray granite of which it is built is not unsuitable to the sterling character of its people; for though this stone may be dull and ugly, there is a natural nobility about it, and it never can be mean.

I have said that, as a city, Glasgow is practically religious, and certainly this was the case something less than half a century ago. The number of its churches was not more remarkable than the piety and learning of its clergy; and the “skailing” of their congregations on a Sabbath afternoon was one of the most impressive sights, of its kind, in the world.

My true little story opens with the skailing of the Ramshorn Kirk, a very favorite place of worship with the well-to-do burghers of the east end of the city, and it was a peculiarly douce, decent, solemn-looking crowd that slowly and reverently passed out of its gates into the absolutely silent streets. For no vehicles of any kind disturbed the Sabbath stillness, and not until the people had gone some distance from the house of God did they begin to think their own thoughts, and with a certain grave reserve put them into words.

Among the groups who proceeded still farther east, towards the pleasant houses facing the “Green,” one alone was remarkable enough to have elicited special notice from an

observing stranger. It consisted of an old man and a young girl, evidently his daughter. Both were strikingly handsome, and the girl was much better dressed than the majority of women who took the same road. Long before they reached the Green they were joined by a younger man, whom the elder at once addressed in a reproving voice.

Page 37

"Ye didna pay as much attention to the sermon as it behooved ye to do, James Blackie; and what for did ye speak to Robert Laird a'most within 'the Gates'?"

"I only asked if he had heard of the 'Bonnie Bess;' she is overdue five days, and eight good men in her, not to speak of the cargo."

"It's no cannie to be aye asking questions. Sit still and the news will come to ye: forbye, I'm no sure if yon was a lawfu' question; the Sabbath sun hasna set yet."

James Blackie mechanically turned to the west, and then slowly let his glance fall on the lovely face at his side.

"Christine," he asked softly, "how is all with you?"

"All is well, James."

Not another word was spoken until they reached David Cameron's home. He was carefully reconsidering the sermon—going over every point on his finger ends, lest he should drop any link of the argument; and James and Christine were listening to his criticisms and remarks. They all stopped before a shop over the windows of which was painted, "David Cameron, Dealer in Fine Teas;" and David, taking a large key from his pocket, opened the door, and said,

"Come in and eat wi' us, James; ye ken ye're welcome."

"Our friendship, Mr. Cameron, is a kind of Montgomery division—all on one side, nothing on the other; but I am 'so by myself' that I thank you heartily."

So David, followed by Christine and James, passed slowly through the darkened store, with its faint smells of Eastern spices and fragrant teas, into the little parlor beyond. The early winter night had now fallen, and the room, having only an outlet into a small court, would have been dark also but for the red glow of the "covered" fire. David took the poker and struck the great block of coal, and instantly the cheerful blaze threw an air of cosey and almost picturesque comfort over the homelike room.

The two men sat down beside the fire, spreading their hands to its warmth, and apparently finding their own thoughts excellent company, for neither of them spoke or moved until Christine reappeared. She had divested herself of the handsome black satin and velvet which formed her kirk suit; but in her long, plain dress of gray winsey, with a snowy lawn kerchief and cuffs, she looked still more fair and lovable.

James watched her as she spread the cloth and produced from various cupboards cold meats and pastries, bread and cakes, and many kinds of delicate preserves and sweetmeats. Her large, shapely hands among the gold-and-white china fascinated him,

while her calm, noiseless, unhurried movements induced a feeling of passive repose that it required an effort to dispel, when she said in a low, even voice,

“Father, the food is waiting for the blessing.”

It was a silent but by no means an unhappy meal. David was a good man, and he ate his food graciously and gratefully, dropping now and then a word of praise or thanks; and James felt it delightful enough to watch Christine. For James, though he had not yet admitted the fact to his own heart, loved Christine Cameron as men love only once, with that deep, pure affection that has perchance a nearer kindred than this life has hinted of.

Page 38

He thought her also exquisitely beautiful, though this opinion would not have been indorsed by a majority of men. For Christine had one of those pale, statuesque faces apt to be solemn in repose; its beauty was tender and twilight, its expression serious and steadfast, and her clear, spiritual eyes held in them no light of earthly passion. She had grown up in that little back parlor amid the din and tumult of the city, under the gray, rainy skies, and surrounded by care and sin, as a white lily grows out of the dark, damp soil, drawing from the elements around only sweetness and purity.

She was very silent this afternoon, but apparently very happy. Indeed, there was an expression on her face which attracted her father's attention, and he said,

"The sermon has pleased thee well, I see, Christine."

"The sermon was good, but the text was enough, father. I think it over in my heart, and it leaves a light on all the common things of life." And she repeated it softly, "O Thou preserver of men, unto Thee shall all flesh come."

David lifted his bonnet reverently, and James, who was learned in what the Scotch pleasantly call "the humanities," added slowly,

"But I, the mortal,
Planted so lowly, with death to bless me,
I sorrow no longer."

When people have such subjects of conversation, they talk moderately—for words are but poor interpreters of emotions whose sources lie in the depths of eternity. But they were none the less happy, and James felt as if he had been sitting at one of those tables which the Lord "prepareth in the wilderness," where the "cup runneth over" with joy and content.

Such moments rarely last long; and it is doubtful if we could bear to keep the soul always to its highest bent. When Christine had sided away the dishes and put in order the little room, David laid down his pipe, and said, "The Lord's day being now over, I may speak anent my ain matters. I had a letter, Christine, on Saturday, from my brother-in-law, McFarlane. He says young Donald will be in Glasgow next week."

"Will he stay here, father?"

"Na, na; he'll bide wi' the McFarlanes. They are rich folk; but siller is nae sin—an' it be clean-won siller."

"Then why did Uncle McFarlane write to you, father?"

"He wrote concerning the lad's pecuniary matters, Christine. Young Donald will need gude guiding; and he is my sister Jessie's only bairn—blood is thicker than water, ye'll

allow that—and Donald is o’ gentle blood. I’m no saying that’s everything; but it is gude to come o’ a gude kind.”

“The McFarlanes have aye been for the pope and the Stuarts,” said James, a little scornfully. “They were ‘out’ in the ‘79’; and they would pin the white cockade on to-morrow, if there was ever a Stuart to bid them do it.”

“Maybe they would, James. Hielandmen hae a way o’ sticking to auld friends. There’s Camerons I wadna go bail for, if Prince Charlie could come again; but let that flea stick to the wa’. And the McFarlanes arena exactly papist noo; the twa last generations hae been ‘Piscopals—that’s ane step ony way towards the truth. Luther mayna be John Knox, but they’ll win up to him some time, dootless they will.”

Page 39

"How old is young McFarlane?" asked James.

"He is turned twenty—a braw lad, his father says. I hae ne'er seen him, but he's Jessie's bairn, and my heart gaes out to meet him."

"Why did you not tell me on Saturday, father? I could have spoken for Maggie Maclean to help me put the house in order."

"I didna get the letter till the evening post. It was most as good as Sabbath then. Housecleaning is an unco temptation to women-folk, so I keepit the news till the Sabbath sun was weel set."

During this conversation James Blackie's heart had become heavy with some sad presentiment of trouble, such as arise very naturally in similar circumstances. As a poet says,

"Ah, no! it is not all delusion,
That strange intelligence of sorrow
Searching the tranquil heart's seclusion,
Making us quail before the morrow.
'Tis the farewell of happiness departing,
The sudden tremor of a soul at rest;
The wraith of coming grief upstarting
Within the watchful breast."

He listened to David Cameron's reminiscences of his bonnie sister Jessie, and of the love match she had made with the great Highland chieftain, with an ill-disguised impatience. He had a Lowlander's scorn for the thriftless, fighting, freebooting traditions of the Northern clans and a Calvinist's dislike to the Stuarts and the Stuarts' faith; so that David's unusual emotion was exceedingly and, perhaps, unreasonably irritating to him. He could not bear to hear him speak with trembling voice and gleaming eyes of the grand mountains and the silent corries around Ben-Nevis, the red deer trooping over the misty steeps, and the brown hinds lying among the green plumes of fern, and the wren and the thrush lilting in song together.

"Oh, the bonnie, bonnie Hielands!" cried David with a passionate affection; "it is always Sabbath up i' the mountains, Christine. I maun see them once again ere I lay by my pilgrim-staff and shoon for ever."

"Then you are not Glasgow born, Mr. Cameron," said James, with the air of one who finds out something to another's disadvantage.

"Me! Glasgo' born! Na, na, man! I was born among the mountains o' Argyle. It was a sair downcome fra them to the Glasgo' pavements. But I'm saying naething against

Glasgo'. I was but thinking o' the days when I wore the tartan and climbed the hills in the white dawns, and, kneeling on the top o' Ben Na Keen, saw the sun sink down wi' a smile. It's little ane sees o' sunrising or sunsetting here, James," and David sighed heavily and wiped away the tender mist from his sight.

James looked at the old man with some contempt; he himself had been born and reared in one or other of the closest and darkest streets of the city. The memories of his loveless, hard-worked childhood were bitter to him, and he knew nothing of the joy of a boyhood spent in the hills and woods.

Page 40

"Life is the same everywhere, Mr. Cameron. I dare say there is as much sin and as much worry and care among the mountains as on the Glasgow pavements."

"You may 'daur say' it, James, but that winna mak it true. Even in this warld our Father's house has many mansions. Gang your way up and up through thae grand solitudes and ye'll blush to be caught worrying among them."

And then in a clear, jubilant voice he broke into the old Scotch version of the 121st Psalm:

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes
from whence doth come mine aid;
My safety cometh from the Lord,
who heaven and earth hath made."

And he sang it to that loveliest of all psalm tunes, Rathiel's "St. Mary's." It was impossible to resist the faith, the enthusiasm, the melody. At the second bar Christine's clear, sweet voice joined in, and at the second line James was making a happy third.

"Henceforth thy goings out and in
God keep for ever will."

"Thae twa lines will do for a 'Gude-night,'" said David in the pause at the end of the psalm, and James rose with a sigh and wrapped his plaid around him.

CHAPTER II.

James had gone into the house so happy and hopeful, he left it so anxious and angry—yes, angry. He knew well that he had no just cause for anger, but that knowledge only irritated him the more. Souls, as well as bodies, are subject to malignant diseases, and to-night envy and jealousy were causing James Blackie more acute suffering than any attack of fever or contagion. A feeling of dislike towards young Donald McFarlane had taken possession of his heart; he lay awake to make a mental picture of the youth, and then he hated the picture he had made.

Feverish and miserable, he went next morning to the bank in which he was employed, and endeavored amid the perplexities of compound interest to forget the anxieties he had invented for himself. But it was beyond his power, and he did not pray about them; for the burdens we bind on our own shoulders we rarely dare to go to God with, and James might have known from this circumstance alone that his trouble was no lawful one. He nursed it carefully all day and took it to bed with him again at night. The next day he had begun to understand how envy grew to hatred, and hatred to murder. Still he did not go to God for help, and still he kept ever before his eyes the image of the youth that he had determined was to be his enemy.



On Thursday night he could no longer bear his uncertainties. He dressed himself carefully and went to David Cameron's. David was in his shop tasting and buying teas, and apparently absorbed in business. He merely nodded to James, and bid him "walk through." He had no intention of being less kindly than usual, but James was in such a suspicious temper that he took his preoccupation for coolness, and so it was almost with a resentful feeling he opened the half-glass door dividing the shop from the parlor.

Page 41

As his heart had foretold him, there sat the youth whom he had determined to hate, but his imagination had greatly deceived him with regard to his appearance. He had thought of Donald only as a “fair, false Highlander” in tartan, kilt, and philibeg. He found him a tall, dark youth, richly dressed in the prevailing Southern fashion, and retaining no badge of his country’s costume but the little Glengary cap with its chieftain’s token of an eagle’s feather. His manners were not rude and haughty, as James had decided they would be; they were singularly frank and pleasant. Gracious and graceful, exceedingly handsome and light-hearted, he was likely to prove a far more dangerous rival than even James’ jealous heart had anticipated.

He rose at Christine’s introduction, and offered his hand with a pleasant smile to James. The latter received the courtesy with such marked aversion that Donald slightly raised his eyebrows ere he resumed his interrupted conversation with Christine. And now that James sat down with a determination to look for offences he found plenty. Christine was sewing, and Donald sat beside her winding and unwinding her threads, playing with her housewife, or teasingly hiding her scissors. Christine, half pleased and half annoyed, gradually fell into Donald’s mood, and her still face dimpled into smiles. James very quickly decided that Donald presumed in a very offensive manner on his relationship to Christine.

A little after nine o’clock David, having closed his shop, joined them in the parlor. He immediately began to question James about the loss of the “Bonnie Bess,” and from that subject they drifted easily into others of a local business interest. It was very natural that Donald, being a stranger both to the city and its business, should take no part in this discourse, and that he should, in consequence, devote himself to Christine. But James felt it an offence, and rose much earlier than was his wont to depart. David stayed him, almost authoritatively:

“Ye maun stop, baith o’ ye lads, and join in my meat and worship. They are ill visitors that canna sit at ane board and kneel at ane altar.”

For David had seen, through all their drifting talk of ships and cargoes, the tumult in James’ heart, and he did not wish him to go away in an ungenerous and unjust temper. So both Donald and James partook of the homely supper of pease brose and butter, oatmeal cakes and fresh milk, and then read aloud with David and Christine the verses of the evening Psalm that came to each in turn. James was much softened by the exercise; so much so that when Donald asked permission to walk with him as far as their way lay together, he very pleasantly acceded to the request. And Donald was so bright and unpretentious it was almost impossible to resist the infectious good temper which seemed to be his characteristic.

Page 42

Still James was very little happier or more restful. He lay awake again, but this night it was not to fret and fume, but to calmly think over his position and determine what was best and right to do. For James still thought of "right," and would have been shocked indeed if any angel of conscience had revealed to him the lowest depths of his desires and intentions. In the first place, he saw that David would tolerate no element of quarrelling and bitterness in his peaceful home, and that if he would continue to visit there he must preserve the semblance of friendship for Donald McFarlane. In the second, he saw that Donald had already made so good his lien upon his uncle's and cousin's affections that it would be very hard to make them believe wrong of the lad, even if he should do wrong, though of this James told himself there would soon be abundance.

"For the things David will think sinful beyond all measure," he argued, "will seem but Puritanical severity to him; forbye, he is rich, gay, handsome, and has little to do with his time, he'll get well on to Satan's ground before he knows it;" and then some whisper dim and low in his soul made him blush and pause and defer the following out of a course which was to begin in such a way.

So Donald and he fell into the habit of meeting at David's two or three nights every week, and an apparent friendship sprang up between them. It was only apparent, however. On Donald's side was that good-natured indifference that finds it easy enough to say smooth words, and is not ready to think evil or to take offence; on James' part a wary watchfulness, assuming the role of superior wisdom, half admiring and half condemning Donald's youthful spirits and ways.

David was quite deceived; he dropped at once the authoritative manner which had marked his displeasure when he perceived James' disposition to envy and anger; he fell again into his usual pleasant familiar talks with the young man, for David thought highly of James as of one likely to do his duty to God and himself.

In these conversations Donald soon began to take a little share, and when he chose to do so, evinced a thought and shrewdness which greatly pleased his uncle; more generally, however, he was at Christine's side, reading her some poem he had copied, or telling her about some grand party he had been at. Sometimes James could catch a few words of reproof addressed in a gentle voice to Donald by Christine; more often he heard only the murmur of an earnest conversation, or Christine's low laugh at some amusing incident.

The little room meanwhile had gradually become a far brighter place. Donald kept it sweet and bright with his daily offerings of fresh flowers; the pet canary he had given Christine twittered and sang to her all the day through. Over Christine herself had come the same bright change; her still, calm face often dimpled into smiles, her pale-gold hair was snooded with a pretty ribbon, and her dress a little

Page 43

richer. Yet, after all, the change was so slight that none but a lover would have noticed it. But there was not a smile or a shade of brighter color that James did not see; and he bore it with an equanimity which used often to astonish himself, though it would not have done so if he had dared just once to look down into his heart; he bore it because he knew that Donald was living two lives—one that Christine saw, and one that she could not even have imagined.

It was, alas, too true that this gay, good-natured young man, who had entered the fashionable world without one bad habit, was fast becoming proficient in all its follies and vices. That kind of negative goodness which belonged naturally to him, unfortified by strict habits and strong principles, had not been able to repel the seductions and temptations that assail young men, rich, handsome, and well-born. There was an evil triumph in James' heart one night when Donald said to him, as they walked home after an evening at David's,

"Mr. Blackie, I wish you could lend me L20. I am in a little trouble, and I cannot ask Uncle David for more, as I have already overdrawn my father's allowance."

James loaned it with an eager willingness, though he was usually very cautious and careful of every bawbee of his hard-earned money. He knew it was but the beginning of confidence, and so it proved; in a very little while Donald had fallen into the habit of going to James in every emergency, and of making him the confidant of all his youthful hopes and follies.

James even schooled himself to listen patiently to Donald's praises of his cousin Christine. "She is just the wife I shall need when I settle down in three or four years," Donald would say complacently, "and I think she loves me. Of course no man is worthy of such a woman, but when I have seen life a little I mean to try and be so."

"Umph!" answered James scornfully, "do you suppose, Mr. McFarlane, that ye'll be fit for a pure lassie like Christine Cameron when you have played the prodigal and consorted with foolish women, and wasted your substance in riotous living?"

And Donald said with an honest blush, "By the memory of my mother, no, I do not, James. And I am ashamed when I think of Christine's white soul and the stained love I have to offer it. But women forgive! Oh, what mothers and wives and sisters there are in this world!"

"Well, don't try Christine too far, Donald. She is of an old Covenanting stock; her conscience feels sin afar off. I do not believe she would marry a bad, worldly man, though it broke her heart to say 'No.' I have known her far longer than you have."



“Tut, man, I love her! I know her better in an hour than you could do in a lifetime;” and Donald looked rather contemptuously on the plain man who was watching him with eyes that might have warned any one more suspicious or less confident and self-satisfied.

CHAPTER III.

Page 44

The summer brought some changes. Christine went to the seaside for a few weeks, and Donald went away in Lord Neville's yacht with a party of gay young men; James and David passed the evenings generally together. If it was wet, they remained in the shop or parlor; if fine, they rambled to the "Green," and sitting down by the riverside talked of business, of Christine, and of Donald. In one of these confidential rambles James first tried to arouse in David's mind a suspicion as to his nephew's real character. David himself introduced the subject by speaking of a letter he had received from Donald.

"He's wi' the great Earl o' Egremont at present," said David proudly, for he had all a Scotsman's respect for good birth; "and there is wi' them young Argyle, and Lord Lovat, and ithers o' the same quality. But our Donald can cock his bonnet wi' ony o' them; there is na better blood in Scotland than the McFarlanes'. It taks money though to foregather wi' nobeelity, and Donald is wanting some. So, James, I'll gie ye the siller to-night, and ye'll send it through your bank as early as may be in the morn."

"Donald wanting money is an old want, Mr. Cameron."

David glanced quickly at James, and answered almost haughtily, "It's a common want likewise, James Blackie. But if Donald McFarlane wants money, he's got kin that can accommodate him, James; wanters arena always that fortunate."

"He has got friends likewise, Mr. Cameron; and I am sure I was proud enough to do him a kindness, and he knows it well."

"And how much may Donald be owing you, I wonder?"

"Only a little matter of L20. You see he had got into—"

"Dinna fash yoursel' wi' explanations, James. Dootless Donald has his faults; but I may weel wink at his small faults, when I hae sae mony great faults o' my ain."

And David's personal accusation sounded so much like a reproof, that James did not feel it safe to pursue the subject.

That very night David wrote thus to his nephew:

"Donald, my dear lad, if thou owest James Blackie L20, pay it immediate. Lying is the second vice, owing money is the first. I enclose draft for L70 instead o' L50, as per request."

That L70 was a large sum in the eyes of the careful Glasgow trader; in the young Highlander's eyes it seemed but a small sum. He could not form any conception of the amount of love it represented, nor of the struggle it had cost David to "gie awa for nae consideration" the savings of many days, perhaps weeks, of toil and thought.



In September Christine came back, and towards the end of October, Donald. He was greatly improved externally by his trip and his associations—more manly and more handsome—while his manners had acquired a slight touch of hauteur that both amused and pleased his uncle. It had been decided that he should remain in Glasgow another winter, and then select his future profession. But at present Donald troubled himself little about the future. He had returned to Christine more in love with the peace and purity of her character than ever; and besides, his pecuniary embarrassments in Glasgow were such as to require his personal presence until they were arranged.

Page 45

This arrangement greatly troubled him. He had only a certain allowance from his father—a loving but stern man—who having once decided what sum was sufficient for a young man in Donald's position, would not, under any ordinary circumstances, increase it. David Cameron had already advanced him L70. James Blackie was a resource he did not care again to apply to. In the meantime he was pressed by small debts on every hand, and was living among a class of young men whose habits led him into expenses far beyond his modest income. He began to be very anxious and miserable. In Christine's presence he was indeed still the same merry-hearted gentleman; but James saw him in other places, and he knew from long experience the look of care that drew Donald's handsome brows together.

One night, towards the close of this winter, James went to see an old man who was a broker or trader in bills and money, doing business in the Cowcaddens. James also did a little of the same business in a cautious way, and it was some mutual transaction in gold and silver that took him that dreary, soaking night into such a locality.

The two men talked for some time in a low and earnest voice, and then the old man, opening a greasy leather satchel, displayed a quantity of paper which he had bought. James looked it over with a keen and practised eye. Suddenly his attitude and expression changed; he read over and over one piece of paper, and every time he read it he looked at it more critically and with a greater satisfaction.

"Andrew Starkie," he said, "where did you buy this?"

"Weel, James, I bought it o' Laidlaw—Aleck Laidlaw. Ye wadna think a big tailoring place like that could hae the wind in their faces; but folks maun hae their bad weather days, ye ken; but it blew me gude, so I'll ne'er complain. Ye see it is for L89, due in twenty days now, and I only gied L79 for it—a good name too, nane better."

"David Cameron! But what would he be owing Laidlaw L89 for clothes for?"

"Tut, tut! The claithes were for his nephew. There was some trouble anent the bill, but the old man gied a note for the amount at last, at three months. It's due in twenty days now. As he banks wi' your firm, ye may collect it for me; it will be an easy-made penny or twa."

"I would like to buy this note. What will you sell it for?"

"I'm no minded to sell it. What for do ye want it?"

"Nothing particular. I'll give you L90 for it."

"If it's worth that to you, it is worth mair. I'm no minded to tak L90."

"I'll give you L95."

“I’m no minded to tak it. It’s worth mair to you, I see that. What are you going to mak by it? I’ll sell it for half o’ what you are counting on.” “Then you would not make a bawbee. I am going to ware L95 on—on a bit of revenge. Now will you go shares?”

“Not I. Revenge in cold blood is the deil’s own act. I dinna wark wi’ the deil, when it’s a losing job to me.”

Page 46

"Will you take L95 then?"

"No. When lads want whistles they maun pay for them."

"I'll give no more. For why? Because in twenty days you will do my work for me; then it will cost me nothing, and it will cost you L89, that is all about it, Starkie."

Starkie lifted the note which James had flung carelessly down, and his skinny hands trembled as he fingered it. "This is David Cameron's note o' hand, and David Cameron is a gude name."

"Yes, very good. Only that is not David Cameron's writing, it is a—forgery. Light your pipe with it, Andrew Starkie."

"His nephew gave it himsel' to Aleck Laidlaw—"

"I know. And I hate his nephew. He has come between me and Christine Cameron. Do you see now?"

"Oh! oh! oh! I see, I see! Well, James, you can have it for L100—as a favor."

"I don't want it now. He could not have a harder man to deal with than you are. You suit me very well."

"James, such business wont suit me. I can't afford to be brought into notice. I would rather lose double the money than prosecute any gentleman in trouble."

The older man had reasoned right—James dared not risk the note out of sight, dared not trust to Starkie's prosecution. He longed to have the bit of paper in his own keeping, and after a wary battle of a full hour's length Andrew Starkie had his L89 back again, and James had the note in his pocket-book.

Through the fog, and through the wind, and through the rain he went, and he knew nothing, and he felt nothing but that little bit of paper against his breast. Oh, how greedily he remembered Donald's handsome looks and stately ways, and all the thousand little words and acts by which he imagined himself wronged and insulted. Now he had his enemy beneath his feet, and for several days this thought satisfied him, and he hid his secret morsel of vengeance and found it sweet—sharply, bitterly sweet—for even yet conscience pleaded hard with him.

As he sat counting his columns of figures, every gentle, forgiving word of Christ came into his heart. He knew well that Donald would receive his quarterly allowance before the bill was due, and that he must have relied on this to meet it. He also knew enough of Donald's affairs to guess something of the emergency that he must have been in ere he would have yielded to so dangerous an alternative. There were times when he



determined to send for Donald, show him the frightful danger in which he stood, and then tear the note before his eyes, and leave its payment to his honor. He even realized the peace which would flow from such a deed. Nor were these feelings transitory, his better nature pleaded so hard with him that he walked his room hour after hour under their influence, and their power over him was such as delayed all action in the matter for nearly a week.

CHAPTER IV.

Page 47

At length one morning David Cameron came into the bank, and having finished his business, walked up to James and said, "I feared ye were ill, James. Whatna for hae ye stayed awa sae lang? I wanted ye sairly last night to go o'er wi' me the points in this debate at our kirk. We are to hae anither session to-night; ye'll come the morn and talk it o'er wi' me?"

"I will, Mr. Cameron."

But James instantly determined to see Christine that night. Her father would be at the kirk session, and if Donald was there, he thought he knew how to whisper him away. He meant to have Christine all to himself for an hour or two, and if he saw any opportunity he would tell her all. When he got to David's the store was still open, but the clerk said, "David has just gone," and James, as was his wont, walked straight to the parlor.

Donald was there; he had guessed that, because a carriage was in waiting, and he knew it could belong to no other caller at David Cameron's. And never had Donald roused in him such an intense antagonism. He was going to some National Celebration, and he stood beside Christine in all the splendid picturesque pomp of the McFarlane tartans. He was holding Christine's hand, and she stood as a white lily in the glow and color of his dark beauty. Perhaps both of them felt James' entrance inopportune. At any rate they received him coldly, Donald drew Christine a little apart, said a few whispered words to her, and lifting his bonnet slightly to James, he went away.

In the few minutes of this unfortunate meeting the devil entered into James' heart. Even Christine was struck with the new look on his face. It was haughty, malicious, and triumphant, and he leaned against the high oaken chimney-piece in a defiant way that annoyed Christine, though she could not analyze it.

"Sit down, James," she said with a touch of authority—for his attitude had unconsciously put her on the defensive. "Donald has gone to the Caledonian club; there is to be a grand gathering of Highland gentlemen there to-night."

"*Gentlemen!*"

"Well, yes, *gentlemen!* And there will be none there more worthy the name than our Donald."

"The rest of them are much to be scorned at, then."

"James, James, that speech was little like you. Sit down and come to yourself; I am sure you are not so mean as to grudge Donald the rights of his good birth."

“Donald McFarlane shall have all the rights he has worked for; and when he gets his just payment he will be in Glasgow jail.”

“James, you are ill. You have not been here for a week, and you look so unlike yourself. I know you must be ill. Will you let me send for our doctor?” And she approached him kindly, and looked with anxious scrutiny into his face.

He put her gently away, and said in a thick, rapid voice,

“Christine, I came to-night to tell you that Donald McFarlane is unworthy to come into your presence—he has forged your father’s name.”

Page 48

"James, you are mad, or ill, what you say is just impossible!"

"I am neither mad nor ill. I will prove it, if you wish."

At these words every trace of sympathy or feeling vanished from her face; and she said in a low, hoarse whisper,

"You cannot prove it. I would not believe such a thing possible."

Then with a pitiless particularity he went over all the events relating to the note, and held it out for her to examine the signature.

"Is that David Cameron's writing?" he cried; "did you ever see such a weak imitation? The man is a fool as well as a villain."

Christine gazed blankly at the witness of her cousin's guilt, and James, carried away with the wicked impetuosity of his passionate accusations of Donald's life, did not see the fair face set in white despair and the eyes close wearily, as with a piteous cry she fell prostrate at his feet.

Ah, how short was his triumph! When he saw the ruin that his words had made he shrieked aloud in his terror and agony. Help was at hand, and doctors were quickly brought, but she had received a shock from which it seemed impossible to revive her. David was brought home, and knelt in speechless distress by the side of his insensible child, but no hope lightened the long, terrible night, and when the reaction came in the morning, it came in the form of fever and delirium.

Questioned closely by David, James admitted nothing but that while talking to him about Donald McFarlane she had fallen at his feet, and Donald could only say that he had that evening told her he was going to Edinburgh in two weeks, to study law with his cousin, and that he had asked her to be his wife.

This acknowledgement bound David and Donald in a closer communion of sorrow. James and his sufferings were scarcely noticed. Yet, probably of all that unhappy company, he suffered the most. He loved Christine with a far deeper affection than Donald had ever dreamed of. He would have given his life for hers, and yet he had, perhaps, been her murderer. How he hated Donald in those days! What love and remorse tortured him! And what availed it that he had bought the power to ruin the man he hated? He was afraid to use it. If Christine lived, and he did use it, she would never forgive him; if she died, he would be her murderer.

But the business of life cannot be delayed for its sorrows. David must wait in his shop, and James must be at the bank; and in two weeks Donald had to leave for Edinburgh, though Christine was lying in a silent, broken-hearted apathy, so close to the very shoal of Time that none dared say, "She will live another day."

How James despised Donald for leaving her at all; he desired nothing beyond the permission to sit by her side, and watch and aid the slow struggle of life back from the shores and shades of death.

It was almost the end of summer before she was able to resume her place in the household, but long before that she had asked to see James. The interview took place one Sabbath afternoon while David was at church. Christine had been lifted to a couch, but she was unable to move, and even speech was exhausting and difficult to her. James knelt down by her side, and, weeping bitterly, said,

Page 49

"O Christine, forgive me!"

She smiled faintly.

"You—have—not—used—yonder—paper,—James?"

"Oh, no, no."

"It—would—kill—me. You—would—not—kill—me?"

"I would die to make you strong again."

"Don't—hurt—Donald. Forgive—for—Christ's—sake,—James!"

Poor James! It was hard for him to see that still Donald was her first thought, and, looking on the wreck of Christine's youth and beauty, it was still harder not to hate him worse than ever.

Nor did the temptation to do so grow less with time. He had to listen every evening to David's praises of his nephew: how "he had been entered wi' Advocate Scott, and was going to be a grand lawyer," or how he had been to some great man's house and won all hearts with his handsome face and witty tongue. Or, perhaps, he would be shown some rich token of his love that had come for Christine; or David would say, "There's the 'Edinbro' News,' James; it cam fra Donald this morn; tak it hame wi' you. You're welcome." And James feared not to take it, feared to show the slightest dislike to Donald, lest David's anger at it should provoke him to say what was in his heart, and Christine only be the sufferer.

One cold night in early winter, James, as was his wont now, went to spend the evening in talking with David and in watching Christine. That was really all it was; for, though she had resumed her house duties, she took little part in conversation. She had always been inclined to silence, but now a faint smile and a "Yes" or "No" were her usual response, even to her father's remarks. This night he found David out, and he hesitated whether to trouble Christine or not. He stood for a moment in the open door and looked at her. She was sitting by the table with a little Testament open in her hand; but she was rather musing on what she had been reading than continuing her occupation.

"Christine!"

"James!"

"May I come in?"

"Yes, surely."

"I hear your father has gone to a town-meeting."

"Yes."

"And he is to be made a bailie."

"Yes."

"I am very glad. It will greatly please him, and there is no citizen more worthy of the honor."

"I think so also."

"Shall I disturb you if I wait to see him?"

"No, James; sit down."

Then Christine laid aside her book and took her sewing, and James sat thinking how he could best introduce the subject ever near his heart. He felt that there was much to say in his own behalf, if he only knew how to begin. Christine opened the subject for him. She laid down her work and went and stood before the fire at his side. The faintest shadow of color was in her face, and her eyes were unspeakably sad and anxious. He could not bear their eager, searching gaze, and dropped his own.

"James, have you destroyed yonder paper?"

Page 50

"Nay, Christine; I am too poor a man to throw away so much hard-won gold. I am keeping it until I can see Mr. McFarlane and quietly collect my own."

"You will never use it in any way against him?"

"Will you ever marry him? Tell me that."

"O sir!" she cried indignantly, "you want to make a bargain with my poor heart. Hear, then. If Donald wants me to marry him I'll never cast him off. Do you think God will cast him off for one fault? You dare not say it."

"I do not say but what God will pardon. But we are human beings; we are not near to God yet."

"But we ought to be trying to get near him; and oh, James, you never had so grand a chance. See the pitiful face of Christ looking down on you from the cross. If that face should turn away from you, James—if it should!"

"You ask a hard thing of me, Christine."

"Yes, I do."

"But if you will only try and love me—"

"Stop, James! I will make no bargain in a matter of right and wrong. If for Christ's sake, who has forgiven you so much, you can forgive Donald, for Christ's dear sake do it. If not, I will set no earthly love before it. Do your worst. God can find out a way. I'll trust him."

"Christine! dear Christine!"

"Hush! I am Donald's promised wife. May God speak to you for me. I am very sad and weary. Good-night."

James did not wait for David's return. He went back to his own lodging, and, taking the note out of his pocket-book, spread it before him. His first thought was that he had wared L89 on his enemy's fine clothes, and James loved gold and hated foppish, extravagant dress; his next that he had saved Andrew Starkie L89, and he knew the old usurer was quietly laughing at his folly. But worse than all was the alternative he saw as the result of his sinful purchase: if he used it to gratify his personal hatred, he deeply wounded, perhaps killed, his dearest love and his oldest friend. Hour after hour he sat with the note before him. His good angel stood at his side and wooed him to mercy. There was a fire burning in the grate, and twice he held the paper over it, and twice turned away from his better self.

The watchman was calling “half-past two o’clock,” when, cold and weary with his mental struggle, he rose and went to his desk. There was a secret hiding-place behind a drawer there, in which he kept papers relating to his transactions with Andrew Starkie, and he put it among them. “I’ll leave it to its chance,” he muttered; “a fire might come and burn it up some day. If it is God’s will to save Donald, he could so order it, and I am fully insured against pecuniary loss.” He did not at that moment see how presumptuously he was throwing his own responsibility on God; he did not indeed want to see anything but some plausible way of avoiding a road too steep for a heart weighed down with earthly passion to dare.

Page 51

Then weeks and months drifted away in the calm regular routine of David's life. But though there were no outward changes, there was a very important inward one. About sixteen months after Donald's departure he returned to visit Christine. James, at Christine's urgent request, absented himself during this visit; but when he next called at David's, he perceived at once that all was not as had been anticipated. David had little to say about him; Christine looked paler and sadder than ever. Neither quite understood why. There had been no visible break with Donald, but both father and daughter felt that he had drifted far away from them and their humble, pious life. Donald had lost the child's heart he had brought with him from the mountains; he was ambitious of honors, and eager after worldly pleasures and advantages. He had become more gravely handsome, and he talked more sensibly to David; but David liked him less.

After this visit there sprang up a new hope in James' heart, and he waited and watched, though often with very angry feelings; for he was sure that Donald was gradually deserting Christine.

She grew daily more sad and silent; it was evident she was suffering. The little Testament lay now always with her work, and he noticed that she frequently laid aside her sewing and read it earnestly, even while David and he were quietly talking at the fireside.

One Sabbath, two years after Donald's departure, James met David coming out of church alone. He could only say, "I hope Christine is well."

"Had she been well, she had been wi' me; thou kens that, James."

"I might have done so. Christine is never absent from God's house when it is open."

"It is a good plan, James; for when they who go regular to God's house are forced to stay away, God himself asks after them. I hae no doubt but what Christine has been visited."

They walked on in silence until David's house was in sight. "I'm no caring for any company earth can gie me the night, James; but the morn I hae something to tell you I canna speak anent to-day."

CHAPTER V.

The next day David came into the bank about noon, and said, "Come wi' me to McLellan's, James, and hae a mutton pie, it's near by lunch-time." While they were eating it David said, "Donald McFarlane is to be wedded next month. He's making a grand marriage."

James bit his lip, but said nothing.

“He’s spoken for Miss Margaret Napier; her father was ane o’ the Lords o’ Session; she’s his sole heiress, and that will mean L50,000, foreby the bonnie place and lands o’ Ellenshaw.”

“And Christine?”

“Dinna look that way, man. Christine is content; she kens weel enough she isna like her cousin.”

“God be thanked she is not. Go away from me, David Cameron, or I shall say words that will make more suffering than you can dream off. Go away, man.”

Page 52

David was shocked and grieved at his companion's passion. "James," he said solemnly, "dinna mak a fool o' yoursel'. I hae long seen your ill-will at Donald. Let it go. Donald's aboon your thumb now, and the anger o' a poor man aye falls on himsel'."

"For God's sake don't tempt me farther. You little know what I could do if I had the ill heart to do it."

"Ow! ay!" said David scornfully, "if the poor cat had only wings it would extirpate the race of sparrows from the world; but when the wings arena there, James lad, it is just as weel to mak no boast o' them."

James had leaned his head in his hands, and was whispering, "Christine! Christine! Christine!" in a rapid inaudible voice. He took no notice of David's remark, and David was instantly sorry for it. "The puir lad is just sorrowful wi' love for Christine, and that's nae sin that I can see," he thought. "James," he said kindly, "I am sorry enough to grieve you. Come as soon as you can like to do it. You'll be welcome."

James slightly nodded his head, but did not move; and David left him alone in the little boarded room where they had eaten. In a few minutes he collected himself, and, like one dazed, walked back to his place in the bank. Never had its hours seemed so long, never had the noise and traffic, the tramping of feet, and the banging of doors seemed so intolerable. As early as possible he was at David's, and David, with that fine instinct that a kind heart teaches, said as he entered, "Gude evening, James. Gae awa ben and keep Christine company. I'm that busy that I'll no shut up for half an hour yet."

James found Christine in her usual place. The hearth had been freshly swept, the fire blazed brightly, and she sat before it with her white seam in her hand. She raised her eyes at James' entrance, and smilingly nodded to a vacant chair near her. He took it silently. Christine seemed annoyed at his silence in a little while, and asked, "Why don't you speak, James? Have you nothing to say?"

"A great deal, Christine. What now do you think of Donald McFarlane?"

"I think well of Donald."

"And of his marriage also?"

"Certainly I do. When he was here I saw how unfit I was to be his wife. I told him so, and bid him seek a mate more suitable to his position and prospects."

"Do you think it right to let yonder lady wed such a man with her eyes shut?"

"Are you going to open them?" Her face was sad and mournful, and she laid her hand gently on James' shoulder.

“I think it is my duty, Christine.”

“Think again, James. Be sure it is your duty before you go on such an errand. See if you dare kneel down and ask God to bless you in this duty.”

“Christine, you treat me very hardly. You know how I love you, and you use your power over me unmercifully.”

“No, no, James, I only want you to keep yourself out of the power of Satan. If indeed I have any share in your heart, do not wrong me by giving Satan a place there also. Let me at least respect you, James.”

Page 53

Christine had never spoken in this way before to him; the majesty and purity of her character lifted him insensibly to higher thoughts, her gentleness soothed and comforted him. When David came in he found them talking in a calm, cheerful tone, and the evening that followed was one of the pleasantest he could remember. Yet James understood that Christine trusted in his forbearance, and he had no heart to grieve her, especially as she did her best to reward him by striving to make his visits to her father unusually happy.

So Donald married Miss Napier, and the newspapers were full of the bridegroom's beauty and talents, and the bride's high lineage and great possessions. After this Donald and Donald's affairs seemed to very little trouble David's humble household. His marriage put him far away from Christine's thoughts, for her delicate conscience would have regarded it as a great sin to remember with any feeling of love another woman's affianced husband; and when the struggle became one between right and wrong, it was ended for Christine. David seldom named him, and so Donald McFarlane gradually passed out of the lives he had so sorely troubled.

Slowly but surely James continued to prosper; he rose to be cashier in the bank, and he won a calm but certain place in Christine's regard. She had never quite recovered the shock of her long illness; she was still very frail, and easily exhausted by the least fatigue or excitement. But in James' eyes she was perfect; he was always at his best in her presence, and he was a very proud and happy man when, after eight years' patient waiting and wooing, he won from her the promise to be his wife; for he knew that with Christine the promise meant all that it ought to mean.

The marriage made few changes in her peaceful life. James left the bank, put his savings in David's business, and became his partner. But they continued to live in the same house, and year after year passed away in that happy calm which leaves no records, and has no fate days for the future to date from.

Sometimes a letter, a newspaper, or some public event, would bring back the memory of the gay, handsome lad that had once made so bright the little back parlor. Such strays from Donald's present life were always pleasant ones. In ten years he had made great strides forward. Every one had a good word for him. His legal skill was quoted as authority, his charities were munificent, his name unblemished by a single mean deed.

Had James forgotten? No, indeed. Donald's success only deepened his hatred of him. Even the silence he was compelled to keep on the subject intensified the feeling. Once after his marriage he attempted to discuss the subject with Christine, but the scene had been so painful he had never attempted it again; and David was swift and positive to dismiss any unfavorable allusion to Donald. Once, on reading that "Advocate McFarlane had joined the Free Kirk of Scotland on open confession of faith," James flung down the paper and said pointedly, "I wonder whether he confessed his wrongdoing before his faith or not."

Page 54

"There's nane sae weel shod, James, that they mayna slip," answered David, with a stern face. "He has united wi' Dr. Buchan's kirk—there's nane taken into that fellowship unworthily, as far as man can judge."

"He would be a wise minister that got at all Advocate McFarlane's sins, I am thinking."

"Dinna say all ye think, James. They walk too fair for earth that naebody can find fault wi'."

So James nursed the evil passion in his own heart; indeed, he had nursed it so long that he could not of himself resign it, and in all his prayers—and he did pray frequently, and often sincerely—he never named this subject to God, never once asked for his counsel or help in the matter.

Twelve years after his marriage with Christine David died, died as he had often wished to die, very suddenly. He was well at noon; at night he had put on the garments of eternal Sabbath. He had but a few moments of consciousness in which to bid farewell to his children. "Christine," he said cheerfully, "we'll no be lang parted, dear lassie;" and to James a few words on his affairs, and then almost with his last breath, "James, heed what I say: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall—obtain mercy.'"

There seemed to have been some prophetic sense in David's parting words to his daughter, for soon after his death she began to fail rapidly. What James suffered as he saw it only those can tell who have watched their beloved slowly dying, and hoped against hope day after day and week after week. Perhaps the hardest part was the knowledge that she had never recovered the health she had previous to the terrible shock which his revelation of Donald's guilt had been to her. He forgot his own share in the shock and threw the whole blame of her early decay on Donald. "And if she dies," he kept saying in his angry heart, "I will make him suffer for it."

And Christine was drawing very near to death, though even when she was confined to her room and bed James would not believe it. And it was at this time that Donald came once more to Glasgow. There was a very exciting general election for a new Parliament, and Donald stood for the Conservative party in the city of Glasgow. Nothing could have so speedily ripened James' evil purpose. Should a forger represent his native city? Should he see the murderer of his Christine win honor upon honor, when he had but to speak and place him among thieves?

During the struggle he worked frantically to defeat him—and failed. That night he came home like a man possessed by some malicious, ungovernable spirit of hell. He would not go to Christine's room, for he was afraid she would discover his purpose in his face, and win him from it. For now he had sworn to himself that he would only wait until the congratulatory dinner. He could get an invitation to it. All the bailies and the great men of the city would be there. The newspaper reporters would be there. His triumph would

be complete. Donald would doubtless make a great speech, and after it *he* would say his few words.

Page 55

Then he thought of Christine. But she did not move him now, for she was never likely to hear of it. She was confined to her bed; she read nothing but her Bible; she saw no one but her nurse. He would charge the nurse, and he would keep all papers and letters from her. He thought of nothing now but the near gratification of a revengeful purpose for which he had waited twenty years. Oh, how sweet it seemed to him!

The dinner was to be in a week, and during the next few days he was like a man in a bad dream. He neglected his business, and wandered restlessly about the house, and looked so fierce and haggard that Christine began to notice, to watch, and to fear. She knew that Donald was in the city, and her heart told her that it was his presence only that could so alter her husband; and she poured it out in strong supplications for strength and wisdom to avert the calamity she felt approaching.

That night her nurse became sick and could not remain with her, and James, half reluctantly, took her place, for he feared Christine's influence now. She would ask him to read the Bible, to pray with her; she might talk to him of death and heaven; she might name Donald, and extract some promise from him. And he was determined now that nothing should move him. So he pretended great weariness, drew a large chair to her bedside, and said,

"I shall try and sleep a while, darling; if you need me you have only to speak."

CHAPTER VI.

He was more weary than he knew, and ere he was aware he fell asleep—a restless, wretched sleep, that made him glad when the half-oblivion was over. Christine, however, was apparently at rest, and he soon relapsed into the same dark, haunted state of unconsciousness. Suddenly he began to mutter and moan, and then to speak with a hoarse, whispered rapidity that had in it something frightful and unearthly. But Christine listened with wide-open eyes, and heard with sickening terror the whole wicked plot. It fell from his half-open lips over and over in every detail; and over and over he laughed low and terribly at the coming shame of the hated Donald.

She had not walked alone for weeks, nor indeed been out of her room for months, but she must go now; and she never doubted her strength. As if she had been a spirit, she slipped out of bed, walked rapidly and noiselessly into the long-unfamiliar parlor. A rushlight was burning, and the key of the old desk was always in it. Nothing valuable was kept there, and people unacquainted with the secret of the hidden drawer would have looked in vain for the entrance to it. Christine had known it for years, but her wifely honor had held it more sacred than locks or keys could have done. She was aware only that James kept some private matter of importance there, and she would as readily have robbed her husband's purse as have spied into things of which he did not speak to her.

Page 56

Now, however, all mere thoughts of courtesy or honor must yield before the alternative in which James and Donald stood. She reached the desk, drew out the concealing drawer, pushed aside the slide, and touched the paper. There were other papers there, but something taught her at once the right one. To take it and close the desk was but the work of a moment, then back she flew as swiftly and noiselessly as a spirit with the condemning evidence tightly clasped in her hand.

James was still muttering and moaning in his troubled sleep, and with the consciousness of her success all her unnatural strength passed away. She could hardly secrete it in her bosom ere she fell into a semi-conscious lethargy, through which she heard with terror her husband's low, weird laughter and whispered curses.

At length the day for the dinner came. James had procured an invitation, and he made unusual personal preparations for it. He was conscious that he was going to do a very mean action, but he would look as well as possible in the act. He had even his apology for it ready; he would say that "as long as it was a private wrong he had borne the loss patiently for twenty years, but that the public welfare demanded honest men, men above reproach, and he could no longer feel it his duty," *etc.*, *etc.*

After he was dressed he bid Christine "Good-by."

"He would only stay an hour," he said, "and he must needs go, as Donald was her kin."

Then he went to the desk, and with hands trembling in their eagerness sought the bill. It was not there. *Impossible!* He looked again—again more carefully—could not believe his eyes, and looked again and again. It was really gone. If the visible hand of God had struck him, he could not have felt it more consciously. He mechanically closed the desk and sat down like one stunned. Cain might have felt as James did when God asked him, "Where is thy brother?" He did not think of prayer. No "God be merciful to me a sinner" came as yet from his dry, white lips. The fountains of his heart seemed dry as dust. The anger of God weighed him down till

"He felt as one
Who, waking after some strange, fevered dream,
Sees a dim land and things unspeakable,
And comes to know at last that it is hell."

Meantime Christine was lying with folded hands, praying for him. She knew what an agony he was going through, and ceaselessly with pure supplications she prayed for his forgiveness. About midnight one came and told him his wife wanted to see him. He rose with a wretched sigh, and looked at the clock. He had sat there six hours. He had thought over everything, over and over—the certainty that the paper was there, the fact that no other paper had been touched, and that no human being but Christine knew of the secret place. These things shocked him beyond expression. It was to his mind a

visible assertion of the divine prerogative; he had really heard God say to him, "Vengeance is mine." The lesson that in these materialistic days we would reason away, James humbly accepted. His religious feelings were, after all, his deepest feelings, and in those six hours he had so palpably felt the frown of his angry Heavenly Father that he had quite forgotten his poor, puny wrath at Donald McFarlane.

Page 57

As he slowly walked up stairs to Christine he determined to make to her a full confession of the deed he had meditated. But when he reached her bedside he saw that she was nearly dead. She smiled faintly and said,

“Send all away, James. I must speak alone with you, dear; we are going to part, my husband.”

Then he knelt down by her side and held her cold hands, and the gracious tears welled up in his hot eyes, and he covered them with the blessed rain.

“O James, how you have suffered—since six o’clock.”

“You know then, Christine! I would weep tears of blood over my sin. O dear, dear wife, take no shameful memory of me into eternity with you.”

“See how I trust you, James. Here is poor, weak Donald’s note. I know now you will never use it against him. What if your six hours were lengthened out through life—through eternity? I ask no promise from you now, dear.”

“But I give it. Before God I give it, with all my heart. My sin has found me out this night. How has God borne with me all these years? Oh, how great is his mercy!”

Then Christine told him how he had revealed his wicked plot, and how wonderful strength had been given her to defeat it; and the two souls, amid their parting sighs and tears, knew each other as they had never done through all their years of life.

For a week James remained in his own room. Then Christine was laid beside her father, and the shop was reopened, and the household returned to its ways. But James was not seen in house or shop, and the neighbors said,

“Kirsty Cameron has had a wearisome sickness, and nae doobt her gudeman was needing a rest. Dootless he has gane to the Hielands a bit.”

But it was not northward James Blackie went. It was south; south past the bonnie Cumberland Hills and the great manufacturing towns of Lancashire and the rich valleys of Yorkshire; southward until he stopped at last in London. Even then, though he was weary and sick and the night had fallen, he did not rest. He took a carriage and drove at once to a fashionable mansion in Baker street. The servant looked curiously at him and felt half inclined to be insolent to such a visitor.

“Take that card to your master at once,” he said in a voice whose authority could not be disputed, and the man went.

His master was lying on a sofa in a luxuriously-furnished room, playing with a lovely girl about four years old, and listening meanwhile to an enthusiastic account of a cricket

match that two boys of about twelve and fourteen years were giving him. He was a strikingly handsome man, in the prime of life, with a thoroughly happy expression. He took James' card in a careless fashion, listened to the end of his sons' story, and then looked at it. Instantly his manner changed; he stood up, and said promptly,

"Go away now, Miss Margaret, and you also, Angus and David; I have an old friend to see." Then to the servant, "Bring the gentleman here at once."

Page 58

When he heard James' step he went to meet him with open hand; but James said,

"Not just yet, Mr. McFarlane; hear what I have to say. Then if you offer your hand I will take it."

"Christine is dead?"

"Dead, dead."

They sat down opposite each other, and James did not spare himself. From his discovery of the note in old Starkie's possession until the death of Christine, he confessed everything. Donald sat with downcast eyes, quite silent. Once or twice his fierce Highland blood surged into his face, and his hand stole mechanically to the place where his dirk had once been, but the motion was as transitory as a thought. When James had finished he sat with compressed lips for a few moments, quite unable to control his speech; but at length he slowly said,

"I wish I had known all this before; it would have saved much sin and suffering. You said that my indifference at first angered you. I must correct this. I was not indifferent. No one can tell what suffering that one cowardly act cost me. But before the bill fell due I went frankly to Uncle David and confessed all my sin. What passed between us you may guess; but he forgave me freely and fully, as I trust God did also. Hence there was no cause for its memory to darken life."

"I always thought Christine had told her father," muttered James.

"Nay, but I told him myself. He said he would trace the note, and I have no doubt he knew it was in your keeping from the first."

Then James took it from his pocket-book.

"There it is, Mr. McFarlane. Christine gave it back to me the hour she died. I promised her to bring it to you and tell you all."

"Christine's soul was a white rose without a thorn. I count it an honor to have known and loved her. But the paper is yours, Mr. Blackie, unless I may pay for it."

"O man, man! what money could pay for it? I would not dare to sell it for the whole world! Take it, I pray you."

"I will not. Do as you wish with it, James, I can trust you."

Then James walked towards the table. There were wax lights burning on it, and he held it in the flame and watched it slowly consume away to ashes. The silence was so intense that they heard each other breathing, and the expression on James' face was so

rapt and noble that even Donald's stately beauty was for the moment less attractive. Then he walked towards Donald and said,

"Now give me your hand, McFarlane, and I'll take it gladly."

And that was a handclasp that meant to both men what no words could have expressed.

"Farewell, McFarlane; our ways in this world lie far apart; but when we come to die it will comfort both of us to remember this meeting. God be with you!"

"And with you also, James. Farewell."

Then James went back to his store and his shadowed household life. And people said he looked happier than ever he had done, and pitied him for his sick wife, and supposed he felt it a happy release to be rid of her. So wrongly does the world, which knows nothing of our real life, judge us.

Page 59

You may see his gravestone in Glasgow Necropolis to-day, and people will tell you that he was a great philanthropist, and gave away a noble fortune to the sick and the ignorant; and you will probably wonder to see only beneath his name the solemn text, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Facing His Enemy.

FACING HIS ENEMY.

CHAPTER I.

Forty years ago there stood in the lower part of the city of Glasgow a large, plain building which was to hundreds of very intelligent Scotchmen almost sacred ground. It stood among warehouses and factories, and in a very unfashionable quarter; but for all that, it was Dr. William Morrison's kirk. And Dr. Morrison was in every respect a remarkable man—a Scotchman with the old Hebrew fervor and sublimity, who accepted the extremest tenets of his creed with a deep religious faith, and scorned to trim or moderate them in order to suit what he called "a sinfu' latitudinarian age."

Such a man readily found among the solid burghers of Glasgow a large "following" of a very serious kind, douce, dour men, whose strongly-marked features looked as if they had been chiselled out of their native granite—men who settled themselves with a grave kind of enjoyment to listen to a full hour's sermon, and who watched every point their minister made with a critical acumen that seemed more fitting to a synod of divines than a congregation of weavers and traders.

A prominent man in this remarkable church was Deacon John Callendar. He had been one of its first members, and it was everything to his heart that Jerusalem is to the Jew, or Mecca to the Mohammedan. He believed his minister to be the best and wisest of men, though he was by no means inclined to allow himself a lazy confidence in this security. It was the special duty of deacons to keep a strict watch over doctrinal points, and though he had never had occasion to dissent in thirty years' scrutiny, he still kept the watch.

In the temporal affairs of the church it had been different. There was no definite creed for guidance in these matters, and eight or ten men with strong, rugged wills about L, S., D., each thinking highly of his own discretion in monetary affairs, and rather indifferently of the minister's gifts in this direction, were not likely to have always harmonious sessions.

They had had a decidedly inharmonious one early in January of 184-, and Deacon Callendar had spoken his mind with his usual blunt directness. He had been a good deal nettled at the minister's attitude, for, instead of seconding his propositions, Dr.

Morrison had sat with a faraway, indifferent look, as if the pending discussion was entirely out of his range of interest. John could have borne contradiction better. An argument would have gratified him. But to have the speech and statistics which he had so carefully prepared fall on the minister's ear without provoking any response was a great trial of his patience. He was inwardly very angry, though outwardly very calm; but Dr. Morrison knew well what a tumult was beneath the dour still face of the deacon as he rose from his chair, put on his plaid, and pulled his bonnet over his brows.

Page 60

"John," he said kindly, "you are a wise man, and I aye thought so. It takes a Christian to lead passion by the bridle. A Turk is a placid gentleman, John, but he cannot do it."

"Ou, ay! doubtless! There is talk o' the Turk and the Pope, but it is my neighbors that trouble me the maist, minister. Good-night to ye all. If ye vote to-night you can e'en count my vote wi' Dr. Morrison's; it will be as sensible and warld-like as any o' the lave."

With this parting reflection he went out. It had begun to snow, and the still, white solitude made him ashamed of his temper. He looked up at the quiet heavens above him, then at the quiet street before him, and muttered with a spice of satisfaction, "Speaking comes by nature, and silence by understanding. I am thankfu' now I let Deacon Strang hae the last word. I'm saying naught against Strang; he may gie good counsel, but they'll be fools that tak it."

"Uncle!"

"Hout, Davie! Whatna for are you here?"

"It began to snow, and I thought you would be the better of your cloak and umbrella. You seem vexed, uncle."

"Vexed? Ay. The minister is the maist contrary o' mortals. He kens naething about church government, and he treats gude siller as if it wasna worth the counting; but he's a gude man, and a great man, Davie, and folk canna serve the altar and be money-changers too. I ought to keep that i' mind. It's Deacon Strang, and no the minister."

"Well, uncle, you must just thole it; you know what the New Testament says?"

"Ay, ay; I ken it says if a man be struck on one cheek, he must turn the other; but, Davie, let me tell you that the man who gets the first blow generally deserves the second. It is gude Christian law no to permit the first stroke. That is my interpretation o' the matter."

"I never thought of that."

"Young folk don't think o' everything."

There was something in the tone of this last remark which seemed to fit best into silence, and David Callendar had a particular reason for not further irritating his uncle. The two men without any other remark reached the large, handsome house in Blytheswood Square which was their home. Its warmth and comfort had an immediate effect on the deacon. He looked pleasantly at the blazing fire and the table on the hearthrug, with its basket of oaten cakes, its pitcher of cream, and its whiskey-bottle and toddy glasses. The little brass kettle was simmering before the fire, his slippers were invitingly warm, his loose coat lying over the back of his soft, ample chair, and just as he

had put them on, and sank down with a sigh of content, a bright old lady entered with a spicy dish of kippered salmon.

“I thought I wad bring ye a bit relish wi’ your toddy, deacon. Talking is hungry wark. I think a man might find easier pleasuring than going to a kirk session through a snowstorm.”

“A man might, Jenny. They’d suit women-folk wonderfu’; there’s plenty o’ talk and little wark.”

Page 61

"Then I dinna see ony call to mak a change, deacon."

"Now, Jenny, you've had the last word, sae ye can go to bed wi' an easy mind. And, Jenny, woman, dinna let your quarrel wi' Maggie Launder come between you and honest sleep. I think that will settle her," he observed with a pawky smile, as his housekeeper shut the door with unnecessary haste.

Half an hour afterwards, David, mixing another glass of toddy, drew his chair closer to the fire, and said, "Uncle John, I want to speak to you."

"Speak on, laddie;" but David noticed that even with the permission, cautious curves settled round his uncle's eyes, and his face assumed that business-like immobility which defied his scrutiny.

"I have had a very serious talk with Robert Leslie; he is thinking of buying Alexander Hastie out."

"Why not think o' buying out Robert Napier, or Gavin Campbell, or Clydeside Woolen Works? A body might as weel think o' a thousand spindles as think o' fifty."

"But he means business. An aunt, who has lately died in Galloway, has left him L2,000."

"That isna capital enough to run Sandy Hastie's mill."

"He wants me to join him."

"And how will that help matters? Twa thousand pounds added to Davie Callendar will be just L2,000."

"I felt sure you would lend me L2,000; and in that case it would be a great chance for me. I am very anxious to be—"

"Your ain maister."

"Not that altogether, uncle, although you know well the Callendars come of a kind that do not like to serve. I want to have a chance to make money."

"How much of your salary have you saved?"

"I have never tried to save anything yet, uncle, but I am going to begin."

The old man sat silent for a few moments, and then said, "I wont do it, Davie."

"It is only L2,000, Uncle John."



"*Only* L2,000! Hear the lad! Did ye ever mak L2,000? Did ye ever save L2,000? When ye hae done that ye'll ne'er put in the adverb, Davie. *Only* L2,000, *indeed!*"

"I thought you loved me, uncle."

"I love no human creature better than you. Whatna for should I not love you? You are the only thing left to me o' the bonnie brave brother who wrapped his colors round him in the Afghan Pass, the brave-hearted lad who died fighting twenty to one. And you are whiles sae like him that I'm tempted—na, na, that is a' byganes. I will not let you hae the L2,000, that is the business in hand."

"What for?"

"If you will hear the truth, that second glass o' whiskey is reason plenty. I hae taken my ane glass every night for forty years, and I hae ne'er made the ane twa, except New Year's tide."

"That is fair nonsense, Uncle John. There are plenty of men whom you trust for more than L2,000 who can take four glasses for their nightcap always."

"That may be; I'm no denying it; but what is lawfu' in some men is sinfu' in others."

Page 62

"I do not see that at all."

"Do you mind last summer, when we were up in Argyleshire, how your cousin, Roy Callendar, walked, with ne'er the wink o' an eyelash, on a mantel-shelf hanging over a three-hundred-feet precipice? Roy had the trained eyesight and the steady nerve which made it lawfu' for him; for you or me it had been suicide—naething less sinfu'. Three or four glasses o' whiskey are safer for some men than twa for you. I hae been feeling it my duty to tell you this for some time. Never look sae glum, Davie, or I'll be thinking it is my siller and no mysel' you were caring for the night when ye thought o' my cloak and umbrella."

The young man rose in a perfect blaze of passion.

"Sit down, sit down," said his uncle. "One would think you were your grandfather, Evan Callendar, and that some English red-coat had trod on your tartan. Hout! What's the use o' a temper like that to folk wha hae taken to the spindle instead o' the claymore?"

"I am a Callendar for all that."

"Sae am I, sae am I, and vera proud o' it fore-bye. We are a' kin, Davie; blood is thicker than water, and we wont quarrel."

David put down his unfinished glass of toddy. He could not trust himself to discuss the matter any farther, but as he left the room he paused, with the open door in his hand, and said,

"If you are afraid I am going to be a drunkard, why did you not care for the fear before it became a question of L2,000? And if I ever do become one, remember this, Uncle John—you mixed my first glass for me!"

CHAPTER II.

A positive blow could hardly have stunned John Callendar as this accusation did. He could not have answered it, even if he had had an opportunity, and the shock was the greater that it brought with it a sudden sense of responsibility, yea, even guilt. At first the feeling was one of anger at this sudden charge of conscience. He began to excuse himself; he was not to blame if other people could not do but they must o'erdo; then to assure himself that, being God's child, there could be no condemnation in the matter to him. But his heart was too tender and honest to find rest in such apologies, and close upon his anger at the lad crowded a host of loving memories that would not be put away.

David's father had been very dear to him. He recalled his younger brother in a score of tender situations: the schoolhouse in which they had studied cheek to cheek over one

book; the little stream in which they had paddled and fished on holidays, the fir-wood, the misty corries, and the heathery mountains of Argyle; above all, he remembered the last time that he had ever seen the bright young face marching at the head of his company down Buchanan street on his way to India. David's mother was a still tenderer memory, and John Callendar's eyes grew misty as his heart forced him to recall that dark, wintry afternoon when she had brought David to him, and he had solemnly promised to be a father to the lad. It was the last promise between them; three weeks afterwards he stood at her grave's side. Time is said to dim such memories as these. It never does. After many years some sudden event recalls the great crises of any life with all the vividness of their first occurrence.

Page 63

Confused as these memories were, they blended with an equal confusion of feelings. Love, anger, regret, fear, perplexity, condemnation, excuse, followed close on each other, and John's mind, though remarkably clear and acute, was one trained rather to the consideration of things point by point than to the catching of the proper clew in a mental labyrinth. After an hour's miserable uncertainty he was still in doubt what to do. The one point of comfort he had been able to reach was the hope that David had gone straight to Jenny with his grievance. "And though women-folk arena much as counsellors," thought John, "they are wonderfu' comforters; and Jenny will ne'er hear tell o' his leaving the house; sae there will be time to put right what is wrong."

But though David had always hitherto, when lessons were hard or lassies scornful, gone with his troubles to the faithful Jenny, he did not do so at this time. He did not even bid her "Good-night," and there was such a look on his face that she considered it prudent not to challenge the omission.

"It will be either money or marriage," she thought. "If it be money, the deacon has mair than is good for him to hae; if it be marriage, it will be Isabel Strang, and that the deacon wont like. But it is his ain wife Davie is choosing, and I am for letting the lad hae the lass he likes best."

Jenny had come to these conclusions in ten minutes, but she waited patiently for an hour before she interrupted her master. Then the clock struck midnight, and she felt herself aggrieved. "Deacon," she said sharply, "ye should mak the day day and the night night, and ye would if ye had a three weeks' ironing to do the morn. It has chappit twelve, sir."

"Jenny, I'm not sleeplike to-night. There hae been ill words between David and me."

"And I am mair than astonished at ye, deacon. Ye are auld enough to ken that ill words canna be wiped out wi' a sponge. Our Davie isna an ordinar lad; he can be trusted where the lave would need a watcher. Ye ken that, deacon, for he is your ain bringing up."

"But, Jenny, L2,000 for his share o' Hastie's mill! Surely ye didna encourage the lad in such an idea?"

"Oh, sae it's money," thought Jenny. "What is L2,000 to you, deacon? Why should you be sparing and saving money to die wi'? The lad isna a fool."

"I dinna approve o' the partner that is seeking him, Jenny. I hae heard things anent Robert Leslie that I dinna approve of; far from it."

"Hae ye *seen* anything wrong?"

"I canna say I hae."

“Trust to your eyes, deacon; they believe themselves, and your ears believe other people; ye ken which is best. His father was a decent body.”

“Ay, ay; but Alexander Leslie was different from his son Robert. He was a canny, cautious man, who could ding for his ain side, and who always stood by the kirk. Robert left Dr. Morrison’s soon after his father died. The doctor was too narrow for Robert Leslie. Robert Leslie has wonderfu’ broad ideas about religion now. Jenny, I dinna like the men who are their ain Bibles and ministers.”

Page 64

"But there are good folk outside Dr. Morrison's kirk, deacon, surely."

"We'll trust so, surely, we'll trust so, Jenny; but a man wi' broad notions about religion soon gets broad notions about business and all other things. Why, Jenny, I hae heard that Robert Leslie once spoke o' the house o' John Callendar & Co. as 'old foggyish!'"

"That's no hanging matter, deacon, and ye must see that the world is moving."

"Maybe, maybe; but I'se never help it to move except in the safe, narrow road. Ye ken the Garloch mill-stream? It is narrow enough for a good rider to leap, but it is deep, and it does its wark weel summer and winter. They can break down the banks, woman, and let it spread all over the meadow; bonnie enough it will look, but the mill-clapper would soon stop. Now there's just sae much power, spiritual or temporal, in any man; spread it out, and it is shallow and no to be depended on for any purpose whatever. But narrow the channel, Jenny, narrow the channel, and it is a driving force."

"Ye are getting awa from the main subject, deacon. It is the L2,000, and ye had best mak up your mind to gie it to Davie. Then ye can gang awa to your bed and tak your rest."

"You talk like a—like a woman. It is easy to gie other folks' siller awa. I hae worked for my siller."

"Your siller, deacon? Ye hae naught but a life use o' it. Ye canna take it awa wi' ye. Ye can leave it to the ane you like best, but that vera person may scatter it to the four corners o' the earth. And why not? Money was made round that it might roll. It is little good yours is doing lying in the Clyde Trust."

"Jenny Callendar, you are my ain cousin four times removed, and you hae a kind o' right to speak your mind in my house; but you hae said enough, woman. It isna a question of money only; there are ither things troubling me mair than that. But women are but one-sided arguers. Good-night to you."

He turned to the fire and sat down, but after a few moments of the same restless, confused deliberation, he rose and went to his Bible. It lay open upon its stand, and John put his hand lovingly, reverently upon the pages. He had no glasses on, and he could not see a letter, but he did not need to.

"It is my Father's word," he whispered; and, standing humbly before it, he recalled passage after passage, until a great calm fell upon him. Then he said,

"I will lay me down and sleep now; maybe I'll see clearer in the morning light."

Almost as soon as he opened his eyes in the morning there was a tap at his door, and the gay, strong voice he loved so dearly asked,

“Can I come in, Uncle John?”

“Come in, Davie.”

“Uncle, I was wrong last night, and I cannot be happy with any shadow between us two.”

Scotchmen are not demonstrative, and John only winked his eyes and straightened out his mouth; but the grip of the old and young hand said what no words could have said half so eloquently. Then the old man remarked in a business-like way,

Page 65

"I hae been thinking, Davie, I would go and look o'er Hastie's affairs, and if I like the look o' them I'll buy the whole concern out for you. Partners are kittle cattle. Ye will hae to bear their shortcomings as well as your ain. Tak my advice, Davie; rule your youth well, and your age will rule itself'."

"Uncle, you forget that Robert Leslie is in treaty with Hastie. It would be the height of dishonor to interfere with his bargain. You have always told me never to put my finger in another man's bargain. Let us say no more on the subject. I have another plan now. If it succeeds, well and good; if not, there are chances behind this one."

John fervently hoped there would be no more to say on this subject, and when day after day went by without any reference to Hastie or Robert Leslie, John Callendar felt much relieved. David also had limited himself to one glass of toddy at night, and this unspoken confession and reformation was a great consolation to the old man. He said to himself that the evil he dreaded had gone by his door, and he was rather complacent over the bold stand he had taken.

That day, as he was slowly walking through the Exchange, pondering a proposal for Virginia goods, Deacon Strang accosted him. "Callendar, a good day to ye; I congratulate ye on the new firm o' Callendar & Leslie. They are brave lads, and like enough—if a' goes weel—to do weel."

John did not allow an eyelash to betray his surprise and chagrin. "Ah, Strang!" he answered, "the Callendars are a big clan, and we are a' kin; sae, if you tak to congratulating me on every Callendar whose name ye see aboon a doorstep, you'll hae mair business on hand than you'll ken how to manage. A good day to you!" But Deacon Callendar went up Great George street that day with a heavy, angry heart. His nephew opened the door for him. "Uncle John, I have been looking all over for you. I have something to tell you."

"Fiddler's news, Davie. I hae heard it already. Sae you hae struck hands wi' Robert Leslie after a', eh?"

"He had my promise, uncle, before I spoke to you. I could not break it."

"H'm! Where did you get the L2,000?"

"I borrowed it."

"Then I hope 'the party' looked weel into the business."

"They did not. It was loaned to me on my simple representation."

"Simple representation! Vera simple! It was some woman, dootless."

“It was my mother’s aunt, Lady Brith.”

“Ou, ay! I kent it. Weel, when a bargain is made, wish it good luck; sae, Jenny, put a partridge before the fire, and bring up a bottle O’ Madeira.”

It was not however a lively meal. John was too proud and hurt to ask for information, and David too much chilled by his reserve to volunteer it. The wine, being an unusual beverage to John, made him sleepy; and when David said he had to meet Robert Leslie at nine o’clock, John made no objection and no remark. But when Jenny came in to cover up the fire for the night, she found him sitting before it, rubbing his hands in a very unhappy manner.

Page 66

"Cousin," he said fretfully, "there is a new firm in Glasgo' to-day."

"I hae heard tell o' it. God send it prosperity."

"It isna likely, Jenny; auld Lady Brith's money to start it! The godless auld woman! If Davie taks her advice, he's a gane lad."

"Then, deacon, it's your ain fault. Whatna for did ye not gie him the L2,000?"

"Just hear the woman! It taks women and lads to talk o' L2,000 as if it were picked up on the planestanes."

"If ye had loaned it, deacon, ye would hae had the right to spier into things, and gie the lad advice. He maun tak his advice where he taks his money. Ye flung that chance o' guiding Davie to the four winds. And let me tell ye, Cousin Callendar, ye hae far too tight a grip on this warld's goods. The money is only loaned to you to put out at interest for the Master. It ought to be building kirks and schoolhouses, and sending Bibles to the far ends o' the earth. When you are asked what ye did wi' it, how will you like to answer, 'I hid it safely awa, Lord, in the Clyde Trust and in Andrew Fleming's bank!'"

"That will do, woman. Now you hae made me dissatisfied wi' my guiding o' Davie, and meeserable anent my bank account, ye may gang to your bed; you'll doobtless sleep weel on the thought."

CHAPTER III.

However, sometimes things are not so ill as they look. The new firm obtained favor, and even old, cautious men began to do a little business with it. For Robert introduced some new machinery, and the work it did was allowed, after considerable suspicion, to be "vera satisfactory." A sudden emergency had also discovered to David that he possessed singularly original ideas in designing patterns; and he set himself with enthusiasm to that part of the business. Two years afterwards came the Great Fair of 1851, and Callendar & Leslie took a first prize for their rugs, both design and workmanship being honorably mentioned.

Their success seemed now assured. Orders came in so fast that the mill worked day and night to fill them; and David was so gay and happy that John could hardly help rejoicing with him. Indeed, he was very proud of his nephew, and even inclined to give Robert a little cautious kindness. The winter of 1851 was a very prosperous one, but the spring brought an unlooked-for change.

One evening David came home to dinner in a mood which Jenny characterized as "*thrawart*." He barely answered her greeting, and shut his room-door with a bang. He did not want any dinner, and he wanted to be let alone. John looked troubled at this

behavior. Jenny said, "It is some lass in the matter; naething else could mak a sensible lad like Davie act sae child-like and silly." And Jennie was right. Towards nine o'clock David came to the parlor and sat down beside his uncle. He said he had been "greatly annoyed."

"Annoyances are as certain as the multiplication table," John remarked quietly, "and ye ought to expect them—all the mair after a long run o' prosperity."

Page 67

"But no man likes to be refused by the girl he loves."

"Eh? Refused, say ye? Wha has refused you?"

"Isabel Strang. I have loved her, as you and Jenny know, since we went to school together, and I was sure that she loved me. Two days ago I had some business with Deacon Strang, and when it was finished I spoke to him anent Isabel. He made me no answer then, one way or the other, but told me he would have a talk with Isabel, and I might call on him this afternoon. When I did so he said he felt obligated to refuse my offer."

"Weel?"

"That is all."

"Nonsense! Hae you seen Isabel hersel'?"

"She went to Edinburgh last night."

"And if you were your uncle, lad, you would hae been in Edinburgh too by this time. Your uncle would not stay refused twenty-four hours, if he thought the lass loved him. Tut, tut, you ought to hae left at once; that would hae been mair like a Callendar than ganging to your ain room to sit out a scorning. There is a train at ten o'clock to-night; you hae time to catch it if ye dinna lose a minute, and if you come back wi' Mrs. David Callendar, I'll gie her a warm welcome for your sake."

The old man's face was aglow, and in his excitement he had risen to his feet with the very air of one whom no circumstances could depress or embarrass. David caught his mood and his suggestion, and in five minutes he was on his way to the railway depot. The thing was done so quickly that reflection had formed no part of it. But when Jenny heard the front-door clash impatiently after David, she surmised some imprudence, and hastened to see what was the matter. John told her the "affront" David had received, and looked eagerly into the strong, kindly face for an assurance that he had acted with becoming promptitude and sympathy. Jenny shook her head gravely, and regarded the deacon with a look of pitying disapproval. "To think," she said, "of twa men trying to sort a love affair, when there was a woman within call to seek counsel o'."

"But we couldna hae done better, Jenny."

"Ye couldna hae done warse, deacon. Once the lad asked ye for money, and ye wouldna trust him wi' it; and now ye are in sic a hurry to send him after a wife that he maun neither eat nor sleep. Ye ken which is the maist dangerous. And you, wi' a' your years, to play into auld Strang's hand sae glibly! Deacon, ye hae made a nice mess o' it. Dinna ye see that Strang knew you twa fiery Hielandmen would never tak 'No,' and he sent Isabel awa on purpose for our Davie to run after her. He kens weel they will be

sure to marry, but he'll say now that his daughter disobeyed him; sae he'll get off giving her a bawbee o' her fortune, and he'll save a' the plenishing and the wedding expenses. Deacon, I'm ashamed o' you. Sending a love-sick lad on sic a fool's errand. And mair, I'm not going to hae Isabel Strang, or Isabel Callendar here. A young woman wi' bridish ways dawdling about the house, I canna, and I willna stand. You'll hae to choose atween Deacon Strang's daughter and your auld cousin, Jenny Callendar."

Page 68

John had no answer ready, and indeed Jenny gave him no time to make one: she went off with a sob in her voice, and left the impulsive old matchmaker very unhappy indeed. For he had an unmitigated sense of having acted most imprudently, and moreover, a shrewd suspicion that Jenny's analysis of Deacon Strang's tactics was a correct one. For the first time in many a year, a great tide of hot, passionate anger swept away every other feeling. He longed to meet Strang face to face, and with an hereditary and quite involuntary instinct he put his hand to the place where his forefathers had always carried their dirks. The action terrified and partly calmed him. "My God!" he exclaimed, "forgive thy servant. I hae been guilty in my heart o' murder."

He was very penitent, but still, as he mused the fire burned; and he gave vent to his feelings in odd, disjointed sentences thrown up from the very bottom of his heart, as lava is thrown up by the irrepressible eruption: "Wha shall deliver a man from his ancestors? Black Evan Callendar was never much nearer murder than I hae been this night, only for the grace of God, which put the temptation and the opportunity sae far apart. I'll hae Strang under my thumb yet. God forgie me! what hae I got to do wi' sorting my ain wrongs? What for couldna Davie like some other lass? It's as easy to graft on a good stock as an ill one. I doobt I hae done wrong. I am in a sair swither. The righteous dinna always see the right way. I maun e'en to my Psalms again. It is a wonderfu' comfort that King David was just a weak, sinfu' mortal like mysel'." So he went again to those pathetic, self-accusing laments of the royal singer, and found in them, as he always had done, words for all the great depths of his sin and fear, his hopes and his faith.

In the morning one thing was clear to him; David must have his own house now—David must leave him. He could not help but acknowledge that he helped on this consummation, and it was with something of the feeling of a man doing a just penance that he went to look at a furnished house, whose owner was going to the south of France with a sick daughter. The place was pretty, and handsomely furnished, and John paid down the year's rent. So when David returned with his young bride, he assumed at once the dignity and the cares of a householder.

Jenny was much offended at the marriage of David. She had looked forward to this event as desirable and probable, but she supposed it would have come with solemn religious rites and domestic feasting, and with a great gathering in Blytheswood Square of all the Callendar clan. That it had been "a wedding in a corner," as she contemptuously called it, was a great disappointment to her. But, woman-like, she visited it on her own sex. It was all Isabel's fault, and from the very first day of the return of the new couple she assumed an air of commiseration for the young husband, and always spoke of him as "poor Davie."

Page 69

This annoyed John, and after his visits to David's house he was perhaps unnecessarily eloquent concerning the happiness of the young people. Jenny received all such information with a dissenting silence. She always spoke of Isabel as "Mistress David," and when John reminded her that David's wife was "Mistress Callendar," she said, "It was weel kent that there were plenty o' folk called Callendar that werna Callendars for a' that." And it soon became evident to her womanly keen-sightedness that John did not always return from his visits to David and Isabel in the most happy of humors. He was frequently too silent and thoughtful for a perfectly satisfied man; but whatever his fears were, he kept them in his own bosom. They were evidently as yet so light that hope frequently banished them altogether; and when at length David had a son and called it after his uncle, the old man enjoyed a real springtime of renewed youth and pleasure. Jenny was partly reconciled also, for the happy parents treated her with special attention, and she began to feel that perhaps David's marriage might turn out better than she had looked for.

Two years after this event Deacon Strang became reconciled to his daughter, and as a proof of it gave her a large mansion situated in the rapidly-growing "West End." It had come into his possession at a bargain in some of the mysterious ways of his trade; but it was, by the very reason of its great size, quite unsuitable for a young manufacturer like David. Indeed, it proved to be a most unfortunate gift in many ways.

"It will cost L5,000 to furnish it," said John fretfully, "and that Davie can ill afford—few men could; but Isabel has set her heart on it."

"And she'll hae her will, deacon. Ye could put L5,000 in the business though, or ye could furnish for them."

"My way o' furnishing wouldna suit them; and as for putting back money that David is set on wasting, I'll no do it. It is a poor well, Jenny, into which you must put water. If David's business wont stand his drafts on it, the sooner he finds it out the better."

So the fine house was finely furnished; but that was only the beginning of expenses. Isabel now wanted dress to suit her new surroundings, and servants to keep the numerous rooms clean. Then she wanted all her friends and acquaintances to see her splendid belongings, so that ere long David found his home turned into a fashionable gathering-place. Lunches, dinners, and balls followed each other quickly, and the result of all this visiting was that Isabel had long lists of calls to make every day, and that she finally persuaded David that it would be cheaper to buy their own carriage than to pay so much hire to livery-stables.

Page 70

These changes did not take place all at once, nor without much disputing. John Callendar opposed every one of them step by step till opposition was useless. David only submitted to them in order to purchase for himself a delusive peace during the few hours he could afford to be in his fine home; for his increased expenditure was not a thing he could bear lightly. Every extra hundred pounds involved extra planning and work and risks. He gradually lost all the cheerful buoyancy of manner and the brightness of countenance that had been always part and parcel of David Callendar. A look of care and weariness was on his face, and his habits and hours lost all their former regularity. It had once been possible to tell the time of day by the return home of the two Callendars. Now no one could have done that with David. He stayed out late at night; he stayed out all night long. He told Isabel the mill needed him, and she either believed him or pretended to do so.

So that after the first winter of her fashionable existence she generally “entertained” alone. “Mr. Callendar had gone to Stirling, or up to the Highlands to buy wool,” or, “he was so busy money-making she could not get him to recognize the claims of society.” And society cared not a pin’s point whether he presided or not at the expensive entertainments given in his name.

CHAPTER IV.

But things did not come to this pass all at once; few men take the steps towards ruin so rapidly as to be themselves alarmed by it. It was nearly seven years after his marriage when the fact that he was in dangerously embarrassed circumstances forced itself suddenly on David’s mind. I say “suddenly” here, because the consummation of evil that has been long preparing comes at last in a moment; a string holding a picture gets weaker and weaker through weeks of tension, and then breaks. A calamity through nights and days moves slowly towards us step by step, and then some hour it has come. So it was with David’s business. It had often lately been in tight places, but something had always happened to relieve him. One day, however, there was absolutely no relief but in borrowing money, and David went to his uncle again.

It was a painful thing for him to do; not that they had any quarrel, though sometimes David thought a quarrel would be better than the scant and almost sad intercourse their once tender love had fallen into. By some strange mental sympathy, hardly sufficiently recognized by us, John was thinking of his nephew when he entered. He greeted him kindly, and pulled a chair close, so that David might sit beside him. He listened sympathizingly to his cares, and looked mournfully into the unhappy face so dear to him; then he took his bank-book and wrote out a check for double the amount asked.

The young man was astonished; the tears sprang to his eyes, and he said, “Uncle, this is very good of you. I wish I could tell you how grateful I am.”

Page 71

"Davie, sit a moment, you dear lad. I hae a word to say to ye. I hear tell that my lad is drinking far mair than is good either for himsel' or his business. My lad, I care little for the business; let it go, if its anxieties are driving thee to whiskey. David, remember what thou accused me of, yonder night, when this weary mill was first spoken of; and then think how I suffer every time I hear tell o' thee being the warse o' liquor. And Jenny is greeting her heart out about thee. And there is thy sick wife, and three bonnie bit bairns."

"Did Isabel tell you this?"

"How can she help complaining? She is vera ill, and she sees little o' thee, David, she says."

"Yes, she is ill. She took cold at Provost Allison's ball, and she has dwined away ever since. That is true. And the house is neglected and the servants do their own will both with it and the poor children. I have been very wretched, Uncle John, lately, and I am afraid I have drunk more than I ought to have done. Robert and I do not hit together as we used to; he is always fault-finding, and ever since that visit from his cousin who is settled in America he has been dissatisfied and heartless. His cousin has made himself a rich man in ten years there; and Robert says we shall ne'er make money here till we are too old to enjoy it."

"I heard tell, too, that Robert has been speculating in railway stock. Such reports, true or false, hurt you, David. Prudent men dinna like to trust speculators."

"I think the report is true; but then it is out of his private savings he speculates."

"Davie, gie me your word that you wont touch a drop o' whiskey for a week—just for a week."

"I cannot do it, uncle. I should be sure to break it. I don't want to tell you a lie."

"O Davie, Davie! Will you try, then?"

"I'll try, uncle. Ask Jenny to go and see the children."

"Deed she shall go; she'll be fain to do it. Let them come and stay wi' me till their mother is mair able to look after them."

Jenny heard the story that night with a dour face. She could have said some very bitter things about Deacon Strang's daughter, but in consideration of her sickness she forbore. The next morning she went to David's house and had a talk with Isabel. The poor woman was so ill that Jenny had no heart to scold her; she only gave the house "a good sorting," did what she could for Isabel's comfort, and took back with her the children and their nurse. It was at her suggestion John saw David the next day, and

offered to send Isabel to the mild climate of Devonshire. "She'll die if she stays in Glasgo' through the winter," he urged, and David consented. Then, as David could not leave his business, John himself took the poor woman to Torbay, and no one but she and God ever knew how tenderly he cared for her, and how solemnly he tried to prepare her for the great change he saw approaching. She had not thought of death before, but when they parted he knew she had understood him, for weeping bitterly, she said, "You will take care of the children, Uncle John? I fear I shall see them no more."

Page 72

"I will, Isabel. While I live I will."

"And, O uncle, poor David! I have not been a good wife to him. Whatever happens, think of that and judge him mercifully. It is my fault, uncle, my fault, my fault! God forgive me!"

"Nae, nae, lassie; I am far from innocent mysel'," and with these mournful accusations they parted for ever.

For Isabel's sickness suddenly assumed an alarming character, and her dissolution was so rapid that John had scarcely got back to Glasgow ere David was sent for to see his wife die. He came back a bereaved and very wretched man; the great house was dismantled and sold, and he went home once more to Blytheswood Square.

But he could not go back to his old innocent life and self; and the change only revealed to John how terribly far astray his nephew had gone. And even Isabel's death had no reforming influence on him; it only roused regrets and self-reproaches, which made liquor all the more necessary to him. Then the breaking up of the house entailed much bargain-making, all of which was unfortunately cemented with glasses of whiskey toddy. Still his uncle had some new element of hope on which to work. David's home was now near enough to his place of business to afford no excuse for remaining away all night. The children were not to be hid away in some upper room; John was determined they should be at the table and on the hearthstone; and surely their father would respect their innocence and keep himself sober for their sakes.

"It is the highest earthly motive I can gie him," argued the anxious old man, "and he has aye had grace enough to keep out o' my sight when he wasna himsel'; he'll ne'er let wee John and Flora and Davie see him when the whiskey is aboon the will and the wit—that's no to be believed."

And for a time it seemed as if John's tactics would prevail. There were many evenings when they were very happy. The children made so gay the quiet old parlor, and David learning to know his own boys and girl, was astonished at their childish beauty and intelligence. Often John could not bear to break up the pleasant evening time, and David and he would sit softly talking in the firelight, with little John musing quietly between them, and Flora asleep on her uncle's lap. Then Jenny would come gently in and out and say tenderly, "Hadna the bairns better come awa to their beds?" and the old man would answer, "Bide a bit, Jenny, woman," for he thought every such hour was building up a counter influence against the snare of strong drink.

But there is no voice in human nature that can say authoritatively, "*Return!*" David felt all the sweet influences with which he was surrounded, but, it must be admitted, they were sometimes an irritation to him. His business troubles, and his disagreements with his partner, were increasing rapidly; for Robert—whose hopes were set on America—was

urging him to close the mill before their liabilities were any larger. He refused to believe longer in the future making good what they had lost; and certainly it was uphill work for David to struggle against accumulating bills, and a partner whose heart was not with him.

Page 73

One night at the close of the year, David did not come home to dinner, and John and the children ate it alone. He was very anxious, and he had not much heart to talk; but he kept the two eldest with him until little Flora's head dropped, heavy with sleep, on his breast. Then a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he sent them, almost hurriedly, away. He had scarcely done so when there was a shuffling noise in the hall, the parlor-door was flung open with a jar, and David staggered towards him—*drunk!*

In a moment, John's natural temper conquered him; he jumped to his feet, and said passionately, "How daur ye, sir? Get out o' my house, you sinfu' lad!" Then, with a great cry he smote his hands together and bowed his head upon them, weeping slow, heavy drops, that came each with a separate pang. His agony touched David, though he scarcely comprehended it. Not all at once is the tender conscience seared, and the tender heart hardened.

"Uncle," he said in a maudlin, hesitating way, which it would be a sin to imitate—"Uncle John, I'm not drunk, I'm in trouble; I'm in trouble, Uncle John. Don't cry about me. I'm not worth it."

Then he sank down upon the sofa, and, after a few more incoherent apologies, dropped into a deep sleep.

CHAPTER V.

John sat and looked at his fallen idol with a vacant, tear-stained face. He tried to pray a few words at intervals, but he was not yet able to gird up his soul and wrestle with this grief. When Jenny came in she was shocked at the gray, wretched look with which her master pointed to the shameful figure on the sofa. Nevertheless, she went gently to it, raised the fallen head to the pillow, and then went and got a blanket to cover the sleeper, muttering,

"Poor fellow! There's nae need to let him get a pleurisy, ony gate. Whatna for did ye no tell me, deacon? Then I could hae made him a cup o' warm tea."

She spoke as if she was angry, not at David, but at John; and, though it was only the natural instinct of a woman defending what she dearly loved, John gave it a different meaning, and it added to his suffering.

"You are right, Jenny, woman," he said humbly, "it is my fault. I mixed his first glass for him."

"Vera weel. Somebody aye mixes the first glass. Somebody mixed your first glass. That is a bygone, and there is nae use at a' speiring after it. How is the lad to be saved? That is the question now."



“O Jenny, then you dare to hope for his salvation?”

“I would think it far mair sinfu' to despair o' it. The Father has twa kinds o' sons, deacon. Ye are ane like the elder brother; ye hae 'served him many years and transgressed not at any time his commandment; but this dear lad is his younger son—still his son, mind ye—and he'll win hame again to his Father's house. What for not? He's the bairn o' many prayers. Gae awa to your ain room, deacon; I'll keep the watch wi' him. He'd rather see me nor you when he comes to himsel'.”

Page 74

Alas! the watch begun that night was one Jenny had very often to keep afterwards. David's troubles gathered closer and closer round him, and the more trouble he had the deeper he drank. Within a month after that first shameful homecoming the firm of Callendar & Leslie went into sequestration. John felt the humiliation of this downcome in a far keener way than David did. His own business record was a stainless one; his word was as good as gold on Glasgow Exchange; the house of John Callendar & Co. was synonymous with commercial integrity. The prudent burghers who were his nephew's creditors were far from satisfied with the risks David and Robert Leslie had taken, and they did not scruple to call them by words which hurt John Callendar's honor like a sword-thrust. He did not doubt that many blamed him for not interfering in his nephew's extravagant business methods; and he could not explain to these people how peculiarly he was situated with regard to David's affairs; nor, indeed, would many of them have understood the fine delicacy which had dictated John's course.

It was a wretched summer every way. The accountant who had charge of David's affairs was in no hurry to close up a profitable engagement, and the creditors, having once accepted the probable loss, did not think it worth while to deny themselves their seaside or Highland trips to attend meetings relating to Callendar & Leslie. So there was little progress made in the settlement of affairs all summer, and David was literally out of employment. His uncle's and his children's presence was a reproach to him, and Robert and he only irritated each other with mutual reproaches. Before autumn brought back manufacturers and merchants to their factories and offices David had sunk still lower. He did not come home any more when he felt that he had drunk too much. He had found out houses where such a condition was the natural and the most acceptable one—houses whose doors are near to the gates of hell.

This knowledge shocked John inexpressibly, and in the depth of his horror and grief he craved some human sympathy.

"I must go and see Dr. Morrison," he said one night to Jenny.

"And you'll do right, deacon; the grip o' his hand and the shining o' his eyes in yours will do you good; forbye, you ken weel you arena fit to guide yoursel', let alane Davie. You are too angry, and angry men tell many a lie to themsel's."

There is often something luminous in the face of a good man, and Dr. Morrison had this peculiarity in a remarkable degree. His face seemed to radiate light; moreover, he was a man anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and John no sooner felt the glow of that radiant countenance on him than his heart leaped up to welcome it.

"Doctor," he said, choking back his sorrow, "doctor, I'm fain to see you."

"John, sit down. What is it, John?"

“It’s David, minister.”

Page 75

And then John slowly, and weighing every word so as to be sure he neither over-stated nor under-stated the case, opened up his whole heart's sorrow.

"I hae suffered deeply, minister; I didna think life could be such a tragedy."

"A tragedy indeed, John, but a tragedy with an angel audience. Think of that. Paul says 'we are a spectacle unto men and angels.' Mind how you play your part. What is David doing now?"

"Nothing. His affairs are still unsettled."

"But that wont do, John. Men learn to do ill by doing what is next to it—nothing. Without some duty life cannot hold itself erect. If a man has no regular calling he is an unhappy man and a cross man, and I think prayers should be offered up for his wife and children and a' who have to live with him. Take David into your own employ at once."

"O minister, that I canna do! My office has aye had God-fearing, steady men in it, and I canna, and—"

"And that day Jesus was guest in the house of a man that was a sinner.' John, can't you take a sinner as a servant into your office?"

"I'll try it, minister."

"And, John, it will be a hard thing to do, but you must watch David constantly. You must follow him to his drinking-haunts and take him home; if need be, you must follow him to warse places and take him home. You must watch him as if all depended on your vigilance, and you must pray for him as if nothing depended on it. You hae to conquer on your knees before you go into the world to fight your battle, John. But think, man, what a warfare is set before you—the saving of an immortal soul! And I'm your friend and helper in the matter; the lad is one o' my stray lambs; he belongs to my fold. Go your ways in God's strength, John, for this grief o' yours shall be crowned with consolation."

It is impossible to say how this conference strengthened John Callendar. Naturally a very choleric man, he controlled himself into a great patience with his erring nephew. He watched for him like a father; nay, more like a mother's was the thoughtful tenderness of his care. And David was often so touched by the love and forbearance shown him, that he made passionate acknowledgments of his sin and earnest efforts to conquer it. Sometimes for a week together he abstained entirely, though during these intervals of reason he was very trying. His remorse, his shame, his physical suffering, were so great that he needed the most patient tenderness; and yet he frequently resented this tenderness in a moody, sullen way that was a shocking contrast to his once bright and affectionate manner.

Page 76

So things went on until the close of the year. By that time the affairs of the broken firm had been thoroughly investigated, and it was found that its liabilities were nearly L20,000 above its assets. Suddenly, however, bundle wools took an enormous rise, and as the stock of "Callendar & Leslie" was mainly of this kind, they were pushed on the market, and sold at a rate which reduced the firm's debts to about L17,000. This piece of good fortune only irritated David; he was sure now that if Robert had continued the fight they would have been in a position to clear themselves. Still, whatever credit was due the transaction was frankly given to David. It was his commercial instinct that had divined the opportunity and seized it, and a short item in the "Glasgow Herald" spoke in a cautiously flattering way of the affair.

Both John and David were greatly pleased at the circumstance. David also had been perfectly sober during the few days he had this stroke of business in hand, and the public acknowledgment of his service to the firm's creditors was particularly flattering to him. He came down to breakfast that morning as he had not come for months. It was a glimpse of the old Davie back again, and John was as happy as a child in the vision. Into his heart came at once Dr. Morrison's assertion that David must have some regular duty to keep his life erect. It was evident that the obligation of a trust had a controlling influence over him.

"David," he said cheerfully, "you must hae nearly done wi' that first venture o' yours. The next will hae to redeem it; that is all about it. Everything is possible to a man under forty years auld."

"We have our final meeting this afternoon, uncle. I shall lock the doors for ever to-night."

"And your debts are na as much as you expected."

"They will not be over L17,000, and they may be considerably less. I hope to make another sale this morning. There are yet three thousand bundles in the stock."

"David, I shall put L20,000 in your ain name and for your ain use, whatever that use may be, in the Western Bank this morning. I think you'll do the best thing you can do to set your name clear again. If you are my boy you will."

"Uncle John, you cannot really mean that I may pay every shilling I owe, and go back on the Exchange with a white name? O uncle, if you should mean this, what a man you would make of me!"

"It is just what I mean to do, Davie. Is na all that I have yours and your children's? But oh, I thank God that you hae still a heart that counts honor more than gold. David, after this I wont let go one o' the hopes I have ever had for you."

“You need not, uncle. Please God, and with his help, I will make every one of them good.”

And he meant to do it. He never had felt more certain of himself or more hopeful for the future than when he went out that morning. He touched nothing all day, and as the short, dark afternoon closed in, he went cheerfully towards the mill, with his new check-book in his pocket and the assurance in his heart that in a few hours he could stand up among his fellow-citizens free from the stain of debt.

Page 77

His short speech at the final meeting was so frank and manly, and so just and honorable to his uncle, that it roused a quiet but deep enthusiasm. Many of the older men had to wipe the mist from their glasses, and the heaviest creditor stood up and took David's hand, saying, "Gentlemen, I hae made money, and I hae saved money, and I hae had money left me; but I never made, nor saved, nor got money that gave me such honest pleasure as this siller I hae found in twa honest men's hearts. Let's hae in the toddy and drink to the twa Callendars."

Alas! alas! how often is it our friends from whom we ought to pray to be preserved. The man meant kindly; he was a good man, he was a God-fearing man, and even while he was setting temptation before his poor, weak brother, he was thinking "that money so clean and fair and unexpected should be given to some holy purpose." But the best of us are the slaves of habit and chronic thoughtlessness. All his life he had signalled every happy event by a libation of toddy; everybody else did the same; and although he knew David's weakness, he did not think of it in connection with that wisest of all prayers, "Lead us not into temptation."

CHAPTER VI.

David ought to have left then, but he did not; and when his uncle's health was given, and the glass of steaming whiskey stood before him, he raised it to his lips and drank. It was easy to drink the second glass and the third, and so on. The men fell into reminiscence and song, and no one knew how many glasses were mixed; and even when they stood at the door they turned back for "a thimbleful o' raw speerit to keep out the cold," for it had begun to snow, and there was a chill, wet, east wind.

Then they went; and when their forms were lost in the misty gloom, and even their voices had died away, David turned back to put out the lights, and lock the mill-door for the last time. Suddenly it struck him that he had not seen Robert Leslie for an hour at least, and while he was wondering about it in a vague, drunken way, Robert came out of an inner room, white with scornful anger, and in a most quarrelsome mood.

"You have made a nice fool of yoursel', David Callendar! Flinging awa so much gude gold for a speech and a glass o' whiskey! Ugh!"

"You may think so, Robert. The Leslies have always been 'rievers and thieves;' but the Callendars are of another stock."

"The Callendars are like ither folk—good and bad, and mostly bad. Money, not honor, rules the world in these days; and when folk have turned spinners, what is the use o' talking about honor! Profit is a word more fitting."

“I count mysel’ no less a Callendar than my great-grandfather, Evan Callendar, who led the last hopeless charge on Culloden. If I am a spinner, I’ll never be the first to smirch the roll o’ my house with debt and dishonesty, if I can help it.”

Page 78

“Fair nonsense! The height of nonsense! Your ancestors indeed! Mules make a great to-do about their ancestors having been horses!”

David retorted with hot sarcasm on the freebooting Leslies, and their kin the Armstrongs and Kennedys; and to Scotchmen this is the very sorest side of a quarrel. They can forgive a bitter word against themselves perhaps, but against their clan, or their dead, it is an unpardonable offence. And certainly Robert had an unfair advantage; he was in a cool, wicked temper of envy and covetousness. He could have struck himself for not having foreseen that old John Callendar would be sure to clear the name of dishonor, and thus let David and his £20,000 slip out of his control.

David had drunk enough to excite all the hereditary fight in his nature, and not enough to dull the anger and remorse he felt for having drunk anything at all. The dreary, damp atmosphere and the cold, sloppy turf of Glasgow Green might have brought them back to the ordinary cares and troubles of every-day life, but it did not. This grim oasis in the very centre of the hardest and bitterest existences was now deserted. The dull, heavy swash of the dirty Clyde and the distant hum of the sorrowful voices of humanity in the adjacent streets hardly touched the sharp, cutting accents of the two quarrelling men. No human ears heard them, and no human eyes saw the uplifted hands and the sway and fall of Robert Leslie upon the smutty and half melted snow, except David's.

Yes; David saw him fall, and heard with a strange terror the peculiar thud and the long moan that followed it. It sobered him at once and completely. The shock was frightful. He stood for a moment looking at the upturned face, and then with a fearful horror he stooped and touched it. There was no response to either entreaties or movement, and David was sure after five minutes' efforts there never would be. Then his children, his uncle, his own life, pressed upon him like a surging crowd. His rapid mind took in the situation at once. There was no proof. Nobody had seen them leave together. Robert had certainly left the company an hour before it scattered; none of them could know that he was waiting in that inner room. With a rapid step he took his way through Kent street into a region where he was quite unknown, and by a circuitous route reached the foot of Great George street.

He arrived at home about eight o'clock. John had had his dinner, and the younger children had gone to bed. Little John sat opposite him on the hearthrug, but the old man and the child were both lost in thought. David's face at once terrified his uncle.

“Johnnie,” he said, with a weary pathos in his voice, “your father wants to see me alone. You had best say ‘Gude-night,’ my wee man.”

The child kissed his uncle, and after a glance into his father's face went quietly out. His little heart had divined that he “must not disturb papa.” David's eyes followed him with an almost overmastering grief and love, but when John said sternly, “Now, David Callendar, what is it this time?” he answered with a sullen despair,

Page 79

"It is the last trouble I can bring you. I have killed Robert Leslie!"

The old man uttered a cry of horror, and stood looking at his nephew as if he doubted his sanity.

"I am not going to excuse myself, sir. Robert said some aggravating things, and he struck me first; but that is neither here nor there. I struck him and he fell. I think he hit his head in falling; but it was dark and stormy, I could not see. I don't excuse myself at all. I am as wicked and lost as a man can be. Just help me away, Uncle John, and I will trouble you no more for ever."

"Where have you left Robert?"

"Where he fell, about 300 yards above Rutherglen Bridge."

"You are a most unmerciful man! I never liked Robert, but had he been my bitterest enemy I would have got him help if there was a chance for life, and if not, I would have sought a shelter for his corpse."

Then he walked to the parlor door, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

"As for helping you away, sir, I'll never do it, never; you have sinned, and you'll pay the penalty, as a man should do."

"Uncle, have mercy on me."

"Justice has a voice as well as mercy. O waly, waly!" cried the wretched old man, going back to the pathetic Gaelic of his childhood, "O waly, waly! to think o' the sin and the shame o' it. Plenty o' Callendars have died before their time, but it has been with their faces to their foes and their claymores in their hands. O Davie, Davie! my lad, my lad! My Davie!"

His agony shook him as a great wind shakes the tree-tops, and David stood watching him in a misery still keener and more hopeless. For a few moments neither spoke. Then John rose wearily and said,

"I'll go with you, David, to the proper place. Justice must be done—yes, yes, it is just and right."

Then he lifted up his eyes, and clasping his hands, cried out,

"But, O my heavenly Father, be merciful, be merciful, for love is the fulfilling of the law. Come, David, we have delayed over long."

"Where are you going, uncle?"

“You ken where weel enough.”

“Dear uncle, be merciful. At least let us go see Dr. Morrison first. Whatever he says I will do.”

“I’ll do that; I’ll be glad to do that; maybe he’ll find me a road out o’ this sair, sair strait. God help us all, for vain is the help o’ man.”

CHAPTER VII.

When they entered Dr. Morrison’s house the doctor entered with them. He was wet through, and his swarthy face was in a glow of excitement. A stranger was with him, and this stranger he hastily took into a room behind the parlor, and then he came back to his visitors.

“Well, John, what is the matter?”

“Murder. Murder is the matter, doctor,” and with a strange, quiet precision he went over David’s confession, for David had quite broken down and was sobbing with all the abandon of a little child. During the recital the minister’s face was wonderful in its changes of expression, but at the last a kind of adoring hopefulness was the most decided.

Page 80

“John,” he said, “what were you going to do wi’ that sorrowfu’ lad?”

“I was going to gie him up to justice, minister, as it was right and just to do; but first we must see about—about the body.”

“That has, without doot, been already cared for. On the warst o’ nights there are plenty o’ folk passing o’er Glasgow Green after the tea-hour. It is David we must care for now. Why should we gie him up to the law? Not but what ‘the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.’ But see how the lad is weeping. Dinna mak yoursel’ hard to a broken heart, deacon. God himsel’ has promised to listen to it. You must go back hame and leave him wi’ me. And, John,” he said, with an air of triumph, as they stood at the door together, with the snow blowing in their uplifted faces, “John, my dear old brother John, go hame and bless God; for, I tell you, this thing shall turn out to be a great salvation.”

So John went home, praying as he went, and conscious of a strange hopefulness in the midst of his grief. The minister turned back to the sobbing criminal, and touching him gently, said,

“Davie, my son, come wi’ me.”

David rose hopelessly and followed him. They went into the room where they had seen the minister take the stranger who had entered the house with them. The stranger was still there, and as they entered he came gently and on tiptoe to meet them.

“Dr. Fleming,” said the minister, “this is David Callendar, your patient’s late partner in business; he wishes to be the poor man’s nurse, and indeed, sir, I ken no one fitter for the duty.”

So Dr. Fleming took David’s hand, and then in a low voice gave him directions for the night’s watch, though David, in the sudden hope and relief that had come to him, could scarcely comprehend them. Then the physician went, and the minister and David sat by the bedside alone. Robert lay in the very similitude and presence of death, unconscious both of his sufferings and his friends. Congestion of the brain had set in, and life was only revealed by the faintest pulsations, and by the appliances for relief which medical skill thought it worth while to make.

“‘And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death,’” said the doctor solemnly. “David, there is your work.”

“God knows how patiently and willingly I’ll do it, minister. Poor Robert, I never meant to harm him.”

“Now listen to me, and wonder at God’s merciful ways. Auld Deacon Galbraith, who lives just beyond Rutherglen Bridge, sent me word this afternoon that he had gotten a summons from his Lord, and he would like to see my face ance mair before he went



awa for ever. He has been my right hand in the kirk, and I loved him weel. Sae I went to bid him a short Gude-by—for we'll meet again in a few years at the maist—and I found him sae glad and solemnly happy within sight o' the heavenly shore, that I tarried wi' him a few hours, and we ate and drank his last sacrament

Page 81

together. He dropped my hand wi' a smile at half-past six o'clock, and after comforting his wife and children a bit I turned my face hameward. But I was in that mood that I didna care to sit i' a crowded omnibus, and I wanted to be moving wi' my thoughts. The falling snow and the deserted Green seemed good to me, and I walked on thinking o'er again the deacon's last utterances, for they were wise and good even beyond the man's nature. That is how I came across Robert Leslie. I thought he was dead, but I carried him in my arms to the House o' the Humane Society, which, you ken, isna one hundred yards from where Robert fell. The officer there said he wasna dead, sae I brought him here and went for the physician you spoke to. Now, Davie, it is needless for me to say mair. You ken what I expect o' you. You'll get no whiskey in this house, not a drop o' it. If the sick man needs anything o' that kind, I shall gie it wi' my ain hand; and you wont leave this house, David, until I see whether Robert is to live or die. You must gie me your word o' honor for that."

"Minister, pray what is my word worth?"

"Everything it promises, David Callendar. I would trust your word afore I'd trust a couple o' constables, for a' that's come and gane."

"Thank you, thank you, doctor! You shall not trust, and be deceived. I solemnly promise you to do my best for Robert, and not to leave your house until I have your permission."

The next morning Dr. Morrison was at John Callendar's before he sat down to breakfast. He had the morning paper with him, and he pointed out a paragraph which ran thus: "Robert Leslie, of the late firm of Callendar & Leslie, was found by the Rev. Dr. Morrison in an unconscious condition on the Green last night about seven o'clock. It is supposed the young gentleman slipped and fell, and in the fall struck his head, as congestion of the brain has taken place. He lies at Dr. Morrison's house, and is being carefully nursed by his late partner, though there is but little hope of his recovery."

"Minister, it wasna you surely wha concocted this lie?"

"Nobody has told a lie, John. Don't be overrighteous, man; there is an unreasonableness o' virtue that savors o' pride. I really thought Robert had had an accident, until you told me the truth o' the matter. The people at the Humane Society did the same; sae did Dr. Fleming. I suppose some reporter got the information from one o' the latter sources. But if Robert gets well, we may let it stand; and if he doesna get well, I shall seek counsel o' God before I take a step farther. In the meantime David is doing his first duty in nursing him; and David will stay in my house till I see whether it be a case o' murder or not."

Page 82

For three weeks there was but the barest possibility of Robert's recovery. But his youth and fine constitution, aided by the skill of his physician and the unremitting care of his nurse, were at length, through God's mercy, permitted to gain a slight advantage. The discipline of that three weeks was a salutary though a terrible one to David. Sometimes it became almost intolerable; but always, when it reached this point, Dr. Morrison seemed, by some fine spiritual instinct, to discover the danger and hasten to his assistance. Life has silences more pathetic than death's; and the stillness of that darkened room, with its white prostrate figure, was a stillness in which David heard many voices he never would have heard in the crying out of the noisy world.

What they said to him about his wasted youth and talents, and about his neglected Saviour, only his own heart knew. But he must have suffered very much, for, at the end of a month, he looked like a man who had himself walked through the valley and shadow of death. About this time Dr. Morrison began to drop in for an hour or two every evening; sometimes he took his cup of tea with the young men, and then he always talked with David on passing events in such a way as to interest without fatiguing the sick man. His first visit of this kind was marked by a very affecting scene. He stood a moment looking at Robert and then taking David's hand, he laid it in Robert's. But the young men had come to a perfect reconciliation one midnight when the first gleam of consciousness visited the sick man, and Dr. Morrison was delighted to see them grasp each other with a smile, while David stooped and lovingly touched his friend's brow.

"Doctor, it was my fault," whispered Robert. "If I die, remember that. I did my best to anger Davie, and I struck him first. I deserved all I have had to suffer."

After this, however, Robert recovered rapidly, and in two months he was quite well.

"David," said the minister to him one morning, "your trial is nearly over. I have a message from Captain Laird to Robert Leslie. Laird sails to-night; his ship has dropped down the river a mile, and Robert must leave when the tide serves; that will be at five o'clock."

For Robert had shrunk from going again into his Glasgow life, and had determined to sail with his friend Laird at once for New York. There was no one he loved more dearly than David and Dr. Morrison, and with them his converse had been constant and very happy and hopeful. He wished to leave his old life with this conclusion to it unmingled with any other memories.

CHAPTER VIII.

So that evening the three men went in a coach to the Broomilaw together. A boat and two watermen were in waiting at the bridge-stair, and though the evening was wet and chilly they all embarked. No one spoke. The black waters washed and heaved beneath

them, the myriad lights shone vaguely through the clammy mist and steady drizzle, and the roar of the city blended with the stroke of the oars and the patter of the rain. Only when they lay under the hull of a large ship was the silence broken. But it was broken by a blessing.

Page 83

"God bless you, Robert! The Lord Jesus, our Redeemer, make you a gude man," said Dr. Morrison fervently, and David whispered a few broken words in his friend's ear. Then Captain Laird's voice was heard, and in a moment or two more they saw by the light of a lifted lantern Robert's white face in the middle of a group on deck.

"Farewell!" he shouted feebly, and Dr. Morrison answered it with a lusty, "God speed you, Robert! God speed the good ship and all on board of her!"

So they went silently back again, and stepped into the muddy, dreamlike, misty streets, wet through and quite weary with emotion.

"Now gude-night, David. Your uncle is waiting dinner for you. I hae learned to love you vera much."

"Is there anything I can do, doctor, to show you how much I love and respect you?"

"You can be a good man, and you can let me see you every Sabbath in your place at kirk. Heaven's gate stands wide open on the Sabbath day, David; sae it is a grand time to offer your petitions."

Yes, the good old uncle was waiting, but with that fine instinct which is born of a true love he had felt that David would like no fuss made about his return. He met him as if he had only been a few hours away, and he had so tutored Jenny that she only betrayed her joy by a look which David and she understood well.

"The little folks," said John, "have a' gane to their beds; the day has been that wet and wearisome that they were glad to gae to sleep and forget a' about it."

David sat down in his old place, and the two men talked of the Russian war and the probable storming of the Alamo. Then John took his usual after-dinner nap, and David went up stairs with Jenny and kissed his children, and said a few words to them and to the old woman, which made them all very happy.

When he returned to the parlor his uncle was still sleeping, and he could see how weary and worn he had become.

"So patient, so generous, so honorable, so considerate for my feelings," said the young man to himself. "I should be an ingrate indeed if I did not, as soon as he wakes, say what I know he is so anxious to hear."

With the thought John opened his eyes, and David nodded and smiled back to him. How alert and gladly he roused himself! How cheerily he said,

"Why, Davie, I hae been sleeping, I doot. Hech, but it is gude to see you, lad."



"Please God, uncle, it shall always be gude to see me. Can you give me some advice to-night?" "I'll be mair than glad to do it."

"Tell me frankly, Uncle John, what you think I ought to do. I saw Robert off to America to-night. Shall I follow him?"

"Davie, mind what I say. In the vera place where a man loses what he values, there he should look to find it again. You hae lost your good name in Glasgow; stay in Glasgow and find it again."

"I will stay here then. What shall I do?"

Page 84

“You’ll go back to your old place, and to your old business.”

“But I heard that Deacon Strang had bought the looms and the lease.”

“He bought them for me, for us, I mean. I will tell you how that came about. One day when I was cross, and sair put out wi’ your affairs, Davie, Dr. Morrison came into my office. I’m feared I wasna glad to see him; and though I was ceevil enough, the wise man read me like a book. ‘John,’ says he, ‘I am not come to ask you for siller to-day, nor am I come to reprove you for staying awa from the service o’ God twice lately. I am come to tell you that you will hae the grandest opportunity to-day, to be, not only a man, but a Christ-man. If you let the opportunity slip by you, I shall feel sairly troubled about it.’

“Then he was gone before I could say, ‘What is it?’ and I wondered and wondered all day what he could hae meant. But just before I was ready to say, ‘Mr. MacFarlane, lock the safe,’ in walks Deacon Strang. He looked vera downcast and shamefaced, and says he, ‘Callendar, you can tak your revenge on me to-morrow, for a’ I hae said and done against you for thirty years. You hold twa notes o’ mine, and I canna meet them. You’ll hae to protest and post them to-morrow, and that will ruin me and break my heart.’

“David, I had to walk to the window and hide my face till I could master mysel’, I was that astonished. Then I called out, ‘Mr. MacFarlane, you hae two notes o’ Deacon Strang’s, bring them to me.’ When he did sae, I said, ‘Well, deacon, we a’ o’ us hae our ain fashes. How long time do you want, and we’ll renew these bits o’ paper?’

“And the thing was done, Davie, and done that pleasantly that it made me feel twenty years younger. We shook hands when we parted, and as we did sae, the deacon said, ‘Is there aught I can do to pleasure you or David?’ and a’ at once it struck me about the sales o’ the looms and lease. Sae I said, ‘Yes, deacon, there is something you can do, and I’ll be vera much obligated to you for the same. Davie is sae tied down wi’ Robert’s illness, will you go to the sale o’ Callendar & Leslie’s looms and lease, and buy them for me? You’ll get them on better terms than I will.’ And he did get them on excellent terms, Davie; sae your mill is just as you left it—for Bailie Nicol, wha took it at the accountant’s valuation, never opened it at all. And you hae twenty months’ rent paid in advance, and you hae something in the bank I expect.”

“I have L3,600, uncle.”

“Now, I’ll be your partner this time. I’ll put in the business L4,000, but I’ll hae it run on a solid foundation, however small that foundation may be. I’ll hae no risks taken that are dishonest risks; I’ll hae a broad mark made between enterprise and speculation; and above a’, I’ll hae the right to examine the books, and see how things are going on, whenever I wish to do sae. We will start no more looms than our capital will work, and we’ll ask credit from no one.”

Page 85

"Uncle John, there is not another man in the world so generous and unselfish as you are."

"There are plenty as good men in every congregation o' the Lord; if there wasna they would scatter in no time. Then you are willing, are you? Gie me your hand, Davie. I shall look to you to do your best for baith o' us."

"I have not drunk a drop for two months, uncle. I never intend to drink again."

"I hae given it up mysel'," said the old man, with an affected indifference that was pathetic in its self-abnegation. "I thought twa going a warfare together might do better than ane alone. Ye ken Christ sent out the disciples by twa and twa. And, Davie, when you are hard beset, just utter the name of Christ down in your heart, and see how much harder it is to sin."

CHAPTER IX.

The arrangement had been a very pleasant one, every way, but somehow John did not feel as if David had as much outside help as he needed. The young man was not imaginative; an ideal, however high, was a far less real thing to David than to old John. He pondered during many sleepless hours the advisability of having David sign the pledge. David had always refused to do it hitherto. He had a keen sense of shame in breaking a verbal promise on this subject; but he had an almost superstitious feeling regarding the obligation of anything he put his name to; and this very feeling made John hesitate to press the matter. For, he argued, and not unwisely, "if David should break this written obligation, his condition would seem to himself irremediable, and he would become quite reckless."

In the morning this anxiety was solved. When John came down to breakfast, he found David walking about the room with a newspaper in his hand, and in a fever heat of martial enthusiasm. "Uncle," he cried, "O Uncle John, such glorious news! The Alamo is taken. Colin Campbell and his Highlanders were first at the ramparts, and Roy and Hector Callendar were with them. Listen?" and he threw the passion and fervor of all his military instincts into the glowing words which told, how in a storm of fire and shot, Sir Colin and his Highland regiment had pushed up the hill; and how when the Life Guards were struggling to reach their side, the brave old commander turned round and shouted, "We'll hae nane but Hieland bonnets here!" "O Uncle John, what would I not have given to have marched with Roy and Hector behind him? With such a leader I would not turn my back on any foe."

"David, you have a far harder fight before you, and a far grander Captain."



“Uncle, uncle, if I could see my foe; if I could meet him face to face in a real fight; but he steals into my heart, even by my nostrils, and unmans me, before I am aware.”

John rang the bell sharply, and when Jenny came, he amazed her by saying, “Bring me here from the cellar three bottles of whiskey.” He spoke so curt and determined that for once Jenny only wondered, and obeyed.

Page 86

"That will do, my woman." Then he turned to David, and putting one bottle on the table said, "There is your foe! Face your enemy, sir! Sit down before him morning, noon, and night. Dare him to master you! Put this bottle on the table in your ain room; carry this in your hand to your office, and stand it before your eyes upon your desk. If you want a foe to face and to conquer, a foe that you can see and touch, here is one mighty enough to stir the bravest soul. And, if you turn your back on him you are a coward; a mean, poor-hearted coward, sir. And there ne'er was a coward yet, o' the Callendar blood, nor o' the Campbell line! Your Captain is nane less than the Son o' God. Hear what he says to you! 'To him that overcometh! To him that overcometh!' O Davie, you ken the rest!" and the old man was so lifted out of and above himself, that his face shone and his keen gray eyes scintillated with a light that no market-place ever saw in them.

David caught the holy enthusiasm; he seized the idea like a visible hand of God for his help. The black bottle became to him the materialization of all his crime and misery. It was a foe he could see, and touch, and defy. It seemed to mock him, to tempt him, to beg him just to open the cork, if only to test the strength of his resolutions.

Thank God he never did it. He faced his enemy the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. He kept him in sight through the temptations of a business day. He faced him most steadily in the solitude of his own room. There, indeed, his most dangerous struggles took place, and one night John heard him after two hours of restless hurried walking up and down, throw open his window, and dash the bottle upon the pavement beneath it. That was the last of his hard struggles; the bottle which replaced the one flung beyond his reach stands to-day where it has stood for nearly a quarter of a century, and David feels now no more inclination to open it than if it contained strychnine.

This is no fancy story. It is a fact. It is the true history of a soul's struggle, and I write it—God knows I do—in the strong hope that some brave fellow, who is mastered by a foe that steals upon him in the guise of good fellowship, or pleasure, or hospitality, may locate his enemy, and then face and conquer him in the name of Him who delivers his people from their sins. I do not say that all natures could do this. Some may find safety and final victory in flight, or in hiding from their foe; but I believe that the majority of souls would rise to a warfare in which the enemy was confronting them to face and fight, and would conquer.

I have little more to say of David Callendar. It was the story of his fall and his redemption I intended to write. But we cannot separate our spiritual and mortal life; they are the warp and woof which we weave together for eternity. Therefore David's struggle, though a palpable one in some respects, was, after all, an intensely spiritual one; for it was in the constant recognition of Christ as the Captain of his salvation, and in the constant use of such spiritual aids as his Bible and his minister gave him, that he was enabled to fight a good fight and to come off more than conqueror in a contest wherein so many strive and fail.

Page 87

David's reformation had also a very sensible influence on his business prosperity. He has won back again now all, and far more than all, he lost, and in all good and great works for the welfare of humanity David Callendar is a willing worker and a noble giver. The new firm of John and David Callendar acquired a world-wide reputation. It is still John and David Callendar, for when the dear old deacon died he left his interest in it to David's eldest son, a pious, steady young fellow for whom nobody ever mixed a first glass. But God was very kind to John in allowing him to see the full harvest of his tender love, his patience, and his unselfishness. Out of his large fortune he left a noble endowment for a church and college in his native town, making only two requests concerning its management: first, that no whiskey should ever go within the college walls: second, that all the children in the town might have a holiday on the anniversary of his death; "for," said he, "I have aye loved children, and I would fain connect the happiness of childhood with the peace o' the dead."

Dr. Morrison lived long enough to assist in filling in the grave of his old friend and helper, but attained unto the beginning of peace and glory soon afterwards. And I have often pictured to myself the meeting of those two upon the hills of God. The minister anticipated it, though upon his dying bed his great soul forgot all individualities, and thought only of the church universal, and his last glowing words were, "For Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

Robert Leslie has done well in America, and no man is a more warm and earnest advocate of "the faith once delivered to the saints." I read a little speech of his some time ago at the dedication of a church, and it greatly pleased me.

"Many things," he said, "have doubtless been improved in this age, for man's works are progressive and require improvement; but who," he asked, "can improve the sunshine and the flowers, the wheat and the corn? And who will give us anything worthy to take the place of the religion of our fathers and mothers? And what teachers have come comparable to Christ, to David, Isaiah, and Paul?"

Jenny only died a year ago. She brought up David's children admirably, and saw, to her great delight, the marriage of Flora and young Captain Callendar. For it had long been her wish to go back to Argyleshire "among her ain folk and die among the mountains," and this marriage satisfied all her longings. One evening they found her sitting in her open door with her face turned towards the cloud-cleaving hills. Her knitting had fallen upon her lap, her earthly work was done for ever, and she had put on the garments of the eternal Sabbath. But there was a wonderful smile on her simple, kindly face. Soul and body had parted with a smile. Oh, how happy are those whom the Master finds waiting for him, and who, when he calls, pass gently away!



Page 88

“Up to the golden citadel they fare,
And as they go their limbs grow full of might;
And One awaits them at the topmost stair,
One whom they had not seen, but knew at sight.”

Andrew Cargill's Confession.

ANDREW CARGILL'S CONFESSION.

CHAPTER I.

Between Sinverness and Creffel lies the valley of Glenmora. Sca Fells and Soutra Fells guard it on each hand, and the long, treacherous sweep of Solway Frith is its outlet. It is a region of hills and moors, inhabited by a people of singular gravity and simplicity of character, a pastoral people, who in its solemn high places have learned how to interpret the voices of winds and watersand to devoutly love their God.

Most of them are of the purest Saxon origin; but here and there one meets the massive features and the blue bonnet of the Lowland Scots, descendants of those stern Covenanters who from the coasts of Galloway and Dumfries sought refuge in the strength of these lonely hills. They are easily distinguished, and are very proud of their descent from this race whom

“God anointed with his odorous oil
To wrestle, not to reign.”

Thirty years ago their leader and elder was Andrew Cargill, a man of the same lineage as that famous Donald Cargill who was the Boanerges of the Covenant, and who suffered martyrdom for his faith at the town of Queensferry. Andrew never forgot this fact, and the stern, just, uncompromising spirit of the old Protester still lived in him. He was a man well-to-do in the world, and his comfortable stone house was one of the best known in the vale of Glenmora.

People who live amid grand scenery are not generally sensitive to it, but Andrew was. The adoring spirit in which he stood one autumn evening at his own door was a very common mood with him. He looked over the moors carpeted with golden brown, and the hills covered with sheep and cattle, at the towering crags, more like clouds at sunset than things of solid land, at the children among the heather picking bilberries, at the deep, clear, purple mist that filled the valley, not hindering the view, but giving everything a strangely solemn aspect, and his face relaxed into something very like a smile as he said, “It is the wark o’ my Father’s hand, and praised be his name.”

He stood at his own open door looking at these things, and inside his wife Mysie was laying the supper-board with haver bread and cheese and milk. A bright fire blazed on the wide hearth, and half a dozen sheep-dogs spread out their white breasts to the heat. Great settles of carved oak, bedded deep with fleeces of long wool, were on the sides of the fireplace, and from every wall racks of spotless deal, filled with crockery and pewter, reflected the shifting blaze.

Suddenly he stepped out and looked anxiously towards the horizon on all sides. "Mysie, woman," said he, "there is a storm coming up from old Solway; I maun e'en gae and fauld the ewes wi' their young lammies. Come awa', Keeper and Sandy."

Page 89

The dogs selected rose at once and followed Andrew with right good-will. Mysie watched them a moment; but the great clouds of mist rolling down from the mountains soon hid the stalwart figure in its bonnet and plaid from view, and gave to the dogs' fitful barks a distant, muffled sound. So she went in and sat down upon the settle, folding her hands listlessly on her lap, and letting the smile fall from her face as a mask might fall. Oh, what a sad face it was then!

She sat thus in a very trance of sorrow until the tears dropped heavily and slowly down, and her lips began to move in broken supplications. Evidently these brought her the comfort she sought, for ere long she rose, saying softly to herself, "The lost bit o' siller was found, and the strayed sheep was come up wi', and the prodigal won hame again, and dootless, dootless, my ain dear lad will no be lost sight o'."

By this time the storm had broken, but Mysie was not uneasy. Andrew knew the hills like his own ingle, and she could tell to within five minutes how long it would take him to go to the fauld and back. But when it was ten minutes past his time Mysie stood anxiously in the open door and listened. Her ears, trained to almost supernatural quickness, soon detected above the winds and rain a sound of footsteps. She called a wise old sheep-dog and bid him listen. The creature held his head a moment to the ground, looked at her affirmatively, and at her command went to seek his master.

In a few moments she heard Andrew's peculiar "hallo!" and the joyful barking of the dog, and knew that all was right. Yet she could not go in; she felt that something unusual had happened, and stood waiting for whatever was coming. It was a poor, little, half-drowned baby. Andrew took it from under his plaid, and laid it in her arms, saying,

"I maun go now and look after the mither. I'll need to yoke the cart for her; she's past walking, and I'm sair feared she's past living; but you'll save the bit bairn, Mysie, nae doot; for God disna smite aften wi' baith hands."

"Where is she, Andrew?"

"Mang the Druids' stanes, Mysie, and that's an ill place for a Christian woman to die. God forbid it!" he muttered, as he lit a lantern and went rapidly to the stable; "an evil place! under the vera altar-stane o' Satan. God stay the parting soul till it can hear a word o' his great mercy!"

With such a motive to prompt him, Andrew was not long in reaching the ruins of the old Druidical temple. Under a raised flat stone, which made a kind of shelter, a woman was lying. She was now insensible, and Andrew lifted her carefully into the cart. Perhaps it was some satisfaction to him that she did not actually die within such unhallowed precincts; but the poor creature herself was beyond such care. When she had seen her child in Mysie's arms, and comprehended Mysie's assurance that she would care for it, all anxiety slipped away from her. Andrew strove hard to make her understand the

awful situation in which she was; but the girl lay smiling, with upturned eyes, as if she was glad to be relieved of the burden of living.

Page 90

"You hae done your duty, gudeman," at length said Mysie, "and now you may leave the puir bit lassie to me; I'll dootless find a word o' comfort to say to her."

"But I'm feared, I am awfu' feared, woman, that she is but a prodigal and an—"

"Hush, gudeman! There is mercy for the prodigal daughter as weel as for the prodigal son;" and at these words Andrew went out with a dark, stern face, while she turned with a new and stronger tenderness to the dying woman.

"God is love," she whispered; "if you hae done aught wrang, there's the open grave o' Jesus, dearie; just bury your wrang-doing there." She was answered with a happy smile. "And your little lad is my lad fra this hour, dearie!" The dying lips parted, and Mysie knew they had spoken a blessing for her.

Nothing was found upon the woman that could identify her, nothing except a cruel letter, which evidently came from the girl's father; but even in this there was neither date nor locality named. It had no term of endearment to commence with, and was signed simply, "John Dunbar." Two things were, however, proven by it: that the woman's given name was Bessie, and that by her marriage she had cut herself off from her home and her father's affection.

So she was laid by stranger hands within that doorless house in the which God sometimes mercifully puts his weary ones to sleep. Mysie took the child to her heart at once, and Andrew was not long able to resist the little lad's beauty and winning ways. The neighbors began to call him "wee Andrew;" and the old man grew to love his namesake with a strangely tender affection.

Sometimes there was indeed a bitter feeling in Mysie's heart, as she saw how gentle he was with this child and remembered how stern and strict he had been with their own lad. She did not understand that the one was in reality the result of the other, the acknowledgement of his fault, and the touching effort to atone, in some way, for it.

One night, when wee Andrew was about seven years old, this wrong struck her in a manner peculiarly painful. Andrew had made a most extraordinary journey, even as far as Penrith. A large manufactory had been begun there, and a sudden demand for his long staple of white wool had sprung up. Moreover, he had had a prosperous journey, and brought back with him two books for the boy, AEsop's Fables and Robinson Crusoe.

When Mysie saw them, her heart swelled beyond control. She remembered a day when her own son Davie had begged for these very books and been refused with hard rebukes. She remembered the old man's bitter words and the child's bitter tears; but she did not reflect that the present concession was the result of the former refusal, nor yet that the books were much easier got and the money more plentiful than thirty years

previous. When wee Andrew ran away with his treasures to the Druids' stones, Mysie went into the shippen, and did her milking to some very sad thoughts.

Page 91

She was poisoning her heart with her own tears. When she returned to the “houseplace” and saw the child bending with rapt, earnest face over the books, she could not avoid murmuring that the son of a strange woman should be sitting happy in Cargill spence, and her own dear lad a banished wanderer. She had come to a point when rebellion would be easy for her. Andrew saw a look on her face that amazed and troubled him: and yet when she sat so hopelessly down before the fire, and without fear or apology

“Let the tears downfa’,”

he had no heart to reprove her. Nay, he asked with a very unusual concern, “What’s the matter, Mysie, woman?”

“I want to see Davie, and die, gudeman!”

“You’ll no dare to speak o’ dying, wife, until the Lord gies you occasion; and Davie maun drink as he’s brewed.”

“Nay, gudeman, but you brewed for him; the lad is drinking the cup you mixed wi’ your ain hands.”

“I did my duty by him.”

“He had ower muckle o’ your duty, and ower little o’ your indulgence. If Davie was wrang, ither folk werena right. Every fault has its forefault.”

Andrew looked in amazement at this woman, who for thirty and more years had never before dared to oppose his wishes, and to whom his word had been law.

“Davie’s wrang-doing was weel kent, gude-wife; he hasted to sin like a moth to a candle.”

“It’s weel that our faults arena written i’ our faces.”

“I hae fallen on evil days, Mysie; saxty years syne wives and bairns werena sae contrarie.”

“There was gude and bad then, as now, gudeman.”

Mysie’s face had a dour, determined look that no one had ever seen on it before. Andrew began to feel irritated at her. “What do you want, woman?” he said sternly.

“I want my bairn, Andrew Cargill.”

“Your bairn is i’ some far-awa country, squandering his share o’ Paradise wi’ publicans and sinners.”

“I hope not, I hope not; if it werena for this hope my heart would break;” and then all the barriers that education and habit had built were suddenly overthrown as by an earthquake, and Mysie cried out passionately, “I want my bairn, Andrew Cargill! the bonnie bairn that lay on my bosom, and was dandled on my knees, and sobbed out his sorrows i’ my arms. I want the bairn you were aye girding and grumbling at! that got the rod for this, and the hard word and the black look for that! My bonnie Davie, wha ne’er had a playtime nor a story-book! O gudeman, I want my bairn! I want my bairn!”

The repressed passion and sorrow of ten long years had found an outlet and would not be controlled. Andrew laid down his pipe in amazement and terror, and for a moment he feared his wife had lost her senses. He had a tender heart beneath his stern, grave manner, and his first impulse was just to take the sobbing mother to his breast and promise her all she asked. But he did not do it the first moment, and he could not the second. Yet he did rise and go to her, and in his awkward way try to comfort her.

“Dinna greet that way, Mysie, woman,” he said; “if I hae done amiss, I’ll mak amends.”

Page 92

That was a great thing for Andrew Cargill to say; Mysie hardly knew how to believe it. Such a confession was a kind of miracle, for she judged things by results and was not given to any consideration of the events that led up to them. She could not know, and did not suspect, that all the bitter truths she had spoken had been gradually forcing themselves on her husband's mind. She did not know that wee Andrew's happy face over his story-books, and his eager claim for sympathy, had been an accusation and a reproach which the old man had already humbly and sorrowfully accepted. Therefore his confession and his promise were a wonder to the woman, who had never before dared to admit that it was possible Andrew Cargill should do wrong in his own household.

CHAPTER II.

The confidence that came after this plain speaking was very sweet and comforting to both, although in their isolation and ignorance they knew not what steps to take in order to find Davie. Ten years had elapsed since he had hung for one heart-breaking moment on his mother's neck, and bid, as he told her, a farewell for ever to the miserable scenes of his hard, bare childhood. Mysie had not been able to make herself believe that he was very wrong; dancing at pretty Mary Halliday's bridal and singing two or three love-songs did not seem to the fond mother such awful transgressions as the stern, strict Covenanter really believed them to be, though even Mysie was willing to allow that Davie, in being beguiled into such sinful folly, "had made a sair tumble."

However, Davie and his father had both said things that neither could win over, and the lad had gone proudly down the hill with but a few shillings in his pocket. Since then there had been ten years of anxious, longing grief that had remained unconfessed until this night. Now the hearts of both yearned for their lost son. But how should they find him? Andrew read nothing but his Bible and almanac; he had no conception of the world beyond Kendal and Keswick. He could scarcely imagine David going beyond these places, or, at any rate, the coast of Scotland. Should he make a pilgrimage round about all those parts?

Mysie shook her head. She thought Andrew had better go to Keswick and see the Methodist preacher there. She had heard they travelled all over the world, and if so, it was more than likely they had seen Davie Cargill; "at ony rate, he would gie advice worth speiring after."

Andrew had but a light opinion of Methodists, and had never been inside the little chapel at Sinverness; but Mysie's advice, he allowed, "had a savor o' sense in it," and so the next day he rode over to Keswick and opened his heart to John Sugden, the superintendent of the Derwent Circuit. He had assured himself on the road that he would only tell John just as much as was necessary for his quest; but he was quite

unable to resist the preacher's hearty sympathy. There never were two men more unlike than Andrew Cargill and John Sugden, and yet they loved each other at once.

Page 93

"He is a son o' consolation, and dootless ane o' God's chosen," said Andrew to Mysie on his return.

"He is a far nobler old fellow than he thinks he is," said John to his wife when he told her of Andrew's visit.

John had advised advertising for Davie in "The Watchman;" for John really thought this organ of the Methodist creed was the greatest paper in existence, and honestly believed that if Davie was anywhere in the civilized world "The Watchman" would find him out. He was so sure of it that both Mysie and Andrew caught his hopeful tone, and began to tell each other what should be done when Davie came home.

Poor Mysie was now doubly kind to wee Andrew. She accused herself bitterly of "grudging the bit lammie his story-books," and persuaded her husband to bring back from Keswick for the child the "Pilgrim's Progress" and "The Young Christian." John Sugden, too, visited them often, not only staying at Cargill during his regular appointments, but often riding over to take a day's recreation with the old Cameronian. True, they disputed the whole time. John said very positive things and Andrew very contemptuous ones; but as they each kept their own opinions intact, and were quite sure of their grounds for doing so, no words that were uttered ever slackened the grip of their hands at parting.

One day, as John was on the way to Cargill, he perceived a man sitting among the Druids' stones. The stranger was a pleasant fellow, and after a few words with the preacher he proposed that they should ride to Sinverness together. John soon got to talking of Andrew and his lost son, and the stranger became greatly interested. He said he should like to go up to Andrew's and get a description of Davie, adding that he travelled far and wide, and might happen to come across him.

The old man met them at the door.

"My sight fails, John," he said, "but I'd hae kent your step i' a thousand. You too are welcome, sir, though I ken you not, and doubly welcome if you bring God's blessing wi' you."

The stranger lifted his hat, and Andrew led the way into the house. John had been expected, for haver bread and potted shrimps were on the table, and he helped himself without ceremony, taking up at the same time their last argument just where he had dropped it at the gate of the lower croft. But it had a singular interruption. The sheep-dogs who had been quietly sleeping under the settle began to be strangely uneasy. Keeper could scarcely be kept down, even by Andrew's command, and Sandy bounded towards the stranger with low, rapid barks that made John lose the sense of the argument in a new thought. But before he could frame it into words Mysie came in.

“See here, John,” she cried, and then she stopped and looked with wide-open eyes at the man coming towards her. With one long, thrilling cry she threw herself into his arms.

“Mother! mother! darling mother, forgive me!”

Page 94

John had instantly gone to Andrew's side, but Andrew had risen at once to the occasion. "I'm no a woman to skirl or swoon," he said, almost petulantly, "and it's right and fit the lad should gie his mither the first greeting."

But he stretched out both hands, and his cheeks were flushed and his eyes full when Davie flung himself on his knees beside him.

"My lad! my ain dear lad!" he cried, "I'll see nae better day than this until I see His face."

No one can tell the joy of that hour. The cheese curds were left in the dairy and the wool was left at the wheel, and Mysie forget her household, and Andrew forgot his argument, and the preacher at last said,

"You shall tell us, Davie, what the Lord has done for you since you left your father's house."

"He has been gude to me, vera gude. I had a broad Scot's tongue in my head, and I determined to go northward. I had little siller and I had to walk, and by the time I reached Ecclefechan I had reason enough to be sorry for the step I had taken. As I was sitting by the fireside o' the little inn there a man came in who said he was going to Carlisle to hire a shepherd. I did not like the man, but I was tired and had not plack nor bawbee, so I e'en asked him for the place. When he heard I was Cumberland born, and had been among sheep all my life, he was fain enough, and we soon 'greed about the fee.

"He was a harder master than Laban, but he had a daughter who was as bonnie as Rachel, and I loved the lass wi' my whole soul, and she loved me. I ne'er thought about being her father's hired man. I was aye Davie Cargill to mysel', and I had soon enough told Bessie all about my father and mither and hame. I spoke to her father at last, but he wouldna listen to me. He just ordered me off his place, and Bessie went wi' me.

"I know now that we did wrang, but we thought then that we were right. We had a few pounds between us and we gaed to Carlisle. But naething went as it should hae done. I could get nae wark, and Bessie fell into vera bad health; but she had a brave spirit, and she begged me to leave her in Carlisle and go my lane to Glasgow. 'For when wark an' siller arena i' one place, Davie,' she said, 'then they're safe to be in another.'

"I swithered lang about leaving her, but a good opportunity came, and Bessie promised me to go back to her father until I could come after her. It was July then, and when Christmas came round I had saved money enough, and I started wi' a blithe heart to Ecclefechan. I hadna any fear o' harm to my bonnie bit wifie, for she had promised to go to her hame, and I was sure she would be mair than welcome when she went without me. I didna expect any letters, because Bessie couldna write, and, indeed, I

was poor enough wi' my pen at that time, and only wrote once to tell her I had good wark and would be for her a New Year.

“But when I went I found that Bessie had gane, and none knew where. I traced her to Keswick poor-house, where she had a little lad; the matron said she went away in a very weak condition when the child was three weeks old, declaring that she was going to her friends. Puir, bonnie, loving Bessie; that was the last I ever heard o' my wife and bairn.”

Page 95

Mysie had left the room, and as she returnee with a little bundle Andrew was anxiously asking, "What was the lassie's maiden name, Davie?"

"Bessie Dunbar, father."

"Then this is a wun'erful day; we are blessed and twice blessed, for I found your wife and bairn, Davie, just where John Sugden found you, 'mang the Druids' stanes; and the lad has my ain honest name and is weel worthy o' it."

"See here, Davie," and Mysie tenderly touched the poor faded dress and shawl, and laid the wedding-ring in his palm. As she spoke wee Andrew came across the yard, walking slowly, reading as he walked. "Look at him, Davie! He's a bonnie lad, and a gude are; and oh, my ain dear lad, he has had a' things that thy youth wanted."

It pleased the old man no little that, in spite of his father's loving greeting, wee Andrew stole away to his side.

"You see, Davie," he urged in apology, "he's mair at hame like wi' me."

And then he drew the child to him, and let his whole heart go out now, without check or reproach, to "Davie's bairn."

"But you have not finished your story, Mr. Cargill," said John, and David sighed as he answered,

"There is naething by the ordinar in it. I went back to the warks I had got a footing in, the Glencart Iron Warks, and gradually won my way to the topmost rungs o' the ladder. I am head buyer now, hae a gude share i' the concern, and i' money matters there's plenty folk waur off than David Cargill. When I put my father's forgiveness, my mither's love, and my Bessie's bonnie lad to the lave, I may weel say that 'they are weel guided that God guides.' A week ago I went into the editor's room o' the Glasgow Herald, and the man no being in I lifted a paper and saw in it my father's message to me. It's sma' credit that I left a' and answered it."

"What paper, Mr. Cargill, what paper?"

"They ca' it 'The Watchman.' I hae it in my pocket."

"I thought so," said John triumphantly. "It's a grand paper; every one ought to have it."

"It is welcome evermore in my house," said Davie.

"It means weel, it means weel," said Andrew, with a great stretch of charity, "but I dinna approve o' its doctrines at a', and—"

“It found David for you, Andrew.”

“Ay, ay, God uses a’ kinds o’ instruments. ‘The Watchman’ isna as auld as the Bible yet, John, and it’s ill praising green barley.”

“Now, Andrew, I think—”

“Tut, tut, John, I’se no sit i’ Rome and strive wi’ the pope; there’s naething ill said, you ken, if it’s no ill taken.”

John smiled tolerantly, and indeed there was no longer time for further discussion, for the shepherds from the hills and the farmers from the glen had heard of David’s return, and were hurrying to Cargill to see him. Mysie saw that there would be a goodly company, and the long harvest-table was brought in and a feast of thanksgiving spread. Conversation in that house could only set one way, and after all had eaten and David had told his story again, one old man after another spoke of the dangers they had encountered and the spiritual foes they had conquered.

Page 96

Whether it was the speaking, or the sympathy of numbers, or some special influence of the Holy Ghost, I know not; but suddenly Andrew lifted his noble old head and spoke thus:

“Frien’s, ye hae some o’ you said ill things o’ yoursel’s, but to the sons o’ God there is nae condemnation; not that I hae been althegither faultless, but I meant weel, an’ the lad was a wilfu’ lad, and ye ken what the wisest o’ men said anent such. Just and right has been my walk before you, but—still—” Then, with a sudden passion, and rising to his feet, he cried out, “Frien’s, I’m a poor sinfu’ man, but I’ll play no mair pliskies wi’ my conscience. I hae dootless been a hard master, hard and stern, and loving Sinai far beyond Bethlehem. Hard was I to my lad, and hard hae I been to the wife o’ my bosom, and hard hae I been to my ain heart. It has been my ain will and my ain way all my life lang. God forgie me! God forgie me! for this night he has brought my sins to my remembrance. I hae been your elder for mair than forty years, but I hae ne’er been worthy to carry his holy vessels. I’ll e’en sit i’ the lowest seat henceforward.”

“Not so,” said John. And there was such eager praise, and such warm love rose from every mouth, that words began to fail, and as the old man sat down smiling, happier than he had ever been before, song took up the burden speech laid down; for John started one of those old triumphant Methodist hymns, and the rafters shook to the melody, and the stars heard it, and the angels in heaven knew a deeper joy. Singing, the company departed, and Andrew, standing in the moonlight between David and John, watched the groups scatter hither and thither, and heard, far up the hills and down the glen, that sweet, sweet refrain,

“Canaan, bright Canaan!
Will you go to the land of Canaan?”

After this David stayed a week at Glenmora, and then it became necessary for him to return to Glasgow. But wee Andrew was to have a tutor and remain with his grandparents for some years at least. Andrew himself determined to “tak a trip” and see Scotland and the wonderful iron works of which he was never weary of hearing David talk.

When he reached Kendal, however, and saw for the first time the Caledonian Railway and its locomotives, nothing could induce him to go farther.

“It’s ower like the deil and the place he bides in, Davie,” he said, with a kind of horror. “Fire and smoke and iron bands! I’ll no ride at the deil’s tail-end, not e’en to see the land o’ the Covenant.”

So he went back to Glenmora, and was well content when he stood again at his own door and looked over the bonny braes of Sinverness, its simmering becks and fruitful vales. “These are the warks o’ His hands, Mysie,” he said, reverently lifting his bonnet

and looking up to Creffel and away to Solway, "and you'd ken that, woman, if you had seen Satan as I saw him rampaging roun' far waur than any roaring lion."

Page 97

After this Andrew never left Sinverness; but, the past unsighed for and the future sure, passed through

“——an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,”

until, one summer evening, he gently fell on that sleep which God giveth his beloved.

“For such Death’s portal opens not in gloom,
But its pure crystal, hinged on solid gold,
Shows avenues interminable—shows
Amaranth and palm quivering in sweet accord
Of human mingled with angelic song.”

One Wrong Step.

ONE WRONG STEP.

CHAPTER I.

“There’s few folk ken Ragon Torr as I do, mother. He is better at heart than thou wad think; indeed he is!”

“If better were within, better wad come out, John. He’s been drunk or dovering i’ the chimney-corner these past three weeks. Hech! but he’d do weel i’ Fool’s Land, where they get half a crown a day for sleeping.”

“There’s nane can hunt a seal or spear a whale like Ragon; thou saw him theesel’, mother, among the last school i’ Stromness Bay.”

“I saw a raving, ranting heathen, wi’ the bonnie blue bay a sea o’ blood around him, an’ he shouting an’ slaying like an old pagan sea-king. Decent, God-fearing fisher-folk do their needful wark ither gate than yon. Now there is but one thing for thee to do: thou must break wi’ Ragon Torr, an’ that quick an’ soon.”

“Know this, my mother, a friend is to be taken wi’ his faults.”

“Thou knows this, John: I hae forty years mair than thou hast, an’ years ken mair than books. An’ wi’ a’ thy book skill hast thou ne’er read that ‘Evil communications corrupt gude manners’? Mak up thy mind that I shall tak it vera ill if thou sail again this year wi’ that born heathen;” and with these words Dame Alison Sabay rose up from the stone bench at her cottage door and went dourly into the houseplace.

John stood on the little jetty which ran from the very doorstep into the bay, and looked thoughtfully over towards the sweet green isle of Graemsay; but neither the beauty of land or sea, nor the splendor of skies bright with the rosy banners of the Aurora gave him any answer to the thoughts which troubled him. "I'll hae to talk it o'er wi' Christine," he said decidedly, and he also turned into the house.

Christine was ten years older than her brother John. She had known much sorrow, but she had lived through and lived down all her trials and come out into the peace on the other side. She was sitting by the peat fire knitting, and softly crooning an old Scotch psalm to the click of her needles. She answered John's look with a sweet, grave smile, and a slight nod towards the little round table, upon which there was a plate of smoked goose and some oaten cake for his supper.

"I carena to eat a bite, Christine; this is what I want o' thee: the skiff is under the window; step into it, an' do thou go on the bay wi' me an hour."

Page 98

"I havena any mind to go, John. It is nine by the clock, an' to-morrow the peat is to coil an' the herring to kipper; yes, indeed."

"Well an' good. But here is matter o' mair account than peat an' herring. Wilt thou come?"

"At the end I ken weel thou wilt hae thy way. Mother, here is John, an' he is for my going on the bay wi' him."

"Then thou go. If John kept aye as gude company he wouldna be like to bring my gray hairs wi' sorrow to the grave."

John did not answer this remark until they had pushed well off from the sleeping town, then he replied fretfully, "Yes, what mother says is true enough; but a man goes into the world. A' the fingers are not alike, much less one's friends. How can a' be gude?"

"To speak from the heart, John, wha is it?"

"Ragon Torr. Thou knows we hae sat i' the same boat an' drawn the same nets for three years; he is gude an' bad, like ither folk."

"Keep gude company, my brother, an' thou wilt aye be counted ane o' them. When Ragon is gude he is ower gude, and when he is bad he is just beyont kenning."

"Can a man help the kin he comes o'? Have not his forbears done for centuries the vera same way? Naething takes a Norseman frae his bed or his cup but some great deed o' danger or profit; but then wha can fight or wark like them?"

"Christ doesna ask a man whether he be Norse or Scot. If Ragon went mair to the kirk an' less to the change-house, he wouldna need to differ. Were not our ain folk cattle-lifting Hieland thieves lang after the days o' the Covenant?"

"Christine, ye'll speak nae wrang o' the Sabays. It's an ill bird 'files its ain nest."

"Weel, weel, John! The gude name o' the Sabays is i' thy hands now. But to speak from the heart, this thing touches thee nearer than Ragon Torr. Thou did not bring me out to speak only o' him."

"Thou art a wise woman, Christine, an' thou art right. It touches Margaret Fae, an' when it does that, it touches what is dearer to me than life."

"I see it not."

"Do not Ragon an' I sail i' Peter Fae's boats? Do we not eat at his table, an' bide round his house during the whole fishing season? If I sail no more wi' Ragon, I must quit

Peter's employ; for he loves Ragon as he loves no ither lad i' Stromness or Kirkwall. The Norse blood we think little o', Peter glories in; an' the twa men count thegither o'er their glasses the races o' the Vikings, an' their ain generations up to Snorro an' Thorso."

"Is there no ither master but Peter Fae? ask theesel' that question, John."

"I hae done that, Christine. Plenty o' masters, but nane o' them hae Margaret for a daughter. Christine, I love Margaret, an' she loves me weel. Thou hast loved theesel', my sister."

"I ken that, John," she said tenderly; "I hae loved, therefore I hae got beyont doots, an' learned something holier than my ain way. Thou trust Margaret now. Thou say 'Yes' to thy mother, an' fear not."

Page 99

"Christine thou speaks hard words."

"Was it to speak easy anes thou brought me here? An' if I said, 'I counsel thee to tak thy ain will i' the matter,' wad my counsel mak bad gude, or wrang right? Paul Calder's fleet sails i' twa days; seek a place i' his boats."

"Then I shall see next to naught o' Margaret, an' Ragon will see her every day."

"If Margaret loves thee, that can do thee nae harm."

"But her father favors Ragon, an' of me he thinks nae mair than o' the nets, or aught else that finds his boats for sea."

"Well an' good; but no talking can alter facts. Thou must now choose atween thy mother an' Margaret Fae, atween right an' wrang. God doesna leave that choice i' the dark; thy way may be narrow an' unpleasant, but it is clear enough. Dost thou fear to walk i' it?"

"There hae been words mair than plenty, Christine. Let us go hame."

Silently the little boat drifted across the smooth bay, and silently the brother and sister stood a moment looking up the empty, flagged street of the sleeping town. The strange light, which was neither gloaming nor dawning, but a mixture of both, the waving boreal banners, the queer houses, gray with the storms of centuries, the brown undulating heaths, and the phosphorescent sea, made a strangely solemn picture which sank deep into their hearts. After a pause, Christine went into the house, but John sat down on the stone bench to think over the alternatives before him.

Now the power of training up a child in the way it should go asserted itself. It became at once a fortification against self-will. John never had positively disobeyed his mother's explicit commands; he found it impossible to do so. He must offer his services to Paul Calder in the morning, and try to trust Margaret Fae's love for him.

He had determined now to do right, but he did not do it very pleasantly—it is a rare soul that grows sweeter in disappointments. Both mother and sister knew from John's stern, silent ways that he had chosen the path of duty, and they expected that he would make it a valley of Baca. This Dame Alison accepted as in some sort her desert. "I ought to hae forbid the lad three years syne," she said regretfully; "aft ill an' sorrow come o' sich sinfu' putting aff. There's nae half-way house atween right an' wrang."

Certainly the determination involved some unpleasant explanations to John. He must first see old Peter Fae and withdraw himself from his service. He found him busy in loading a small vessel with smoked geese and kippered fish, and he was apparently in a very great passion. Before John could mention his own matters, Peter burst into a torrent of invectives against another of his sailors, who, he said, had given some

information to the Excise which had cost him a whole cargo of Dutch specialties. The culprit was leaning against a hogshead, and was listening to Peter's intemperate words with a very evil smile.

Page 100

“How much did ye sell yoursel’ for, Sandy Beg? It took the son of a Hieland robber like you to tell tales of a honest man’s cargo. It was an ill day when the Scots cam to Orkney, I trow.”

“She’ll hae petter right to say tat same ’fore lang time.” And Sandy’s face was dark with a subdued passion that Peter might have known to be dangerous, but which he continued to aggravate by contemptuous expressions regarding Scotchmen in general.

This John Sabay was in no mood to bear; he very soon took offence at Peter’s sweeping abuse, and said he would relieve him at any rate of one Scot. “He didna care to sail again wi’ such a crowd as Peter gathered round him.”

It was a very unadvised speech. Ragon lifted it at once, and in the words which followed John unavoidably found himself associated with Sandy Beg, a man whose character was of the lowest order. And he had meant to be so temperate, and to part with both Peter and Ragon on the best terms possible. How weak are all our resolutions! John turned away from Peter’s store conscious that he had given full sway to all the irritation and disappointment of his feelings, and that he had spoken as violently as either Peter, Ragon, or even the half-brutal Sandy Beg. Indeed, Sandy had said very little; but the malignant look with which he regarded Peter, John could never forget.

This was not his only annoyance. Paul Calder’s boats were fully manned, and the others had already left for Brassey’s Sound. The Sabays were not rich; a few weeks of idleness would make the long Orkney winter a dreary prospect. Christine and his mother sat from morning to night braiding straw into the once famous Orkney Tuscans, and he went to the peat-moss to cut a good stock of winter fuel; but his earnings in money were small and precarious, and he was so anxious that Christine’s constant cheerfulness hurt him.

Sandy Beg had indeed said something of an offer he could make “if shentlemans wanted goot wages wi’ ta chance of a lucky bit for themsel’s; foive kuineas ta month an’ ta affsets. Oigh! oigh!” But John had met the offer with such scorn and anger that Sandy had thought it worth while to bestow one of his most wicked looks upon him. The fact was, Sandy felt half grateful to John for his apparent partisanship, and John indignantly resented any disposition to put him in the same boat with a man so generally suspected and disliked.

“It might be a come-down,” he said, “for a gude sailor an’ fisher to coil peats and do days’ darg, but it was honest labor; an’, please God, he’d never do that i’ the week that wad hinder him fra going to the kirk on Sabbath.”

“Oigh! she’ll jist please hersel’; she’ll pe owing ta Beg naething by ta next new moon.” And with a mocking laugh Sandy loitered away towards the seashore.

CHAPTER II.

Page 101

Just after this interview a little lad put a note in John's hand from Margaret Fae. It only asked him to be on Brogar Bridge at eight o'clock that night. Now Brogar Bridge was not a spot that any Orcadian cared to visit at such an hour. In the pagan temple whose remains stood there it was said pale ghosts of white-robed priests still offered up shadowy human sacrifices, and though John's faith was firm and sure, superstitions are beyond reasoning with, and he recalled the eerie, weird aspect of the grim stones with an unavoidable apprehension. What could Margaret want with him in such a place and at an hour so near that at which Peter usually went home from his shop? He had never seen Margaret's writing, and he half suspected Sandy Beg had more to do with the appointment than she had; but he was too anxious to justify himself in Margaret's eyes to let any fears or doubts prevent him from keeping the tryst.

He had scarcely reached the Stones of Stennis when he saw her leaning against one of them. The strange western light was over her thoughtful face. She seemed to have become a part of the still and solemn landscape. John had always loved her with a species of reverence; to-night he felt almost afraid of her beauty and the power she had over him. She was a true Scandinavian, with the tall, slender, and rather haughty form which marks Orcadian and Zetland women. Her hair was perhaps a little too fair and cold, and yet it made a noble setting to the large, finely-featured, tranquil face.

She put out her hand as John approached, and said, "Was it well that thou shouldst quarrel with my father? I thought that thou didst love me."

Then John poured out his whole heart—his love for her, his mother's demand of him, his quarrel with Ragon and Peter and Sandy Beg. "It has been an ill time, Margaret," he said, "and thou hast been long in comforting me."

Well, Margaret had plenty of reasons for her delay and plenty of comfort for her lover. Naturally slow of pulse and speech, she had been long coming to a conclusion; but, having satisfied herself of its justice, she was likely to be immovable in it. She gave John her hand frankly and lovingly, and promised, in poverty or wealth, in weal or woe, to stand truly by his side. It was not a very hopeful troth-plighting, but they were both sure of the foundations of their love, and both regarded the promise as solemnly binding.

Then Margaret told John that she had heard that evening that the captain of the Wick steamer wanted a mate, and the rough Pentland Frith being well known to John, she hoped, if he made immediate application, he would be accepted. If he was, John declared his intention of at once seeing Peter and asking his consent to their engagement. In the meantime the Bridge of Brogar was to be their tryst, when tryst was possible. Peter's summer dwelling lay not far from it, and it was Margaret's habit to watch for his boat and walk up from the beach to the house with him. She would always walk over first to Brogar, and if John could meet her there that would be well; if not, she would understand that it was out of the way of duty, and be content.

Page 102

John fortunately secured the mate's place. Before he could tell Margaret this she heard her father speak well of him to the captain. "There is nae better sailor, nor better lad, for that matter," said Peter. "I like none that he wad hang roun' my bonnie Marg'et; but then, a cat may look at a king without it being high treason, I wot."

A week afterwards Peter thought differently. When John told him honestly how matters stood between him and Margaret he was more angry than when Sandy Beg swore away his whole Dutch cargo. He would listen to neither love nor reason, and positively forbid him to hold any further intercourse with his daughter. John had expected this, and was not greatly discouraged. He had Margaret's promise. Youth is hopeful, and they could wait; for it never entered their minds absolutely to disobey the old man.

In the meantime there was a kind of peacemaking between Ragon and John. The good Dominie Sinclair had met them both one day on the beach, and insisted on their forgiving and shaking hands. Neither of them were sorry to do so. Men who have shared the dangers of the deep-sea fishing and the stormy Northern Ocean together cannot look upon each other as mere parts of a bargain. There was, too, a wild valor and a wonderful power in emergencies belonging to Ragon that had always dazzled John's more cautious nature. In some respects, he thought Ragon Torr the greatest sailor that left Stromness harbor, and Ragon was willing enough to admit that John "was a fine fellow," and to give his hand at the dominie's direction.

Alas! the good man's peacemaking was of short duration. As soon as Peter told the young Norse sailor of John's offer for Margaret's hand, Ragon's passive good-will turned to active dislike and bitter jealousy. For, though he had taken little trouble to please Margaret, he had come to look upon her as his future wife. He knew that Peter wished it so, and he now imagined that it was also the only thing on earth he cared for.

Thus, though John was getting good wages, he was not happy. It was rarely he got a word with Margaret, and Peter and Ragon were only too ready to speak. It became daily more and more difficult to avoid an open quarrel with them, and, indeed, on several occasions sharp, cruel words, that hurt like wounds, had passed between them on the public streets and quays.

Thus Stromness, that used to be so pleasant to him, was changing fast. He knew not how it was that people so readily believed him in the wrong. In Wick, too, he had been troubled with Sandy Beg, and a kind of nameless dread possessed him about the man; he could not get rid of it, even after he had heard that Sandy had sailed in a whaling ship for the Arctic seas.

Page 103

Thus things went on until the end of July. John was engaged now until the steamer stopped running in September, and the little sum of ready money necessary for the winter's comfort was assured. Christine sat singing and knitting, or singing and braiding straw, and Dame Alison went up and down her cottage with a glad heart. They knew little of John's anxieties. Christine had listened sympathizingly to his trouble about Margaret, and said, "Thou wait an' trust; John dear, an' at the end a' things will be well." Even Ragon's ill-will and Peter's ill words had not greatly frightened them—"The wrath o' man shall praise Him," read old Alison, with just a touch of spiritual satisfaction, "an' the rest o' the wrath he will restrain."

CHAPTER III.

It was a Saturday night in the beginning of August, and John was at home until the following Monday. He dressed himself and went out towards Brogar, and Christine watched him far over the western moor, and blessed him as he went. He had not seen Margaret for many days, but he had a feeling to-night that she would be able to keep her tryst. And there, standing amid the rushes on the lakeside, he found her. They had so much to say to each other that Margaret forgot her father's return, and delayed so long that she thought it best to go straight home, instead of walking down the beach to meet him.

He generally left Stromness about half-past eight, and his supper was laid for nine o'clock. But this night nine passed, and he did not come; and though the delay could be accounted for in various ways, she had a dim but anxious forecasting of calamity in her heart. The atmosphere of the little parlor grew sorrowful and heavy, the lamp did not seem to light it, her father's chair had a deserted, lonely aspect, the house was strangely silent; in fifteen minutes she had forgotten how happy she had been, and wandered to and from the door like some soul in an uneasy dream.

All at once she heard the far-away shouting of angry and alarmed voices, and to her sensitive ears her lover's and her father's names were mingled. It was her nature to act slowly; for a few moments she could not decide what was to be done. The first thought was the servants. There were only two, Hacon Flett and Gerda Vedder. Gerda had gone to bed, Hacon was not on the place. As she gathered her energies together she began to walk rapidly over the springy heath towards the white sands of the beach. Her father, if he was coming, would come that way. She was angry with herself for the *if*. Of course he was coming. What was there to prevent it? She told herself, Nothing, and the next moment looked up and saw two men coming towards her, and in their arms a figure which she knew instinctively was her father's.

She slowly retraced her steps, set open the gate and the door, and waited for the grief that was coming to her. But however slow her reasoning faculties, her soul knew in a moment what it needed. It was but a little prayer said with trembling lips and fainting

heart; but no prayer loses its way. Straight to the heart of Christ it went. And the answer was there and the strength waiting when Ragon and Hacon brought in the bleeding, dying old man, and laid him down upon his parlor floor.



Page 104

Ragon said but one word, "Stabbed!" and then, turning to Hacon, bid him ride for life and death into Stromness for a doctor. Most sailors of these islands know a little rude surgery, and Ragon stayed beside his friend, doing what he could to relieve the worst symptoms. Margaret, white and still, went hither and thither, bringing whatever Ragon wanted, and fearing, she knew not why, to ask any questions.

With the doctor came the dominie and two of the town bailies. There was little need of the doctor; Peter Fae's life was ebbing rapidly away with every moment of time. There was but little time now for whatever had yet to be done. The dominie stooped first to his ear, and in a few solemn words bid him lay himself at the foot of the cross. "Thou'lt never perish there, Peter," he said; and the dying man seemed to catch something of the comfort of such an assurance.

Then Bailie Inkster said, "Peter Fae, before God an' his minister—before twa o' the town bailies an' thy ain daughter Margaret, an' thy friend Ragon Torr, an' thy servants Hacon Flett an' Gerda Vedder, thou art now to say what man stabbed thee."

Peter made one desperate effort, a wild, passionate gleam shot from the suddenly-opened eyes, and he cried out in a voice terrible in its despairing anger, "*John Sabay! John Sabay—stabb-ed—me! Indeed—he—did!*"

"Oh, forgive him, man! forgive him! Dinna think o' that now, Peter! Cling to the cross—cling to the cross, man! Nane ever perished that only won to the foot o' it." Then the pleading words were whispered down into fast-sealing ears, and the doctor quietly led away a poor heart-stricken girl, who was too shocked to weep and too humbled and wretched to tell her sorrow to any one but God.

CHAPTER IV.

The bailies, after hearing the deposition, immediately repaired to John Sabay's cottage. It was Saturday night, and no warrant could now be got, but the murderer must be secured. No two men bent on such an errand ever found it more difficult to execute. The little family had sat later than usual. John had always news they were eager to hear—of tourists and strangers he had seen in Wick, or of the people the steamer had brought to Kirkwall.

He was particularly cheerful this evening; his interview with Margaret had been hopeful and pleasant, and Christine had given the houseplace and the humble supper-table quite a festival look. They had sat so long over the meal that when the bailies entered John was only then reading the regular portion for the evening exercise. All were a little amazed at the visit, but no one thought for a moment of interrupting the Scripture; and the two men sat down and listened attentively while John finished the chapter.

Bailie Tulloch then rose and went towards the dame. He was a far-off cousin of the Sabays, and, though not on the best of terms with them, his relationship was considered to impose the duty particularly on him.

Page 105

“Gude-e’en, if thou comes on a gude errand,” said old Dame Alison, suspiciously; “but that’s no thy custom, bailie.”

“I came, dame, to ask John anent Peter Fae.”

The dame laughed pleasantly. “If thou had asked him anent Margaret Fae, he could tell thee more about it.”

“This is nae laughing matter, dame. Peter Fae has been murdered—yes, murdered! An’ he said, ere he died, that John Sabay did the deed.”

“Then Peter Fae died wi’ a lie on his lips—tell them that, John,” and the old woman’s face was almost majestic in its defiance and anger.

“I hae not seen Peter Fae for a week,” said John. “God knows that, bailie. I wad be the vera last man to hurt a hair o’ his gray head; why he is Margaret’s father!”

“Still, John, though we hae nae warrant to hold thee, we are beholden to do sae; an’ thou maun come wi’ us,” said Bailie Inkster.

“Wrang has nae warrant at ony time, an’ ye will no touch my lad,” said Alison, rising and standing before her son.

“Come, dame, keep a still tongue.”

“My tongue’s no under thy belt, Tulloch; but it’s weel kenned that since thou wranged us thou ne’er liked us.”

“Mother, mother, dinna fash theesel’. It’s naught at a’ but a mistake; an’ I’ll gae wi’ Bailie Inkster, if he’s feared to tak my word.”

“I could tak thy word fain enough, John—”

“But the thing isna possible, Inkster. Besides, if he were missing Monday morn, I, being i’ some sort a relation, wad be under suspicion o’ helping him awa.”

“Naebody wad e’er suspect thee o’ a helping or mercifu’ deed, Tulloch. Indeed na!”

“Tak care, dame; thou art admitting it wad be a mercifu’ deed. I heard Peter Fae say that John Sabay stabbed him, an’ Ragon Torr and Hacon Flett saw John, as I understand the matter.”

“Mother,” said John, “do thou talk to nane but God. Thou wilt hae to lead the prayer theesel’ to-night; dinna forget me. I’m as innocent o’ this matter as Christine is; mak up thy mind on that.”

“God go wi’ thee, John. A’ the men i’ Orkney can do nae mair than they may against thee.”

“It’s an unco grief an’ shame to me,” said Tulloch, “but the Sabays hae aye been a thorn i’ the flesh to me, an’ John’s the last o’ them, the last o’ them!”

“Thou art makin’ thy count without Providence, Tulloch. There’s mair Sabays than Tullochs; for there’s Ane for them that counts far beyont an’ above a’ that can be against them. Now, thou step aff my honest hearthstane—there is mair room for thee without than within.”

Then John held his mother’s and sister’s hands a moment, and there was such *virtue* in the clasp, and such light and trust in their faces, that it was impossible for him not to catch hope from them. Suddenly Bailie Tulloch noticed that John was in his Sabbath-day clothes. In itself this was not remarkable on a Saturday night. Most of the people kept this evening as a kind of preparation for the Holy Day, and the best clothing and the festival meal were very general. But just then it struck the bailies as worth inquiring about.

Page 106

"Where are thy warking-claes, John—the uniform, I mean, o' that steamship company thou sails for—and why hast na them on thee?"

"I had a visit to mak, an' I put on my best to mak it in. The ithers are i' my room."

"Get them, Christine."

Christine returned in a few minutes pale-faced and empty-handed. "They are not there, John, nor yet i' thy kist."

"I thought sae."

"Then God help me, sister! I know not where they are."

Even Bailie Inkster looked doubtful and troubled at this circumstance. Silence, cold and suspicious, fell upon them, and poor John went away half-bereft of all the comfort his mother's trust and Christine's look had given him.

The next day being Sabbath, no one felt at liberty to discuss the subject; but as the little groups passed one another on their way to church their solemn looks and their doleful shakes of the head testified to its presence in their thoughts. The dominie indeed, knowing how nearly impossible it would be for them not to think their own thoughts this Lord's day, deemed it best to guide those thoughts to charity. He begged every one to be kind to all in deep affliction, and to think no evil until it was positively known who the guilty person was.

Indeed, in spite of the almost overwhelming evidence against John Sabay, there was a strong disposition to believe him innocent. "If ye believe a' ye hear, ye may eat a' ye see," said Geordie Sweyn. "Maybe John Sabay killed old Peter Fae, but every maybe has a may-not-be." And to this remark there were more nods of approval than shakes of dissent.

But affairs, even with this gleam of light, were dark enough to the sorrowful family. John's wages had stopped, and the winter fuel was not yet all cut. A lawyer had to be procured, and they must mortgage their little cottage to do it; and although ten days had passed, Margaret Fae had not shown, either by word or deed, what was her opinion regarding John's guilt or innocence.

But Margaret, as before said, was naturally slow in all her movements, so slow that even Scotch caution had begun to call her cruel or careless. But this was a great injustice. She had weighed carefully in her own mind everything against John, and put beside it his own letter to her and her intimate knowledge of his character, and then solemnly sat down in God's presence to take such counsel as he should put into her heart. After many prayerful, waiting days she reached a conclusion which was

satisfactory to herself; and she then put away from her every doubt of John's innocence, and resolved on the course to be pursued.

In the first place she would need money to clear the guiltless and to seek the guilty, and she resolved to continue her father's business. She had assisted him so long with his accounts that his methods were quite familiar to her; all she needed was some one to handle the rough goods, and stand between her and the rude sailors with whom the business was mainly conducted.

Page 107

Who was this to be? Ragon Torr? She was sure Ragon would have been her father's choice. He had taken all charge of the funeral, and had since hung round the house, ready at any moment to do her service. But Ragon would testify against John Sabay, and she had besides an unaccountable antipathy to his having any nearer relation with her. "I'll ask Geordie Sweyn," she said, after a long consultation with her own slow but sure reasoning powers; "he'll keep the skippers an' farmers i' awe o' him; an' he's just as honest as any ither man."

So Geordie was sent for and the proposal made and accepted. "Thou wilt surely be true to me, Geordie?"

"As sure as death, Miss Margaret;" and when he gave her his great brawny hand on it, she knew her affairs in that direction were safe.

Next morning the shop was opened as usual, and Geordie Sweyn stood in Peter Fae's place. The arrangement had been finally made so rapidly that it had taken all Stromness by surprise. But no one said anything against it; many believed it to be wisely done, and those who did not, hardly cared to express dissatisfaction with a man whose personal prowess and ready hand were so well known.

The same day Christine received a very sisterly letter from Margaret, begging her to come and talk matters over with her. There were such obvious reasons why Margaret could not go to Christine, that the latter readily complied with the request; and such was the influence that this calm, cool, earnest girl had over the elder woman, that she not only prevailed upon her to accept money to fee the lawyer in John's defence, but also whatever was necessary for their comfort during the approaching winter. Thus Christine and Margaret mutually strengthened each other, and both cottage and prison were always the better for every meeting.

CHAPTER V.

But soon the summer passed away, and the storms and snows of winter swept over the lonely island. There would be no court until December to try John, and his imprisonment in Kirkwall jail grew every day more dreary. But no storms kept Christine long away from him. Over almost impassable roads and mosses she made her way on the little ponies of the country, which had to perform a constant steeple-chase over the bogs and chasms.

All things may be borne when they are sure; and every one who loved John was glad when at last he could have a fair hearing. Nothing however was in his favor. The bailies and the murdered man's servants, even the dominie and his daughter could tell but one tale. "Peter Fae had declared with his last breath that John Sabay had stabbed him." The prosecution also brought forward strong evidence to show that very bitter

words had passed, a few days before the murder, between the prisoner and the murdered man.

Page 108

In the sifting of this evidence other points were brought out, still more convincing. Hacon Flett said that he was walking to Stromness by the beach to meet his sweetheart, when he heard the cry of murder, and in the gloaming light saw John Sabay distinctly running across the moor. When asked how he knew certainly that it was John, he said that he knew him by his peculiar dress, its bright buttons, and the glimmer of gold braid on his cap. He said also, in a very decided manner, that John Sabay passed Ragon Torr so closely that he supposed they had spoken.

Then Ragon being put upon his oath, and asked solemnly to declare who was the man that had thus passed him, tremblingly answered,

“John Sabay!”

John gave him such a look as might well haunt a guilty soul through all eternity; and old Dame Alison, roused by a sense of intolerable wrong, cried out,

“Know this, there’s a day coming that will show the black heart; but traitors’ words ne’er yet hurt the honest cause.”

“Peace, woman!” said an officer of the court, not unkindly.

“Weel, then, God speak for me! an’ my thoughts are free; if I daurna say, I may think.”

In defence Margaret Fae swore that she had been with John on Brogar Bridge until nearly time to meet her father, and that John then wore a black broadcloth suit and a high hat; furthermore, that she believed it utterly impossible for him to have gone home, changed his clothes, and then reached the scene of the murder at the time Hacon Flett and Ragon Torr swore to his appearance there.

But watches were very uncommon then; no one of the witnesses had any very distinct idea of the time; some of them varied as much as an hour in their estimate. It was also suggested by the prosecution that John probably had the other suit secreted near the scene of the murder. Certain it was that he had not been able either to produce it or to account for its mysterious disappearance.

The probability of Sandy Beg being the murderer was then advanced; but Sandy was known to have sailed in a whaling vessel before the murder, and no one had seen him in Stromness since his departure for Wick after his dismissal from Peter Fae’s service.

No one? Yes, some one had seen him. That fatal night, as Ragon Torr was crossing the moor to Peter’s house—he having some news of a very particular vessel to give—he heard the cry of “Murder,” and he heard Hacon Flett call out, “I know thee, John Sabay. Thou hast stabbed my master!” and he instantly put himself in the way of the flying man. Then he knew at once that it was Sandy Beg in John Sabay’s clothes. The



two men looked a moment in each other's face, and Sandy saw in Ragon's something that made him say,

"She'll pat Sandy safe ta night, an' that will mak her shure o' ta lass she's seeking far."

There was no time for parley; Ragon's evil nature was strongest, and he answered, "There is a cellar below my house, thou knows it weel."

Page 109

Indeed, most of the houses in Stromness had underground passages, and places of concealment used for smuggling purposes, and Ragon's lonely house was a favorite rendezvous. The vessel whose arrival he had been going to inform Peter of was a craft not likely to come into Stromness with all her cargo.

Towards morning Ragon had managed to see Sandy and send him out to her with such a message as insured her rapid disappearance. Sandy had also with him a sum of money which he promised to use in transporting himself at once to India, where he had a cousin in the forty-second Highland regiment.

Ragon had not at first intended to positively swear away his friend's life; he had been driven to it, not only by Margaret's growing antipathy to him and her decided interest in John's case and family, but also by that mysterious power of events which enable the devil to forge the whole chain that binds a man when the first link is given him. But the word once said, he adhered positively to it, and even asserted it with quite unnecessary vehemence and persistence.

After such testimony there was but one verdict possible. John Sabay was declared guilty of murder, and sentenced to death. But there was still the same strange and unreasonable belief in his innocence, and the judge, with a peculiar stretch of clemency, ordered the sentence to be suspended until he could recommend the prisoner to his majesty's mercy.

A remarkable change now came over Dame Alison. Her anger, her sense of wrong, her impatience, were over. She had come now to where she could do nothing else but trust implicitly in God; and her mind, being thus stayed, was kept in a strange exultant kind of perfect peace. Lost confidence? Not a bit of it! Both Christine and her mother had reached a point where they knew

"That right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

CHAPTER VI.

Slowly the weary winter passed away. And just as spring was opening there began to be talk of Ragon Torr's going away. Margaret continued to refuse his addresses with a scorn he found it ill to bear; and he noticed that many of his old acquaintances dropped away from him. There is a distinct atmosphere about every man, and the atmosphere about Ragon people began to avoid. No one could have given a very clear reason for doing so; one man did not ask another why; but the fact needed no reasoning about, it was there.

One day, when Paul Calder was making up his spring cargoes, Ragon asked for a boat, and being a skilful sailor, he was accepted. But no sooner was the thing known, than Paul had to seek another crew.

“What was the matter?”

“Nothing; they did not care to sail with Ragon Torr, that was all.”

This circumstance annoyed Ragon very much. He went home quite determined to leave Stromness at once and for ever. Indeed he had been longing to do so for many weeks, but had stayed partly out of bravado, and partly because there were few opportunities of getting away during the winter.

Page 110

He went home and shut himself in his own room, and began to count his hoarded gold. While thus employed, there was a stir or movement under his feet which he quite understood. Some one was in the secret cellar, and was coming up. He turned hastily round, and there was Sandy Beg.

"Thou scoundrel!" and he fairly gnashed his teeth at the intruder, "what dost thou want here?"

"She'll be wanting money an' help."

Badly enough Sandy wanted both; and a dreadful story he told. He had indeed engaged himself at Wick for a whaling voyage, but at the last moment had changed his mind and deserted. For somewhere among the wilds of Rhiconich in Sutherland he had a mother, a wild, superstitious, half-heathen Highland woman, and he wanted to see her. Coming back to the coast, after his visit, he had stopped a night at a little wayside inn, and hearing some drovers talking of their gold in Gallic, a language which he well understood, he had followed them into the wild pass of Gualon, and there shot them from behind a rock. For this murder he had been tracked, and was now so closely pursued that he had bribed with all the gold he had a passing fishing-smack to drop him at Stromness during the night.

"She'll gae awa now ta some ither place; 'teet will she! An' she's hungry—an' unco dry;" all of which Sandy emphasized by a desperate and very evil look.

The man was not to be trifled with, and Ragon knew that he was in his power. If Sandy was taken, he would confess all, and Ragon knew well that in such case transportation for life and hard labor would be his lot. Other considerations pressed him heavily—the shame, the loss, the scorn of Margaret, the triumph of all his ill-wishers. No, he had gone too far to retreat.

He fed the villain, gave him a suit of his own clothes, and L50, and saw him put off to sea. Sandy promised to keep well out in the bay, until some vessel going North to Zetland or Iceland, or some Dutch skipper bound for Amsterdam, took him up. All the next day Ragon was in misery, but nightfall came and he had heard nothing of Sandy, though several craft had come into port. If another day got over he would feel safe; but he told himself that he was in a gradually narrowing circle, and that the sooner he leaped outside of it the better.

When he reached home the old couple who hung about the place, and who had learned to see nothing and to hear nothing, came to him and voluntarily offered a remark.

"Queer folk an' strange folk have been here, an' ta'en awa some claes out o' the cellar."

Ragon asked no questions. He knew what clothes they were—that suit of John Sabay's in which Sandy Beg had killed Peter Fae, and the rags which Sandy had a few hours before exchanged for one of his own sailing-suits. He needed no one to tell him what had happened. Sandy had undoubtedly bespoke the very vessel containing the officers in search of him, and had confessed all, as he said he would. The men were probably at this moment looking for him.

Page 111

He lifted the gold prepared for any such emergency, and, loosening his boat, pulled for life and death towards Mayness Isle. Once in the rapid “race” that divides it and Olla from the ocean, he knew no boat would dare to follow him. While yet a mile from it he saw that he was rapidly pursued by a four-oared boat. Now all his wild Norse nature asserted itself. He forgot everything but that he was eluding his pursuers, and as the chase grew hotter, closer, more exciting, his enthusiasm carried him far beyond all prudence.

He began to shout or chant to his wild efforts some old Norse death-song, and just as they gained on him he shot into the “race” and defied them. Oars were useless there, and they watched him fling them far away and stand up with outstretched arms in the little skiff. The waves tossed it hither and thither, the boiling, racing flood hurried it with terrific force towards the ocean. The tall, massive figure swayed like a reed in a tempest, and suddenly the half despairing, half defying song was lost in the roar of the bleak, green surges. All knew then what had happened.

“Let me die the death o’ the righteous,” murmured one old man, piously veiling his eyes with his bonnet; and then the boat turned and went silently back to Stromness.

Sandy Beg was in Kirkwall jail. He had made a clean breast of all his crimes, and measures were rapidly taken for John Sabay’s enlargement and justification. When he came out of prison Christine and Margaret were waiting for him, and it was to Margaret’s comfortable home he was taken to see his mother. “For we are ane household now, John,” she said tenderly, “an’ Christine an’ mother will ne’er leave me any mair.”

Sandy’s trial came on at the summer term. He was convicted on his own confession, and sentenced to suffer the penalty of his crime upon the spot where he stabbed Peter Fae. For some time he sulkily rejected all John’s efforts to mitigate his present condition, or to prepare him for his future. But at last the tender spot in his heart was found. John discovered his affection for his half-savage mother, and promised to provide for all her necessities.

“It’s only ta poun’ o’ taa, an’ ta bit cabin ta shelter her she’ll want at a’,” but the tears fell heavily on the red, hairy hands; “an’ she’ll na tell her fat ill outsent cam to puir Sandy.”

“Thou kens I will gie her a’ she needs, an’ if she chooses to come to Orkney—”

“Na, na, she wullna leave ta Hieland hills for naught at a’.”

“Then she shall hae a siller crown for every month o’ the year, Sandy.”

The poor, rude creature hardly knew how to say a “thanks;” but John saw it in his glistening eyes and heard it in the softly-muttered words, “She was ta only are tat e’er caret for Santy Beg.”

It was a solemn day in Stromness when he went to the gallows. The bells tolled backward, the stores were all closed, and there were prayers both in public and private for the dying criminal. But few dared to look upon the awful expiation, and John spent the hour in such deep communion with God and his own soul that its influence walked with him to the end of life.

Page 112

And when his own sons were grown up to youths, one bound for the sea and the other for Marischal College, Aberdeen, he took them aside and told them this story, adding,

“An’ know this, my lads: the shame an’ the sorrow cam a’ o’ ane thing—I made light o’ my mother’s counsel, an’ thought I could do what nane hae ever done, gather mysel’ with the deil’s journeymen, an’ yet escape the wages o’ sin. Lads! lads! there’s nae half-way house atween right and wrang; know that.”

“But, my father,” said Hamish, the younger of the two, “thou did at the last obey thy mother.”

“Ay, ay, Hamish; but mak up thy mind to this: it isna enough that a man rins a gude race; he maun also *start at the right time*. This is what I say to thee, Hamish, an’ to thee, Donald: fear God, an’ ne’er lightly heed a gude mother’s advice. It’s weel wi’ the lads that carry a mother’s blessing through the world wi’ them.”

Lile Davie.

LILE DAVIE.

In Yorkshire and Lancashire the word “lile” means “little,” but in the Cumberland dales it has a far wider and nobler definition. There it is a term of honor, of endearment, of trust, and of approbation. David Denton won the pleasant little prefix before he was ten years old. When he saved little Willy Sabay out of the cold waters of Thirlmere, the villagers dubbed him “Lile Davie.” When he took a flogging to spare the crippled lad of Farmer Grimsby, men and women said proudly, “He were a lile lad;” and when he gave up his rare half-holiday to help the widow Gates glean, they had still no higher word of praise than “kind lile Davie.”

However, it often happens that a prophet has no honor among his own people, and David was the black sheep of the miserly household of Denton Farm. It consisted of old Christopher Denton, his three sons, Matthew, Sam, and David, and his daughter Jennie. They had the reputation of being “people well-to-do,” but they were not liked among the Cumberland “states-men,” who had small sympathy for their niggardly hospitality and petty deeds of injustice.

One night in early autumn Christopher was sitting at the great black oak table counting over the proceeds of the Kendal market, and Matt and Sam looked greedily on. There was some dispute about the wool and the number of sheep, and Matt said angrily, “There’s summat got to be done about Davie. He’s just a clish-ma-saunter, lying among the ling wi’ a book in his hand the lee-long day. It is just miff-maff and nonsense letting him go any longer to the schoolmaster. I am fair jagged out wi’ his ways.”

“That’s so,” said Sam.

“Then why don’t you gie the lad a licking, and make him mind the sheep better? I saw him last Saturday playing sogers down at Thirlston with a score or more of idle lads like himsel’.” The old man spoke irritably, and looked round for the culprit. “I’ll lay thee a penny he’s at the same game now. Gie him a licking when he comes in, son Matt.”

Page 113

"Nay, but Matt wont," said Jennie Denton, with a quiet decision. She stood at her big wheel, spinning busily, though it was nine o'clock; and though her words were few and quiet, the men knew from her face and manner that Davie's licking would not be easily accomplished. In fact, Jennie habitually stood between Davie and his father and brothers. She had nursed him through a motherless babyhood, and had always sympathized in his eager efforts to rise above the sordid life that encompassed him. It was Jennie who had got him the grudging permission to go in the evening to the village schoolmaster for some book-learning. But peculiar circumstances had favored her in this matter, for neither the old man nor his sons could read or write, and they had begun to find this, in their changed position, and in the rapid growth of general information, a serious drawback in business matters.

Therefore, as Davie could not be spared in the day, the schoolmaster agreed for a few shillings a quarter to teach him in the evening. This arrangement altered the lad's whole life. He soon mastered the simple branches he had been sent to acquire, and then master and pupil far outstepped old Christopher's programme, and in the long snowy nights, and in the balmy summer ones, pored with glowing cheeks over old histories and wonderful lives of great soldiers and sailors.

In fact, David Denton, like most good sons, had a great deal of his mother in him, and she had been the daughter of a long line of brave Westmoreland troopers. The inherited tendencies which had passed over the elder boys asserted themselves with threefold force in this last child of a dying woman. And among the sheepcotes in the hills he felt that he was the son of the men who had defied Cromwell on the banks of the Kent and followed Prince Charlie to Preston.

But the stern discipline of a Cumberland states-man's family is not easily broken. Long after David had made up his mind to be a soldier he continued to bear the cuffs and sneers and drudgery that fell to him, watching eagerly for some opportunity of securing his father's permission. But of this there was little hope. His knowledge of writing and accounts had become of service, and his wish to go into the world and desert the great cause of the Denton economies was an unheard-of piece of treason and ingratitude.

David ventured to say that he "had taught Jennie to write and count, and she was willing to do his work."

The ignorant, loutish brothers scorned the idea of "women-folk meddling wi' their 'counts and wool," and, "besides," as Matt argued, "Davie's going would necessitate the hiring of two shepherds; no hired man would do more than half of what folk did for their ain."

These disputes grew more frequent and more angry, and when Davie had added to all his other faults the unpardonable one of falling in love with the schoolmaster's niece, there was felt to be no hope for the lad. The Dentons had no poor relations; they

regarded them as the one thing *not* needful, and they concluded it was better to give Davie a commission and send him away.

Page 114

Poor Jennie did all the mourning for the lad; his father and brothers were in the midst of a new experiment for making wool water-proof, and pretty Mary Butterworth did not love David as David wished her to love him. It was Jennie only who hung weeping on his neck and watched him walk proudly and sorrowfully away over the hills into the wide, wide world beyond.

Then for many, many long years no more was heard of "Lile Davie Denton." The old schoolmaster died and Christopher followed him. But the Denton brothers remained together. However, when men make saving money the sole end of their existence, their life soon becomes as uninteresting as the multiplication table, and people ceased to care about the Denton farm, especially as Jennie married a wealthy squire over the mountains, and left her brothers to work out alone their new devices and economies.

Jennie's marriage was a happy one, but she did not forget her brother. There was in Esthwaite Grange a young man who bore his name and who was preparing for a like career. And often Jennie Esthwaite told to the lads and lasses around her knees the story of their "lile uncle," whom every one but his own kin had loved, and who had gone away to the Indies and never come back again. "Lile Davie" was the one bit of romance in Esthwaite Grange.

Jennie's brothers had never been across the "fells" that divided Denton from Esthwaite; therefore, one morning, twenty-seven years after Davie's departure, she was astonished to see Matt coming slowly down the Esthwaite side. But she met him with hearty kindness, and after he had been rested and refreshed he took a letter from his pocket and said, "Jennie, this came from Davie six months syne, but I thought then it would be seeking trouble to answer it."

"Why, Matt, this letter is directed to me! How dared you open and keep it?"

"Dared, indeed! That's a nice way for a woman to speak to her eldest brother!' Read it, and then you'll see why I kept it from you."

Poor Jennie's eyes filled fuller at every line. He was sick and wounded and coming home to die, and wanted to see his old home and friends once more.

"O Matt! Matt!" she cried; "how cruel, how shameful, not to answer this appeal."

"Well, I did it for the best; but it seems I have made a mistake. Sam and I both thought an ailing body dovering round the hearthstone and doorstone was not to be thought of—and nobody to do a hand's turn but old Elsie, who is nearly blind—and Davie never was one to do a decent hand job, let by it was herding sheep, and that it was not like he'd be fit for; so we just agreed to let the matter lie where it was."

"Oh, it was a cruel shame, Matt."

“Well, it was a mistake; for yesterday Sam went to Kendall, and there, in the Stramongate, he met Tom Philipson, who is just home from India. And what does Tom say but, ‘Have you seen the general yet?’ and, ‘Great man is Gen. Denton,’ and, ‘Is it true that he is going to buy the Derwent estate?’ and, ‘Wont the Indian Government miss Gen. Denton!’ Sam wasn’t going to let Tom see how the land lay, and Tom went off saying that Sam had no call to be so pesky proud; that it wasn’t him who had conquered the Mahrattas and taken the Ghiznee Pass.”

Page 115

Jennie was crying bitterly, and saying softly to herself, "O my brave laddie! O my bonnie lile Davie!"

"Hush, woman! No good comes of crying. Write now as soon as you like, and the sooner the better."

In a very few hours Jennie had acted on this advice, and, though the writing and spelling were wonderful, the poor sick general, nursing himself at the Bath waters, felt the love that spoke in every word. He had not expected much from his brothers; it was Jennie and Jennie's bairns he wanted to see. He was soon afterwards an honored guest in Esthwaite Grange, and the handsome old soldier, riding slowly among the lovely dales, surrounded by his nephews and nieces, became a well-known sight to the villages around.

Many in Thirlston remembered him, and none of his old companions found themselves forgotten. Nor did he neglect his brothers. These cautious men had become of late years manufacturers, and it was said were growing fabulously rich. They had learned the value of the low coppice woods on their fell-side, and had started a bobbin-mill which Sam superintended, while Matt was on constant duty at the great steam-mill on Milloch-Force, where he spun his own wools into blankets and serges.

The men were not insensible to the honor of their brother's career; they made great capital of it privately. But they were also intensely dissatisfied at the reckless way in which he spent his wealth. Young David Esthwaite had joined a crack regiment with his uncle's introduction and at his uncle's charges, and Jennie and Mary Esthwaite had been what the brothers considered extravagantly dowered in order that they might marry two poor clergymen whom they had set their hearts on.

"It is just sinful, giving women that much good gold," said Matt angrily: "and here we are needing it to keep a great business afloat."

It was the first time Matt had dared to hint that the mill under his care was not making money, and he was terribly shocked when Sam made a similar confession. In fact, the brothers, with all their cleverness and industry, were so ignorant that they were necessarily at the mercy of those they employed, and they had fallen into roguish hands. Sam proposed that David should be asked to look over their affairs and tell them where the leakage was: "He was always a lile-hearted chap, and I'd trust him, Matt, up hill and down dale, I would."

But Matt objected to this plan. He said David must be taken through the mills and the most made of everything, and then in a week or two afterwards be offered a partnership; and Matt, being the eldest, carried the day. A great festival was arranged, everything was seen to the best advantage, and David was exceedingly interested. He lingered with a strange fascination among the steam-looms, and Matt saw the bait had

taken, for as they walked back together to the old homestead David said, “You were ever a careful man, Matt, but it must take a deal of money—you understand, brother—if you need at any time—I hope I don’t presume.”

Page 116

"Certainly not. Yes, we are doing a big business—a very good business indeed; perhaps when you are stronger you may like to join us."

"I sha'n't get stronger, Matt—so I spoke now."

Sam, in his anxiety, thought Matt had been too prudent; he would have accepted Davie's offer at once; but Matt was sure that by his plan they would finally get all the general's money into their hands. However, the very clever always find some quantity that they have failed to take into account. After this long day at the mills General Denton had a severe relapse, and it was soon evident that his work was nearly finished.

"But you must not fret, Jennie dear," he said cheerfully; "I am indeed younger in years than you, but then I have lived a hundred times as long. What a stirring, eventful life I have had! I must have lived a cycle among these hills to have evened it; and most of my comrades are already gone."

One day, at the very last, he said, "Jennie, there is one bequest in my will may astonish you, but it is all right. I went to see her a month ago. She is a widow now with a lot of little lads around her. And I loved her, Jennie—never loved any woman but her. Poor Mary! She has had a hard time; I have tried to make things easier."

"You had always a lile heart, Davie; you could do no wrong to any one."

"I hope not. I—hope—not." And with these words and a pleasant smile the general answered some call that he alone heard, and trusting in his Saviour, passed confidently

"The quicks and drift that fill the rift
Between this world and heaven."

His will, written in the kindest spirit, caused a deal of angry feeling; for it was shown by it that after his visit to the Denton Mills he had revoked a bequest to the brothers of L20,000, because, as he explicitly said, "My dear brothers do not need it;" and this L20,000 he left to Mary Butterworth Pierson, "who is poor and delicate, and does sorely need it." And the rest of his property he divided between Jennie and Jennie's bairns.

In the first excitement of their disappointment and ruin, Sam, who dreaded his brother's anger, and who yet longed for some sympathetic word, revealed to Jennie and her husband the plan Matt had laid, and how signally it had failed.

"I told him, squire, I did for sure, to be plain and honest with Davie. Davie was always a lile fellow, and he would have helped us out of trouble. Oh, dear! oh, dear! that L20,000 would just have put a' things right."

“A straight line, lad, is always the shortest line in business and morals, as well as in geometry; and I have aye found that to be true in my dealings is to be wise. Lying serves no one but the devil, as ever I made out.”