

scramble, with every one getting in every one else's way. The children would not go back into their hay-wagon, but scrambled all over into the best cars, and the girls in the choir got mixed up with the boys in single buggies, and a crowd of foolish young fellows got into Mr. Holmes' car with the Piper, and actually persuaded that staid and proper pillar of the Baptist Church to race with Dr. McGarry. And the Piper was so shaken up he couldn't play at all. And young Mr. Martin's horse took fright at the noise and confusion, and nearly ran away, and just escaped throwing all the children into the ditch. And so they all scampered gaily, helter-skelter, back to the village, the hero far in the rear, hidden in clouds of dust, with his friends gambolling ahead. And indeed Gavin's homecoming was no more like a triumphal procession than any of the foot-ball games in which he used to take part in the river pasture.

But whatever faults The Woman or Tremendous K. might have found with his reception, it was perfect in Gavin's eyes and the eyes of the three Aunties. For all its mistakes were but the result of the overwhelming sympathy and joy of his friends, and relief that the Aunties had not, after all, lost the light of their eyes. And indeed if no one had met him but had left him to find his way to Craig-Ellachie alone, and afterwards over the hills to Christina, Gavin would have been perfectly happy. For he was still much the same shy boy who had gone away, with no thought of glory or public notice, but only a simple desire to do his duty. He was not a boy any more, for he had been through scenes that make men old, and the remembrance of them lingered in his deep eyes, and showed in a new staidness of manner. But he was the same simple-hearted Gavin, reticent and unassuming and in his heart he almost could wish, except for the joy it gave his Aunties, that he had never heard of the Victoria