

"And what's that, Andrew?" she asked.

"The love of a woman," was his reply; "of a good woman."

"Do you mean, Andrew, that if that—guid woman would marry you, you would stay?" A greyiness came about her temples. It was harder than she thought.

"Ay, ay, lass," he said, dropping back into the old dialect of his youth: "if she would marry me."

She came slowly to him, and laid her hand upon his arm. "Andrew," she said, "Andrew,—the woman—will—marry you."

His breast heaved, his arms twitched at his side, his massive body drew up, and he looked down at her with a great yearning.

"Ay, ay, lassie," he responded, the roughness of feeling in his tone, "I ken she would marry me. That is one thing, and it has made me think o' heaven; but would she love me, does she love me, and me alone? That is another thing."

His eyes searched hers, and she dropped them before him.

"She wad try to lee ye, Andrew," she rejoined.

"There is another man," he said with a sigh, "and he has a good heart. He is generous and brave, and the woman loves him."

"Oh, hush!" she said, and she raised her fingers towards his lips, a scared look in her face. "Ye maunna speak o't," she added.

They stood silent, a little away from each other, for a moment.

"Will you walk with me?" he asked.

Without a word she turned, and passed with him into the shadow of the yews. They did not speak. Presently, Andrew, looking out upon the road, saw a figure coming. He wheeled upon her gently, and said: "The day after Beltane I shall go."

She did not instantly reply, but stretched out her hand and raised her eyes to his, with a look of solemn thankfulness which he loved to remember years after. But he knew the immeasurable distance between friendship and love.

"Wait here," he said; "wait just here for a little while, will you?"

"Yes," she replied, "as lang as ye will; but why?"

He did not reply in words, but looked out upon the road, down which Brian was coming. She understood. Strong, deep-natured as she was, she shivered slightly with timidity.

"Oh, no, no, not now, Andrew," she urged.

But he, without a word, and with a grave courtesy, lifted her hand to his lips, and, with head uncovered, drew away from her. He walked steadily on till he met Brian. He paused for a moment, stretched out his hand, and said: "She is waiting for you, Brian, in the yews below."

"Waiting—for me—Venlaw?" said Brian, growing pale.

"I'm going away to the Company's land two days after Beltane, but you'll be staying here."

"I'll—be staying—here," Brian repeated, as the matter dawned upon him. He could say no more; but the two men caught hands, and parted suddenly, both to begin life again.

An hour after, Andrew stood by the old Dominie's grave looking down at it with a gentle sadness, gentle and sad as only a strong man can be. He had squared all accounts. The Dominie's wishes had been fulfilled. The money left him he had handed over to Katie Dryhope and her sister Maggie; he had refused his own happiness from a high sense of justice. There was nothing more to do but to go away. He thought that as he stood by the grave.

And Brian Kingley walked with Jean, his arm about her, in the shadows of the yews.

The next morning was Beltane Fair. Braithen was dancing upon the green. There were fiddlers many, but you could hear above the jaunty scraping of the catgut the soft joyful note of a flute. It seemed to have caught an exhilarating something from the warm breeze, which, sweeping across the braes and down the wimpling Shiel, ran round the valley where Braithen lay, blithe with the sunshine. Now and then it caught the gay ribands of some laughing lass, or lifted, always modestly, the simple folds of a pretty skirt. And the loose flowing hair of man and woman, it blew in warm enjoyment along the undulations of the dance. About old Benoni's raree show boys sat munching gingerbread. Horsemen moved in and out, and on the stroke of noon a troop of His Majesty's cavalry swung slowly through the streets, bringing with them some gay prisoners of war, who were being transferred from a post further south to Braithen. It seemed almost the same crowd that we saw twelve years before. It might, indeed, have seemed the same day, save that Benoni's hair was greyer and his cheek more wrinkled, though his eye was just as gay. And it did not grow duller because he heard the gossiping of some dames behind him discussing the for-