

POETRY.

A cottage home, with windows all ablaze:
White-throated swallows twittering in the caves,
And children laughing plenty here and there.

Jeannie Sinclair,

OR, THE LILY OF THE STRATH.

CHAPTER XXII.
THE SHEPHERD'S SHEILING AND ITS INMATES—
THE TRAVELLER WAYLAIN—THE NATURE OF
WILL SANDERSON'S REVENGE SHADOWED
FORTH.

'Have you emptied your own flask?' asked
Randal, with a laugh.
'Every drop of it, and that three hours
ago,' answered Mark. 'How the devil else
was I to keep from being frozen to death at
my station on the hill? I had't a smug hat
to creep into as you have here, and hardly
even a bush to bield me.'

'Now, Randal,' he exclaimed, as he tossed
the handkerchief with his grim contents upon
the straw by the side of the prostrate and
unconscious sleeper, 'to our work, to our
work. The way is clear for us, and we do
not require a moment's longer tarrying.
Nay, Mark, not a drop for me,' he added,
waving aside the newly-filled glass which the
elder gipsy offered him.

'What—with the storm to face, and your
flask to carry through?' said Mark, in sur-
prise.
'There's vengeance within my grasp is worth
a gallon of the strongest liquor. It would but
blunt my wits, and cheat me of the richest of
my enjoyment.'

'Well, I haven't the same specific against
the cold, and I'll e'en swallow what I've
poured out,' returned Mark. 'Here's to your
enterprise—may the fiend spend you well
through it.'

'Amn to your toast, say I, but don't al-
low the liquor to set your wits a-wandering.
You know what you've got to do—to watch
the sleeper, and should he stir, to ply him
with another dose of this. A pretty mess
you'll put us all in if he gets off from this in
time to reach the town by mid-day.'

'Never fear, man, not fear,' said Mark,
as he took the paper packet from Will. 'I
have promised to back you in this, and Mark
Gideon is not the man to fail his friend. You
know right well, though, that for certain
matters you wot of I would not have helped
you to the revenge you seek. I thought this
Lynedoch Sinclair was my friend once, and
that to lift him to the estate was to bring
good to the tribe. Had that hope held, the
business in hand would never have prospered
to the present point, but he deceived me,
and showed the cloven hoof that he hid
before. Thinking his purpose was sacred, and
that he could safely rely on the hand that had
helped him, he mocked my claims when I re-
peated them, and laughed at my threats.
For this, I too, swore revenge against him,
and went in with your pretty scheme. But
if it had not been for that, Will—'

'Oh, I know, but for that I could not have
counted on you,' exclaimed Will. 'You
trusted his word, though I told you what he
was, and if you hadn't found him out for your-
self, I must have wrought out my revenge
with no aid of yours.'

'Right, Will. That's the plain truth of it.
As matters stood before, I had no cause to
hate the sprigling. The object of my undy-
ing vengeance was the old one. You had
cause to feel differently, and there it was.
Think you, then, I would have stilled my
feelings and given in to yours if Lynedoch
had kept true to our compact? No, by heaven!
The Baronet's carcass might have been
raked to the earth in the old well before I stir-
red a finger to harveit out. But your rare
scheme jumped with my humor, and so I
have backed you in your purpose. Now the
hour of your vengeance is about to strike,
and I expect to see you accomplish it.'

'See you quit not the sheiling too soon,
though,' said Will. 'Leave him there, and
be pointed to the motionless sleeper, no
chance to wake up in time to reach the town
and mar our plot, and bring us into trouble.'

'Trust me,' replied the gipsy, with a sa-
gacious nod. 'You know Mark Gideon by this
time.'

'True, but we have never been in an enter-
prise like this, and there is danger at various
points.'

'There is danger nowhere, I tell you,' ex-
claimed Mark. 'Zoe has the management
of the business at the encampment, and Zoe
is faithful. Make you off to-morrow after
the job is done. I will meet you at the
place appointed, and if the snow keeps fall-
ing, it will destroy all trace of the road we
take.'

'So be it,' said Will, 'and now we go—
Come, Randal, come—come to the doing of
our grand purpose, and the enjoyment of our
life-long hope.'

'Hast any quaver for the doing of your
part Randal?' asked Mark, bending his black
eyes upon the boy.

'Am I a craven?' demanded Randal, angri-
ly. 'Hav'n't I that to think of would make
my white liver, if I had one, turn red and
hot? Didn't Lynedoch Sinclair kill my mo-
ther?'

'So he did, boy, so he did, and the thought
is enough to nerve your heart to requite the
deed.'

'Away, away!' cried Will, impatiently,
looking back from the open door through
which the snow-flakes came hurrying in.
With a bounding spring Randal was by his
side, and the two passing out, vanished into
the darkness and the storm.

'Ay, young chick,' muttered Mark, gazing
into the gloom which swallowed them up,
'and what would you say if you knew who
helped him to kill your mother? For hees-
ven! some people would have to watch them-
selves if that came to your understanding.'

'The reader may think this speech had refer-
ence to Will Sanderson, but it was not so.
It was to himself the words referred, and to
the death of Lady Sinclair, which had been
brought about by the abduction of her child,
or rather the boy she supposed to be her
child. The gipsy knew not that the infant
he had stolen from the Castle was not the
heir of Baigley, or the son of Sir Fergus.
Will Sanderson had kept him utterly in the
dark on that important point, and all along
he had looked upon Randal—the name the
child had received from the tribe—as the
Baronet's son. Had he known the truth a
different and more frightful significance
would have been given to Will Sanderson's
meaning, when he trained the boy to hate
Lynedoch by telling him that he had killed
his mother. Also, the far more horrible na-
ture of revenge which Sanderson had depart-
ed to execute would have dawned upon him.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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