The Braes of Yarrow

Historical Tale of the Sixteenth Century.

Till long after midnight she remained fret-ting under the anguish of suspicion, and then she found unconsciousness in sleep but not

This long atter midnight she remained reting under the anguish of suspicion, and then she found unconsciousness in sleep but not rest.

A little while after matins on the succeeding day, she heard a man's footstep approaching the door. She was now utterly wearied out, but more composed than she had been during the previous day, for she had partly decided upon the line of conduct she should adopt. She would play the hypocrite and foil her jailors with their own weapon—cuming. Her suspense had become so insupportable that she was glad even to see Barras, who now presented himself; for she would at any rate learn the worst from him. He was dressed in the gayest fashion, with the richest material; his hair was arranged with foppish care; and, although underneath everything he said and did there was an evident consciousness of power, his deportment was respectful. He appeared, in fact, to have come with intent to make an impression, and the appearance was corroborated by the purport of his conversation.

He gave Mistress Douglas good morrow, with a low formal bow.

She did not acknowledge the salutation otherwise than by drawing herself up very haughtily, and saying in a calm firm tone—

'I am pleased, my, lord, that you have favoured me with this visit.'

'You do me too much honour, madam,' he put in with another bow, a gratified smirk, as if acknowledging a compliment.

She took note of the interruption.

'I am pleased, my lord, because I would fain know for what crime I am condemned to this imprisoument.'

If you will give so harsh a name to the kind restrait of those most deeply interested in your welfare, madam, then I must answer you as your mee, madam, then I must answer you as your most humble servant that your good brother has exerted what may appear the extremity of his authority to shield you from the designing advances of an adventure.'

'Then I am so weak a child that I cannot protect myself against the designing ad-

turer.

'Then I am so weak a child that I cannot protect myself against the designing advances of adventurers,' she exclaimed with as much contempt forthe sycophanic servicity of the man, so different from the rudeness which had used to her in forcing her into the Friory, as for the insult implied in the explanation.

'The wisest women, madam, may be de-

the Priory, as for the use and explanation.

The wisest women, madam, may be deceived.'

Ay, and the wisest men, too. For instance my noble brother, whose exceeding tenderness for my welfare places me here.'

He did not wince in the least under the gibe.

stance my noble brother, whose exceeding tenderness for my welfare places me here.' He did not wince in the least under the gibe.

'I should explain, madam,' he proceeded, exactly as before, suave and servine, 'that whenever your ladyship lists the doors of the Priory will be thrown open to you.' 'Then let them be opened now.' 'Then istant, madam, you have signed your submission to your brother's will.' 'Just so; and what may my brother be pleased to will that needs the threat of a life long imprisonment to obtain my consent?' 'That you shall wed.' 'Ha!--whom?' 'Your ladyship's most devoted friend who stands before you.'

stands before you.

'You'

She retreated to the wall, her eyes fixed on he man, contempt, amaze, and loathing expressed on her face.

'None other, and in acknowledging myself deeply honoured by this mark of his deep esteem, I can only pledge myself to you that it will be the chief pleasure of my life to winister to your happiness.'

It will be the chief pleasure of my life to minister to your happiness.

'Is this my brother's will?' she said slowly, as if weighing each word.

'It is his will, and surely it is a happier state to be the wife of a gentleman of fortune family and title, who is devoted to your service, than to pass a life of dreary praying and, bead-telling which is, as you, madam, hape wittly remarked, much the same as imprisonment.'

What token have I that my brother desir-

*What token have I that my brother desires this—this union?

Here is the written compact, waiting only your signature to complete it. You will find here certain agreements for your dowry and the signature of Angus affixed.

He held the parchment toward her, but she shrank from touching it with as much horror as if it had been a leper.

'If there be no other condition by which my freedom may be obtained, she said with a slight quiver in her tone, 'then I will bide here until death frees me.'

He smiled superciliously as he placed the parchment in his pouch.

You will alter your resolution, madam, I hope.'

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Nove.'

'Never.'

'That is a long while, but the morrow is a marvellous enchanter. The current of to-day is made a river by to-morrow. The grains of sand, which to-day are blown hither and thither by the winds are transferred to rock by to-morrow.'

'So will be my resolution.'

'The man who is ready to-day to cut his throat is praying for years to his life to-morrow, and, permit me to say, she who is inconsolable to-day, forgets her grief to-morrow. The human heart, madam, is happily subject to the same law of change as all nature. Pardon the sermon, I do not often in that way give offence. I can wat.'

'And I can endure.'

'That be find your mind for the present, madam, I will no longer intrude on your privacy. Adicu.

TO BE CONTINUED.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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