

bairn's no dead?" Menie could not reply—she pressed her hand before her eyes and wept aloud. "My son! my son!" exclaimed the wretched widow—"Oh! is my bairn dead?" The paragraph, which had filled Menie with anguish, stated that a daring assault had been led on by Serjeant Forbes of the 21st, after his superiors had fallen, but that *he also fell mortally wounded* in the moment of victory. I will not attempt to paint their sorrow. Menie put on the garments of widowhood for Willie, and she mourned for him not only many but every day—he had fallen in the arms of glory, yet she accused herself as his murderer.

Five years more had passed. It was March; but the snow lay upon the ground, and the face of the roads was as glass. A stranger gentleman had been thrown from his horse in the neighborhood of the widow's cottage. His life had been endangered by the fall, and he was conveyed beneath her lowly roof, where he remained for weeks unable to be removed. He was about fifty or sixty years of age, and his dress and appearance indicated the military officer. Menie was his nurse, and if her beauty and kindness did not inspire the soul of the veteran with love, they moved it with sympathy.—He wished to make her a return, and, at length, he resolved that that return should be an offer of his hand. He knew he was in his "sere and yellow leaf," and his face was marked with wounds—but for those wounds he had a pension—he had his half-pay as Major, and three thousand pounds in the funds. He would shew his gratitude by tendering his hand and fortune to the village maiden. He made known his proposal to the old woman—maternal feeling suggested her first reply: "She was to be my Willie's wife," said she ruefully, and wiped away a tear; she was to be my daughter, and she *is* my daughter,—I canna part wi' my Menie." But prudence at length prevailed, and she added, "But why should she be buried for me? No, Sir, I winna wrang her, ye are ower kind, yet she deserves it a', an' I will advise her as though she had been my ain bairn." But Menie refused to listen to them.

When the sun began to grow warm in the heavens, a chair was brought to the door for the invalid, and Menie and her mother would sit spinning by his side, while he would recount his "battles, sieges, fortunes," and in an evening in May as the sun was descending on the hills, ran his story—"Fifty of

us were made prisoners. We were chained man to man, and cast into a dark, narrow and damp dungeon. Our only food was a cup of water once in twenty-four hours. Death in mercy thinned our numbers. Worse than plague raged amongst us—dead comrades lay amongst our feet. One living lay chained to a corpse. All died but myself and my companion to whom I was lettered. He cheered me in fever and sickness. And, maiden, I have been interested in you for his sake—for in his sleep he would start, and mention the name of Menie!"

"Oh, sir!" interrupted Menie and the woman at once, "what? what was his name?"

"If the world were mine I would give it to you," replied the Major, and continued, "He succeeded in breaking our fetters: we were left unguarded. Let us fly, said he. I was unable to follow him: he took me upon his shoulders. It was midnight: he bore me to the woods. For five days he carried me along, or supported me on his arm, till we were within sight of the British lines. Then a party of native horsemen came upon me, my deliverer, with no weapon but a brat which he had torn from a tree, defended himself like a lion in its desert. But he fell badly wounded, and was taken prisoner. A company of our troops came to our assistance: he was rescued—but my noble deliverer was borne again into the interior, and three years have passed, and I have heard no more of him."

"But it is *five* years since my Willie sighed Menie Morrison. Yet she brooded the word—*Menie*."

A wayfaring man was seen approaching the cottage. As he drew near, the eyes of the Major glistened,—his lips moved,—he threw down his crutch. He started unaided to his feet—"Gracious Heaven! it is his self!" he exclaimed, "my companion!—my deliverer!"

The stranger rushed forward with open arms—"Menie!—mother!" he cried, and speech failed him. It was Willie Forbes! Menie was on his bosom—his mother's arms were round his neck—the old Major grasped his hand. Reader, need I tell you more? Willie Forbes had fallen, wounded as was thought mortally; but he had recovered: he had been made a prisoner. He was returned. Menie gave him her hand. The Major procured his discharge, and made him his heir. He took a farm, and on the farm the Major dwelt with them, and 'fought his battles o'er again,' to the children Willie and Menie Forbes.