NOT PROVEN.

—OR—

THE TRIALS OF ADAM CLEAVELAND

CHAPTER XIII.

STRICKEN TO THE HEART—A NEW HOME AND AN ABRUPT DISCOVERY.

Gundy Jock's home was on the ground floor, for easy access with his barrow, and consisted of one room and a closet, not very tidy, nor very well lighted, but to the three outcasts at such a moment it appeared a perfect haven of rest. None of the crowd presumed to follow their rescuer, who guarded the rear as they entered the low roofed little den; and Jock speedily accommodated them with broken chairs, which he deftly dusted for them with the glengarry bonnet snatched from his head.

Jean wept quietly, while Heartsease gently sponged the cut on her temples, and vainly tried to kiss the cloud of despair from her brow. Cleaveland said nothing, but looked on pale and indignant. Slowly and surely the conviction was forcing itself upon him that Drumelian was no longer a place for him. In returning he had cherished a faint hope that he might be reinstated in his position as schoolmaster, and the cloud pass from his life and be forgotten, but now with the feeling so strong against him that his unoffending wife had been struck down at his side, the last ray of that hope vanished.

"I am glad you came between me and the crowd, Jock," he said at last. "I'm afraid I might have killed some of them, and been a murderer in reality—they looked so like a horde of fiends, howling about us. Well, well, I care not how soon I am taken from life now—earth has no more to give me."

"Mony a time I've thought that myse', sir," observed Jock, in sympathy. "When the laddies have stealt my candy rock and broken my whirligigs, and ca'ed owre my barrow in the gutter, and I've been short o' aspital to get mair, I've felt wi' Robbie Burns that life's a weary widdle; but then when things were at their warst some freed wad gie me some rags and banes for naething or a saxpence for gaen message, and I wad be as happy as a king afore night. We're a' liable to thae fits o' depression. 'Deed, sir, I believe the verra Queen on the throne sometimes feels she has rather mair on her heid than she can weel haud up."

"But I have no friends now," said Cleaveland, bitterly.

"Nae freends, sir!—am I no a freend?" cried Gundy Jock in reproachful tones. "And there's Cripple Jenny that ye were a gude freend to ever sin' she lost her man, she has dune naething but hirple aboot frae hoose to hoose sin ye were taen awa' declaring ye to be perfectly innocent. There's twa freends for ye—staunch freends—and there may be hunders mair if ye only kent them."

"And you have always mother and me," brightly added Heartsease. "We are as good as hundreds."

"Ah, but you winna have mother long," said Jean, faintly. "I'll never get over this—never!"

"We have to leave this place," said Cleaveland decisively, after an alarmed "We'll aid decisively, after an alarmed look at his wife's pallid face. "I am a ruined man."

"So wis David, but he lived to be King o' Israel for a' that," cheerily observed Jock. "Wait or I bile the kettle and mak' the mistress a gude cup o' tea, wi' some nice cream intil't, and some soda scones frae the baker's, and ye're a' sittin' as tosh and comfortable as the minister in his manse, and ye'll forget yer troubles. When they begin to bother ye, or ye get concerned aboot the future, just say to yersel', as I do, 'Gey! what's aboot it!'"

In this strain did the stumpy little man continue while he swept up the floor, lighted the fire, and did everything he could think of to make his guests comfortable; but the trouble of Jean at least seemed far beyond his power of healing. She was not ill, but she drooped as if the source of her life had suddenly been snapped. A doctor came and saw her, but though a report immediately spread that she was dying, the opinion pronounced by the medical man was that Jean was comparatively well, and suffering only from excitement and prostration. The prescription was merely a simple tonic, and the advice to get out of Gundy Jock's dingy abode as quickly as possible. Jean heard all in silence and with only a weary shake of the head, and continued to occupy Gundy Jock's humble bed, while the generous-hearted little man cheerfully slept among the rags and bones in the adjoining closet. In a day or two, however, Cripple Jennie heard of the doctor's orders, and insisted on Mrs. Cleaveland being removed to her cottage, a little tumble down place at the foot of the town, which had been long since condemned by the owner, but was thought a perfect palace by Jenny. There was certainly *more air* about Jenny's abode, for the walls were falling asunder and the thatch full of holes, but the weather was still warm and the sun strong, so at length Jane consented to be removed thither. Gundy Jock, though loth to lose his guests, offered to hurl her down in his barrow, but Cleaveland after examining the vehicle thus offered, which was tied together at some places by bits of twine, decided that Jane would be safer leaning on his arm, and supported on the other side by Heartsease. Jane could not bear to face the town's folk again, and the change was made in the evening, under the light of the stars and moon. The sick woman was weak and tottering, but when half way down the town asked to be taken a good way off the road.

"Just along to the brow of the hill, so that I can see the kirkyaird where my bairnies lie," she said in tearful pleading when Cleaveland demurred. "I'll maybe never see it again, though I may lie beside them soon enough."

Every house was darkened and the streets were deserted, so the detour was made, Gundy Jock standing back from the group when the pause was made in sight of the churchyard and quietly "dichting" his eyes with his bonnet.

A Lady's Wish.

"Oh, how I do wish my skin was as clear and soft as yours," said a lady to her friend. "You can easily make it so," answered the friend. "How?" inquired the first lady. "By using HOP BITTERS, that makes pure rich blood and blooming health. It did it for me, as you observe." —*Cario Bulletin.*

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Guelph, April 23rd, 1881 dtfw2

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Guelph, December 13th, 1881. dw

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