

"I never set foot in Bal——" he was replying, when Chirsty interfered.

"Well he minds of it," she said, audaciously, "and no farther back than Monday he says to me, 'That was a cup of tea,' he says, 'as I never tasted the marrows of.'"

"Woman!" cried Tammas.

"See to the house, James," said Chirsty, "and I'll go as far as the carriage with the ladies."

When Chirsty returned, five minutes afterwards, her husband was standing where she had left him.

"My name, mem," he was saying to the stair, "is not James, but Tammas, and it's gospel I tell ye when I say I was never at Balribbie in my born days."

Chirsty passed him without a word, and went into the house, slamming the door. Tammas and his tantrums did not seriously disturb her, but she had been badly used on her way back from the carriage. While helping the ladies to their seats she had been happily conscious of Kitty Crabb peeping at the proud sight from the back of the doctor's dyke, and as Kitty was the most celebrated gossip in Tillyloss, Chirsty