

drops and drinks would have failed to do. He was born again miraculously; and Warden of the Marches, he was indefatigable in the cause.

Morning and evening he patrolled the hill alone, and it seemed he never slept. Now you might come on him visiting far outposts on Lammermore; again he stole forth from some lurking-place of watch in the bird-woods, and stood anon, alert, warrior-figure on some eminent knowe amid the bracken to scan the passes; yet the plague grew.

"We will lose all our fowls for sure!" cried the Woman in despair, as on the morning of the funeral Robin brought home the seventh victim.

"If the Lord has appointed it we will surely so," said the fatalist of the folded hands.

"The Lord!" screamed the angry Woman. "It is little the Lord you are considering! It is just spite because his Honour forbad ye the funeral because of your drunkenness."

"Ay," cried Robin, with sudden passion, "seventy and seven years have I lived in this parish, and never thought to live to see the day when I would miss a funeral. Oh!" he cried, breaking down utterly, "I'm an old man now, and I'd but the one wee pleasure left—just now and again a funeral jaunt—and now that's taken would I were taken too."

That afternoon the old man, standing on a bare hillock in the birch-woods, was hearkening wistfully to the tolling of the minute-bell in the village beneath, when he beheld the Woman moving secretly among the woods beneath, like a lean old witch.

He followed and sprang upon her.

"What gars ye anowt among my woods, Sowie?" he asked with asperity. "Are ye searching husks?"

"I'm just takin' a turn round," said the Woman shortly holding her hand behind her.

"Ha' ye seen anything?"

"I saw Danny," said the Woman.

"Danny!" cried Robin. "What then was Danny at?"

"What you should be at," snapped the woman—"creeping."