

'Mebbe ay, an' mebbe no', but as lang as I hae you to come in an' crack to, an' tell ye a' my plans, what do I need mair? Ye are an' awfu' help to me, Elspet, even i' your bed; an' I cauldna do without ye.' His hand caressed hers as though he could keep her from making her escape from him.

'Do ye mind when we ruggit the hainmost root oot o' the northmost field; an' hoo proud we were, the twa o' us, when we walked round the fields an' saw oor first braird springin'! That's a gey while noo; well on to fifty-four year. Ye were young an' fleet then, Elspet,' he said still stroking her face and looking fondly at her.

'Ay,' she said, sighing wearily. 'An' yet it is like yesterday to look back.'

A faint tinge of color came into her cheek, and noticing it he said joyously, 'Sal, ye'll get better yet, Elspet; but you're no' to risk anither hairst, mind that!'

During the next few days she steadily sank; she could only whisper her replies to him, and he could scarcely control himself to speak. He sat by her bedside gazing wistfully into her eyes, stroking her cheek tenderly, and when his emotion was like to master him, turning to the window to hide it.

He had sat by her bedside in silence, listening to her breathing that was beginning to be labored; and wearied with nights of watching he had fallen asleep on the chair, and when he awoke all was still.

'Elspet,' he cried with a loud cry. The eyes opened languidly. A faint smile stole over her features as she recognized him. He had recalled her as she was quietly falling back into the dark shadow. 'Ye maun get better,' he said hoarsely. 'Ye kin I canna live without ye,' and he rushed distracted from the house.

He did not know where he went, but was brought to himself by hearing Dr. Matthews shout across the moor—

'Well, Saunders, how is Elspet keeping?' 'Keepin',' he shouted back, 'she's keepin' better; she maun get better. She's at her warst i' noo, but she maun tak' the turn sune.'

'She will never rise again, Saunders,' Dr. Matthews said gravely.

'She will rise,' he answered furiously; 'she has been up an' oot; an' will be up an' oot again gin I'm spared.'

'No, Saunders, she has not been up and out,' the doctor returned emphatically.

'I tell ye she had her claes on, an' wi' my help an' the lassie's she travelled to the byre-door, and had a look o' the wid. An' what for no? She's no' dune in spite o' a' ye say; she's no' so near hand dune as I am. She has nae richt to be dune, I tell ye.' The old man's eyes flashed, and he walked quickly towards the house with the doctor.

'Well, if it is as you say—' 'As I say? Ye'll see her yoursel'; she's at her warst i' noo, an' will tak' a turn for the better sune. But she maun get ower this! She maun, I tell ye! A bonny like thing to leave me ahent, an' me a gude seven year aulder! Dinna mistak' yoursel', doctor, Elspet's to get better; mind that!'

Grief had made the old man eloquent and indignant; and when he reached the house he ushered his companion into the room with the words, 'It's the doctor, Elspet!'

There was a sigh from the bed. The doctor stepped quickly forward, and lifting the hand from the coverlet, held it for a moment in his own.

'Finis!' he cried softly, and, turning to the old man, who seemed not to understand what had taken place, he said, 'Elspet has just passed away!'

She was partly dressed. As she herself was entering into the shadow her last care had been the sorrow that was bowing her husband to the earth, her last effort, to breathe again the open air to comfort him, and she had succumbed in the effort.

Saunders stood like a monument. At last he lifted his hand reverently, and repeated, with an unflinching voice,

'The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord!'

'Well, you are a cool husband,' the doctor said in amazement. 'However, as I am

here I may as well get certain particulars for filling up the certificate of death. What was your wife's maiden name?'

'It was El—' The word stuck in the old man's throat, and he fled from the room. In a few minutes he returned, and his lips were drawn tightly together.

'It was —' He could not breathe that name and not cry out in his anguish. He walked side by side with the maiden of twenty again; he saw the shapely head with the clustering hair, and the tender grey eyes looking trustfully into his own; he heard anew the murmur of that voice whose music thrilled him, and, forgetful of everything but his own great love and sorrow, he tottered across the floor, knelt down at the bedside, took the hand of her whom he loved, and, devouring it with kisses, cried, 'Oh, Elspet, Elspet, Elspet! my ain Elspet!'

The doctor looked for a moment at the black heap bent in sorrow over the dead hand, and turned suddenly to the window. He put the pencil he held in his fingers between his teeth and bit it through. He looked out at the window. The woods hemmed in the fields, black and motionless; the sky was still. The room was filled with the wail of a soul in agony. The doctor waited a minute or two, then, lifting his hat, let himself out, and walked over the moor with bent head.

Saunders Maclean was beaten.

The Secret of Happiness.

(By the Duke of Argyll, in 'Good Words.')

Modern life is said to be more complicated than was the existence of our forefathers. It is said that the variety of occupations pursued by men nowadays is infinitely greater than of old. More happens to a man in one day—that is, he takes part in more transactions affecting others than himself than his ancestors undertook or met with in a year. The growth of cities, the comparative scarcity of people, in country districts, makes a greater number of people concerned in matters which touch many others besides themselves. This is true; but it may be doubted whether even in simple country life there be not just as many occasions for doing on a small scale good or evil to neighbors and others with whom men may be brought in contact.

I remember in a quiet part of the world there was a game of croquet played, and six persons were with difficulty got together to play the game. The local clergyman was one of them. He had not seen so many as six persons amusing themselves together for a long time, and he innocently exclaimed, 'Oh, what a brilliant scene!' Yet it is sad to say that in that 'brilliant scene' one of the six persons playing croquet was seen to be decidedly cheating, by doing something not allowed in the game when (I will not say whether it was a he or she) thought that the rest were not looking. It might have been different if the one in fault had really thought it a matter of 'honor' not to do that which he or she did, but the occurrence proved that in the simplest and most remote parts 'honor' was not specially honored.

When was the oath or affirmation 'Upon mine honor' first introduced? Honor may

then have only meant fame or reputation, whether that reputation was well or ill-earned. Of course, everybody wants to make everyone else suppose that his reputation is as high as true excellence can grow or keep alive. When a man has no repute, he is not likely to be trusted to 'get on well' with his fellow-men. So that what the French call 'prestige' is a very real article of value.

'Upon my soul!' was more the equivalent expression used when honor was not spoken of. 'Upon my soul' meant that his spirit might suffer if he did not speak the truth. It was to impress men that the oath-taker took it as taken in the sight of God, and at the peril of his soul if he told anything false.

High as we hold honor, we do not usually actually regard it as a heavenly thing. Put so indeed it is. It is only because it is so often of the earth, earthy, that we do not raise it higher in our speech and sense. It should mean the real dignity and worth of a man in his communion with other men, and in so much as that depends on his absolute integrity and goodness it may be regarded as God's gift. A man of faultless honor comes up to the highest ideal, though he be not clothed in any special theological garment any more than the 'naked truth.'

Honor cannot deceive. It cannot lie. It cannot break a promise given. Good-faith is its motto. It is like a good knight pledged to ride a straight course against Fraud, mounted on the strong charged named Truth. Yet in its essence it is for time only, and for our lifetime's conduct. Man was not made to live alone, and it is only through honor that he and his may dwell happily together.

Manliness has the virtue we are speaking of, for manliness despises ease at the cost of self-respect. But the virtue can be seen not only in the usual form when used about the 'weaker sex,' but in every act of woman's life. With her also, as with man, a word given cannot be broken without loss of self-respect.

Francis I., after he lost his army, his guns, and camp at Pavia, wrote, 'All is lost but honor.' It has a fine sound, this quality which all men have loved, if not by the same name, yet meaning the same thing. Truth is said to have fallen, a great crystal from heaven, and that in striking the earth the crystal burst into a thousand fragments, and people caught up the pieces, so each has a little fragment of truth now. And so with honor. If it be not of the essence of the Eternal, it is at least a mirror of the Divine goodness, struck into many fragments, some soiled with human misunderstandings and misuse, yet containing in each shred and morsel something of the Divine. One particle put into the matter of our daily transactions each with the other may keep our doings bright and faithful. Each may help us to rid the dealings of the day of meanness and trickery. Honor can banish double-dealing. Honor can build up the character of a man, and do much to make a nation stronger. It allays suspicion. It gives confidence. It builds up commerce because it grants security. Interpreted aright, it is a message from God, Whose noblest and supreme work is an honorable work in an honorable man.

Faithfulness Rewarded.

It is said that Josiah Quincy was at one time conversing with Daniel Webster upon the importance of doing even the smallest thing thoroughly and well, when the great man related an incident concerning a petty insurance case which was brought to him while a young lawyer. The fee promised was only twenty dollars. Yet, to do his client full justice, Webster found he must journey to Boston and consult the law library. This involved the expense of about the amount of his fee, but, after hesitating a little, he decided to go to Boston, and consult the authorities, let the cost be what it might. He gained the case. Years after this Webster was passing through the city of New York. An important insurance case was to be tried that day, and one of

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