### Jeannie Sinclair.

THE LILY OF THE STRATH.

CHAPTER V.

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THE TEMPTER—THE TEMPTATION—THE FRAUD—THE UNSER WITNESS.

He opened the door of the bedchamber and listened. The great mansion was hushed in profoundast night silence—nothing being heard but the tick, tick of the clock at the foot of the stairs.

'I mann ha'e a glass of whiskey before I gang, tae nerve me for the job,' said Mrs. Otarrick. 'Mind ye, doctor, it's a dreadru' thing tae gang into a hoose at the deid o' nicht, where's there's nething but a corpse and a new born wean. And me gaun tae rob the deid, tae. It's—it's really awfu'.

'Drink up this, and it will make the vapours vanish,' said the doctor, as he poured out a glass of strong Highland whisky and handed it to her.

She put the glass hurriedly to her lips, and drank its contents hurriedly at a gulp. 'Noo for it,' she muttered, muffling the undressed infant carefully in the shawl which enveloped it, and with a final look at the doctor, she passed from the room.

'I will expect you back in twenty minutes,' he whispered after her, and stood listening at the top of the stairs till he heard the hall door opened and immediately closed. Then he knew that she had got clear of the Castle, and returning to the room where the housekeeper was still sleeping profoundly, and her ladyship still remained under the potent influence of the draught which the doctor had administered. It may well be imagined that Mss. Carrick did not lotter on her way to the keeper's house. In the exercise of her calling she had often been abroad; at all hours of the airch, and in the most lonely places of the district, and that without fear or tremor of any kind. It was different now. Even while crossing the park, she looked this way and that in terror, lest she should be observed and when she gained the private door in the purk wall which bounded the road, she listened for some moments with beating hear ere she unlocked the door and went to road.

The tears raised by her guilty conscience received no justification by her senses. The scene appeared to be as solitary as an u

wood, the cries ceased, and all was quiet again.

The light still burned dimly in the keeper's house, and as she neared the door the silence seemed to her to grow more awful, and to bring with it a sense of awe and dread. This was caused by what she knew the house contained. No presence is so awe-inspiring as the presence of death, and though Mrs. Carrick had oftentimes been in that presence she had never felt the awe so great as now. This was conscience, again, relating her and all that surrounded her to the fraud and the sin she was now committing.

'Mercy me, if the doctor's wrang—if the lassie be ha' deid!' she said within herself, as, with a trembling hand, she raised the latch and crept with hesitation along the

lassie bo ha' deid!" she said within herself, as, with a trembling hand, she raised the latch and crept with hesitation along the passage.

Alas! he fear proved vain. Doctor Mapp's assertion was found true. The poor, unknown wanderer was dead, and the child lay calmiy sleeping in unconscious peace in the cold, cold bosom.

Mirs. Carrick shuddered as she approached the still form on the bed. The tace wasturned towards her, but the eyes were closed. The unmistakeable impress of death was on the features, but a strange new beauty had also come upon them. The wan, worn expression of misery and pain were gond, and the countenance had recovered what doubles had been its look in the days of girlish hope and love.

In nervous haste, and without venturing a second look at the white face, the "robber of the dead," as she had truly styled herself—anatched up the infant which lay by the side of its dead mother, and put Lady Sinclair's in its place. Then, goaded by guilt and fear, she rushed from the house and filed in haste along the footpath and across the park towards Beigley Castle.

Had her faculty of observation not been for the time, extinguished by the nervous confusion of her mind, she might have noticed, as she issued from the door of the house, a dark form creeping steathily away from the window, and crouching along by the side of the wald. But this form she never saw, and no sooner had she disappeared past the end of the wood, than it rose slowly up from its recumbent position and approached the door from which she had just emerged.

It was Will Sanderson. Unable to sleep in his layer of straw at the gipsies' encampment, he had come abroad, curious to know what might have become of Nell, whom he had left lying on the road. Finding her away from the spot where he had left ther, he provided about the vicinity, till his attention was attracted by the light in the window of the keeper's but, and, prompted by curiosity, he drew near to obtain a view of the interior. This was nearly half an hour after wandering Ned ha

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