The Maiden's Choice

OR. THE LAIRD OF BIRKENCLEUCH A Tale of the Covenanters.

These were not the days of newspapers and telegraphs, which make such a task as the Baronet had now before him short and easy. There was no machinery which he could set to work in the accomplishment of it. He had to trust only to his own personal exertions, and there was nothing for it but to traverse the district on horseback—exploring the wilds, and journeying over the mountains and moors. The physical labour involved in this was nothing to the sturdy athletic sportsman, and day after day he rode over miles of moss and heather, making diligent inquiries at every lonely habitation he could desery.

miles of moss and nearger, making uniquest inquiries at every lonely habitation he could desory.

But he travelled and inquired in vain, for no tidings could be had of Richard Wayland, and as days and weeks passed on without bringing hope, both the Baronet and Helen grew sad and desponding. At the suggestion of the former, Helen despatched a long letter to Holland to Walter Elliof, giving detailed information of the extraordinary things that had come about, and asking if he remembered anything about the packet which Lady Barton had committed to his father's care. Sir Gilbert did not expect any practical good to come of this, for he did not doubt that the packet had by this time fallen into the hands of Charlie Allan, who would withhold it for the gratification of his revenge. But the Baronet knew how greatly interested Walter would be in the discovery that had been made, and how cordially he would sympathise in his grief and disappointment; and it was for these reasons chiefly that, in the heaviness of his heart, he asked Helen to write a detailed account of matters, and ask Walter for a reply, so far as his knowledge of the packet might ye.

tailed account of matters, and has wheter he reply, so far as his knowledge of the packet might go.

The time, he thought, might come when Watter's testimony to the existence of such a paper might be of importance.

The letter was sent, and Sir Gilbert continued his search for the absent one till every acre of ground with twenty miles of Brankswood had been visited.

Still the search was in vain—no tidings could be had of Richard Wayland.

TAIN THE PACKET FOR SHE GILDERT BARTON

—AN UNPORTUNATE DISCOVERY—THE HOPELESS FLIGHT.

We change the scene for a very brief space, and look into a quaint room in the quaint old Dutch town of Rotterdam. The room and all its furnishings had a foreign look, but its features were those of snugness and comfort. It presented an appearance of Dutch heaviness, but that, as we know, is also chazeterised by a plain substantiality and solid respectability, which to the Scotch eve and the Scotch taste are not uninviting. The human beings seated in the room, however, were not people of the usual broad Dutch build, but forms with which we are already well acquainted, for the group consisted of the Scottish exiles—Mr Gordon, Walter Elliot, and Marion, with another which has been added to their number during their residence in Holland—a little curly-headed boy, the very image of Walter, whom Marion was at the moment dandling on her knee, with all a mother's pride and fondness.

But for the presence of this little bright eyed rogue, there is little change in the appearance of our old acquaintances to suggest the interval of years that in reality stretches between now and the date of their quitting Scotland. Walter seems a little stouter, Marion a little more matronly, and Mr. Gordon's face paler and his hair somewhat whiter, but the change is so small as not to be marked or very noticeable.

Mr. Gordon's at in a large high-backed chair, with an open packetlying on his knee, which he had already read. His counternance

don's face paler and his hair somewhat whiter, but the change is so small as not to be marked or very noticeable.

Mr. Gordon' sat in a large high-backed chair, with an open packetlying on his knee, which he had already read. His countenance, was as calm and as placid as ever—beaming with the same high Christian faith and patient hope. The paper he had perused was a communication from Scotland, from suffering friends there who from time to time sent him tidings of the dark period of persecution that was increasing every day in severity.—The good man's chief cause of mourning was that he was prevented by suffering from returning to Scotland to bear his share in the good fight—in the contendings of the Covenanters against the oppression of the rulers, and the maintenance of the truth against fierce and cruel enactments which were meant to extinguish, but had only the effect of making the sufferers more stauech and true to, their principles. The minister's heart was wholly with the enduring rommant of whose ultimate triumph he was perfectly aure. But the exposures he had experienced during his wanderings, and after the battle of Pentland, where he had been wounded, had produced theumatism in his limbs which made it impossible for him to take any active personal part in a cause so sacred to his soul and so dear to his leart. All he could deand his he did regularly—was to send a written epistle to his lock at Greystone, full of counsel, exortation, and ried gospel comfort, and these epistles were received by the people as precious gifts, and circulated from hand to hand till they were worn to rags, but not before the contents had sank deep into their learts.

Walter as over against Mr. Gordon, and

hand to hand till they were worn to rags, but not before the contents had sank deep into their hearts.

Walter sat over against Mr. Gordon, and he also had an open letter in his hand, which he had just read aloud to the intense interest of himself and his two hearers. It was Helen Cringan's letter.

And so you have a distinct recollection of the packet referred to? observed Mr. Gordon, after a brief pause, during which Walter had been slitting in a meditative mood.

I have, he answered; 'and more than that—I am pretty certain that Charlie Allan has not obtained possession of it. After my father's death, Lady Barton asked me about it so anxiously, and charged me so carnestly to take particular care of it, that, judging it to contain papers of great importance, I deposited it not only in a secret drawer, but in a secret room, the existence of which is known only to myself, and it is hardly possible that Charlie should have discovered it. dly poss ered it.'

To be continued.

A Cat Case—A great law case has recently been tried in Wales, involving the legal status and pecuniary equivalent of a cat. At the Abergavenny County Court, Joseph Holmes sued Charles Morgan for loss alleged to have sustained for the slaughter of two cats. The plaintiff is a fish-dealer, and the defendant a butcher, and the nature of the case appears from the following particulars annexed in legal form to the summons: "The damage and injury done to a cat belonging to plaintiff, caught in a trap set in your slaughter house, in or near Lion st, when the left fore leg of the said cat was broken, and the compensation in respect of the same, £1. To value of one cat belonging to the plaintiff caught and killed in the trap in the said slaughter-house, £2." The cats were named respectively Spot and Jet, and according to the testimony of the plaintiff's wife their value, and more especially that of the deceased Spot, was not to be estimated by "golden sovereigns." Legal gentlemen appeared on either side, and after a lengthy argument, and the submission of a case by the plaintiff's solicitor, the judge ruled that the cats were trespossers, and had come to their deaths by misadventure. The plaintiff was accordingly nonsuited.

The salaries of the Licut-Governors of Ouebec and Outario baye hear TO BE CONTINUED.

The salaries of the Licut.-Gover-rors of Quebec and Ontario have been fxed at \$8,000 per annum, and those of Nova Scotia and New Branswick

WILLIAM SMITH, Manager Gore Bank.

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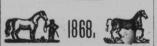
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