

dinna tak' care an ill thing will fa' on ye.'

Mrs. Grant forced an uproarious laugh. 'Ay, I see noo; it's the preachin' ye hae taken to. Faith, it's a cloak that'll fit ye fine, Nancy. Ministers can aye swear to their heart's content, an' threaten folk wi' ill things whenever it suits them. Woman, ye sud hae heard the aye we had in the kirk Sabbath eight days. It was fine. He preached on the destruction o' Sodom and Gomorrah an' when he was describin' the fire an' the brimstone, an' the pair bodies a' in a low, ye micht hae heard a pin drap. An' then the swears he gied—ma heart gied a loup at every aye o' them, an' I says to myself: 'Man, ye're a clever chiel, an' can dae it weel. Ye can preach a rousin' discourse, an' ye can pit up a fine prayer, an' gin ye were here every Sabbath, I'd come to the kirk mair reg'lar.' Our auld minister isna half sae interestin' an' excitin', an' gin yon man were placed here, the kirk wad sune be packed like herrin's in a barrel. Colin didna like it; it gied him the creepies, he said, but it was jist ma style.'

'Ay,' answered Nancy, with biting irony, maun hae suited ye fine. Wasna the minister yer ain brither?'

At this stage Colin walked in. He looked at Nancy as though he wuld hae liked to have a chat with her. But in the act of shakin hands he caught sight of the substantial figure of his wife and moved away.

'Here, Colin, ma,' she cried, 'hae ye no a word to say to yer auld sweetheart, Nancy Bell?'

'It iss into the field I will be going,' replied Colin, 'and I hef the pigs to look after whateffer.'

'Come back, ye auld fule,' cried his wife. She had the feeling that so far she had had the best of it—not usual in an encounter with Nancy—and now she was quite willing to slip away, and leave the old dame with her husband. 'Come back an' listen to Nancy's sermon. Hae ye no heard that she has taken to the preaching?'

But Colin had just crossed over from the M'Lean Arms, and answered with spirit:—

'Nay, nay, one woman's preachin' iss mair nor I ken how to put up wi'.'

With that parting shot he walked off.

Nancy thought it was about time she fulfilled her mission, which she had no intention of forgoing.

'See noo,' she jeered, 'a fine man yon. He's noo sae muckle pleased wi' ye after a. Ye maun cry on yer dochter, Mistress Grant. Gae to the stair fit an' ca' Sybil, "Come doon an' hear auld Nancy preach, ye'll like it fine." Gin ye did that, woman, an' the lassie were in the hoose, but she isna—I ken fine whaur she is, an' the mair shame o' ye to allow her—but gin she were at hame, she'd cry back an' say wi' her fine English: "I cannot come, mother, whateffer. I hef put in my curl papers, and my golden hair iss half down, and I hae taken off my new shoes, an' I cannot put them on again."

This speech, with its inimitable mockery of Sybil's mincing pronunciation, raised Mrs. Grant to a white heat of passion, while it equally awakened her fears.

'Get out o' my shop, ye auld black crow,' she cried; 'an' gin ye say anither word agin ma Sybil, I'll speak to the young laird about ye.'

But instead of going away, Nancy drew nearer, and lifting her long skinny hand, shook it in Mrs. Grant's face.

'Ye're a vain silly woman,' she cried, 'an' gin ye dinna min', yer prood lassie will loose her guid name, gin she hasna lost it already. Q'in it wasna for Colin, I wadna hae warned

ye. But for his sake, I tell ye to keep yer lassie in the hoose, an' get her marrit to Ronald Campbell as sune as ye can, or she'll come to na guid. An' I tell ye, Mistress Grant, that gin the lassie gaes wrong, it's yersel' wha's pit silly pridefu' notions intil her heid. An' noo I'm gaen awa,' an' when yer silly lassie comes hame, spier her what she's bin daein' wi' the laird in his den. And now ye can consider whether that style o' preachin' suits ye.'

The old woman turned on her heel and left the shop, while Mrs. Grant sank silently into the nearest chair.

CHAPTER XVI.

FIONA AND NIAL MOR.

Torquil M'Iver's accident at Bronach Water was a serious blow to his daughter—coming when her own life was so darkened by trouble and perplexity—and it required all her natural vigour and serenity of mind to master the despondency that threatened to overwhelm her.

But for her father's sake she fought bravely with herself. There was an unwanted pallor in her face, and a wistfulness in her eyes which she could not dispel, and often when alone she heaved a sigh like one bearing a secret burden of suffering, yet she had ever a bright smile and hopeful tone in the presence of others.

Moreover, it is not uncommon to find a practical bent in highly reflective and imaginative natures, which, on critical occasions, enables them to act with greater decision and wisdom than more pragmatic individuals. It was so with Fiona. She roused herself, and showed an insight and sagacity in consulting with her father on his affairs—now more embarrassed than ever—that caused him no little admiration and surprise. But do what they would they could not immediately make up for the heavy loss at Bronach Water.

No wonder, therefore, that Mr. M'Iver valued Nial Mor's goodwill, and was more than gratified with every word that had indicated the survival of his interest in Fiona. If these two young people should yet come to regard each other favourably, and the union he had so often desired take place, what a deliverance that would be from difficulties that seemed otherwise insurmountable.

With that thought in his mind he eagerly anticipated Nial's visit to Fas-Ghlaic, and often spoke of him with the utmost enthusiasm. Nial had saved him from a miserable death in the Kelpie's Pool. Nial was all, and more than all, he had ever believed him to be—courageous, magnanimous, loyal to his friends, a man to lean on in the day of trouble.

Fiona listened with mingled feelings. She was very grateful to Nial Mor, but she was also stung with the thought that he was being extolled to the disparagement of Geoffrey Waldegrave. Her father was thinking how much nobler the discarded lover was, than the one to whom she still—in his view so unreasonably—clung. It was one of her chief trials just then that she stood alone in her faith in Waldegrave. But to discuss him any further was both useless and undesirable, and Mr. M'Iver threw out no more direct hint as to what he had begun to hope regarding Nial.

(To be Continued.)

I did not know, till on a grave
I saw the wind-blown grasses wave,
How futile and how fugitive
The business are for which we strive.

An Open Letter to Mothers.

We are permitted to make public the following letter, which is a fair sample of hundreds written by mothers throughout Canada praising Baby's Own Tablets:

Dunbar, Ont., March 18, 1903.

Several weeks ago my baby was very cross and ill owing to troubles common to children when teething. A correspondent highly recommended Baby's Own Tablets, saying she would use no other medicine for her baby. I sent for a box, used them according to directions and must say that I have found them the best medicine for a teething child I have ever tried. One Tablet every other day keeps my baby well and I am sure of my rest at night. I echo the words of my friend and say "they are just splendid."

Mrs. Charles Willard.

Baby's Own Tablets will cure all the minor ailments of children, and may be given with absolute safety to even a newborn baby. These Tablets are the only medicine for children sold under an absolute guarantee to contain no opiate or harmful drug. Sold by druggists or sent by mail post paid at 25 cents a box by writing direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

Reading for Girls.

I could not insist too much upon the only principle which should actuate a girl in her reading, or for that matter a man in his. It should be a generous curiosity to know the thing and the manner of it, and not a selfish greed for information; it should be educative rather than instructive. For this reason I would urge the maid whom I am all this time imagining as fair as she is good, and eager as she is innocent, to shun Lists of Hundred Best Books and the like. These are often the inventions of vulgar and mediocre minds,—at the best, of academic minds. They make choice for their readers in a domain where their will should be freest, and tacitly pledge them to it on pain of being found persons of bad taste. But no one should read any book as proof of good taste. To do that is to devitalize the whole affair, and render it mechanical. It is better to read an inferior book with zest and joy, than a superior book without either. Indeed, not to go too far in a way where danger lies, one may recognize the fact that inferior authors minister to inferior readers, and that this is probably one reason why both exist in such great numbers. Besides, a vast deal that is sweetest and loveliest in literature lies quite outside of the books which are put into lists of the Hundred Best. It is to be found in the Thousand Second-Best, the Ten Thousand Third-Best. Often it lurks obscurely in fragments, or fugitive pieces, the half-conscious beauty of artists who have known how to do one or two things, and have exhausted their creative impulse in these,—W. D. Howells.

When Your Joints Are Stiff

and muscles sore from cold or rheumatism, when you slip and sprain a joint, strain your side or bruise yourself, Perry Davis' Painkiller will take out the soreness and fix you right in a jiffy. Always have it with you, and use it freely. USE

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