

## The Family Circle.

### AGAIN.

Come, breathing gently o'er the eager land,  
With fresh green grass that springs to kiss thy  
feet;  
With little brooks that sparkle in the sand,  
April's faint, shining clouds both soft and fleet,  
All the fair things that do thine advent greet  
Flowers with their blue eyes still by snowdrifts  
wet,  
South winds and flying showers; all, all how  
sweet,  
Let me forget!

Spill from thy white hands till the tender buds,  
An opal mist in every gray old tree;  
Pour from thine urn the rushing silver floods  
That leap, and dance, and struggle to be free  
Coax the pink May blooms to look up at thee,  
Fearless of stormy wind or frosts that fret,  
Enchantress, bring not back the past to me,  
Let me forget!

Alas! when all thy spells but hide a sting,  
When the wild blossom in each fragile bell  
A lurking drop of bitter honey bring,  
When hills and forest one worn story tell,  
When through the bird's new warble sounds a  
knell,  
When grief and sweetness are in all things met,  
When winds repeat those voices loved too well,  
Can I forget?

Poor pangs of earth! I know there comes a day,  
Not far nor late, when God's restoring Spring  
Shall set aside these miracles of clay,  
And his serene immortal summer bring,  
Wherein I shall not pine for anything;  
Not mortal love, nor loss, nor weak regret,  
But at His feet my grateful rapture sing,  
And so forget!

—Rose Terry Cooke.

### A DOCTOR OF THE OLD SCHOOL.\*

BY IAN MACLAREN.

#### II.

#### THROUGH THE FLOOD

Dr. MacLure did not lead a solemn procession from the sick bed to the dining room, and give his opinion from the hearthrug with an air of wisdom bordering on the supernatural, because neither the Drumtochty houses nor his manners were on that large scale. He was accustomed to deliver himself in the yard, and to conclude his directions with one foot in the stirrup; but when he left the room where the life of Annie Mitchell was ebbing slowly away, our doctor said not one word, and at the sight of his face her husband's heart was troubled.

He was a dull man Tammas, who could not read the meaning of a sign, and labored under a perpetual disability of speech; but love was eyes to him that day, and a mouth.

'Is't as bad as yir lookin', doctor? tell's the truth; wull Annie no come through?' and Tammas looked MacLure straight in the face, who never flinched his duty or said smooth things.

'A' wud gie onything tae say Annie hes a chance, but a' daurna; a' doot yir gaein' tae lose her, Tammas.'

MacLure was in the saddle, and as he gave his judgment, he laid his hand on Tammas's shoulder with one of the rare caresses that pass between men.

'It's a sair business, but ye 'ill say the man and no vex Annie; she 'ill dae her best, a'ill warrant.'

'An' a'ill dae mine,' and Tammas gave MacLure's hand a grip that would have crushed the bones of a weakling. Drumtochty felt in such moments the brotherliness of this rough-looking man, and loved him.

Tammas hid his face in Jess's mane, who looked round with sorrow in her beautiful eyes, for she had seen many tragedies, and in this silent sympathy the stricken man drank his cup, dry by drop.

'A' wesna prepared for this, for a' aye thoct she wud live the longest. . . . She's younger than me by ten years, and never wes ill. . . . We've been mairit twal year laist Martinmas, but it's juist like a year the day. . . . A' wes never worthy o' her, the bonniest, snoddest (nearest), kindest lass in the Glen.

A' never cud mak oot hoo she ever lookit at me, 'at hesna hed ae word tae say about her till it's ower late. . . . She didna cuist (cast) up tae me that a' wesna worthy o' her, no her, but nye she said, "Yir ma ain gudeman, and nane cud be kinder tae me."

. . . . An' a' wes minded tae be kind, but a' see noo many little trokes a' micht hae dune for her, and noo the time is bye. . . . Naeboddy kens hoo patient she wes wi' me, and aye made the best o' me, an' never pit me tae shame afore the fouk.

. . . . An' we never hed ae cross word, no ane in twal year. . . . We were mair nor man and wife, we were sweet-hearts a' the time. . . . Ob, ma bonnie lass, what 'ill the bairnies an' me dae without ye, Annie?'

The winter night was falling fast, the snow lay deep upon the ground, and the merciless north wind moaned through the close as Tammas wrestled with his sorrow dry-eyed, for tears were denied Drumtochty men. Neither the doctor or Jess moved hand or foot, but their hearts were with their fellow creature, and at length the doctor made a sign to Margret Howe, who had come out in search of Tammas, and now stood by his side.

'Dinna mourn tae the brakin' o' yir hert, Tammas,' she said, 'as if Annie an' you hed never luv'd. Neither death nor time can pairt them that luv; there's naethin' in a' the warld sae strong as luv. If Annie gaes frae the sicht o' yir een she 'ill come the nearer tae yir hert. She wants tae see ye, and tae hear ye say that ye 'ill never forgit her nicht or day till ye meet in the land where there's nae pairtin'. Ob, a' ken what a'm sayin', for it's five year noo sin George gied away, an' he's mair wi' me noo than when he wes in Edinboro' and I wes in Drumtochty.'

'Thank ye kindly, Margret; thae are gude words and true, an' ye hev the richt tae say them; but a' canna dae with without seein' Annie comin' tae meet me in the gloamin' an' gaein' in an' oot the hoose, an' hearin' her ca' me by ma name, an' a'ill no can tell her that a' luv her when there's nae Annie in the hoose.

'Can naethin' be dune, doctor? Ye savit Flora Cammil, and young Burnbrae, an' yon shepherd's wife Dunleith wy, an' we were a' sae prood o' ye, an' pleased tae think that ye hed keepit deith frae anither bame. Can you no think o' somethin' tae help Annie, and gie her back tae her man and bairnies?' and Tammas searched the doctor's face in the cold, weird light.

'There's nae poor in heaven or airth like luv,' Margret said to me afterwards; 'it maks the weak strong and the dumb tae speak. Oor hearts were as water afore Tammas's words, an' a' saw the doctor shake in his saddle. A' never kent till that meenut hoo he hed a share in a' body's griet, an' carried the heaviest weecht o' a' the Glen. A' peetied him wi' Tammas lookin' at him sae wistfully, as if he hed the keys o' life an' deith in his hands. But he wes honest, and wudna hold oot a false houp tae deceive a sore hert or win escape for himsell.'

'Ye needna plead wi' me, Tammas, to dae the best a' can for yir wife. Man, a' kent her lang afore ye ever luv'd her; a' brocht her intae the warld, and a' saw her through the fever when she wes a bit las-sikie; a' closed her mither's een, and it wes me hed tae tell her she wes an orphan, an' nae man wes better pleased when she got a gude husband, and a' helpit her wi' her fower bairns. A've naither wife nor bairns o' ma own, an' a' coont a' the fouk o' the Glen ma family. Div yet think a' wudna save Annie if I cud? If there wes a man in Muirtown 'at cad dae mair for her, a'd have him this verra nicht, but a' the doctors in Perthshire are helpless for this tribble.

'Tammas, ma pair fellow, if it could avail, a' tell ye a' wud lay doon this auld worn-out ruckle o' a body o' mine juist tae see ye baith sittin' at the fireside, an' the bairns round ye, couthy an' canty again; but it's no tae be, Tammas, it's no tae be.'

'When a' lookit at the doctor's face,' Margret said, 'a' thought him the winsomest man ta' ever saw. He was transfigured that nicht, for a'm judgng there's nae transfiguration like luv.'

'It's God's wull an' maun be borne, but it's a sair wull for me, an' a'm no ungratefu' tae you, doctor, for a' ye've dune and what ye said the nicht,' and Tammas went back to sit with Annie for the last time.

Jessie picked her way through the deep snow to the main road, with a skill that came of long experience, and the doctor held converse with her according to his wont.

'Eb, Jess, wumman, you wes the hardest work a' hae tae face, an' a' wud rather hae ta'en ma chance o' anither row in a Glen Urtach drift than tell Tammas Mitchell his wife wes deen.'

'A' said she cudna be cured, and it wes true, for there's juist ae man in the land fit for't, and they micht as weel try tae get the mune oot o' heaven. Sae a' said naethin' tae vex Tammas's hert, for it's heavy enough without regrets.

'But it's hard, Jess, that money wull buy life after a', an' if Annie wes a duchess her man wudna lose her; but bein' only a pair cottar's wife, she maun dee afore the week's oot.

'Gin we hed him the mourn there's little doot she wud be saved, for he hasna lost mair than five per cent. o' his cases, and they 'ill be pul'toon's craturs, no strappin' women like Annie.

'It's oot o' the question, Jess, sae hurry up, lass, for we've had a heavy day. But it wud be the grandest thing that wes ever dune in the Glen in oor time if it could be managed by hook or crook.'

'We 'ill gang and see Drumsheugh, Jess; he's anither man sin' Geordie Hoo's deith, and he was a' kinder than fouk kent; and the doctor passed at a gallop through the village, whose lights shone across the white frost-bound road.

'Come in by, doctor; a' heard ye on the road; ye 'ill hae been at Tammas Mitchell's; hoo's the gudewife? a' doot she's sober.'

'Annie's deen,' Drumsheugh, an' Tammas is like tae break his hert.'

'That's no lichtsome, doctor, no lichtsome ava (at all), for a' dinna ken ony man in Drumtochty sae bund up in his wife as Tammas, and theirs no a bonnier wumman o' her age crosses oor kirk-door than Annie, nor a cleverer at her wark. Man, ye 'ill need tae pit yir brains in steep. Is she clean beyond ye?'

'Beyond me and every ither in the land but ane, and it wud cost a hundred guineas tae bring him tae Drumtochty.'

'Certes, he's no blate (backward); it's a fell chairge for a short day's work; but hundred or no hundred we 'ill hae him, an' no let Annie gang, and her no half her ycars.'

'Are ye meanin' it, Drumsheugh?' and MacLure turned white below the tan.

'William MacLure,' said Drumsheugh, in one of the few confidences that ever broke the Drumtochty reserve, 'a'm a lonely man wi' naeboddy o' ma ain blude tae care for me livin', or tae lift me intae ma coffin when a'm deid.'

'A' fetch awa at Muirtown market for an extra pund on a beast, or a shillin' on the quarter o' barley, an' what's the gude o't? Burnbrae gaes aff tae get a goone for his wife or a buke for his college laddie, an' Lachlan Campbell 'ill no leave the place noo without a ribbon for Flora.

'Iika man in the Kildrummie train has bit fairin' in his pooch for the fouk at hame that he's bocht wi' the siller he won.

'But there's naeboddy tae be lookin' out for me, an' comin' doon the road tae meet me, and daffin' (joking) wi' me about their fairing, or feeling ma pockets. On ay, a've seen it a' at ither hooses, though they tried tae hide it frae me for fear a' wud lauch at them. Me lauch, wi' ma cauld, empty hame!

'Yir the only man kens, Weelum, that I

aince luv'd the noblest wumman in the Glen or onywhere, an' a' luv her still, but wi' anither luv noo.

'She hed given her hert tae anither, or a've thoct a' micht hae won her, though nae man be worthy o' sic a gift. Ma hert turned to bitterness, but that passed awa beside the brier bush whar George Hoo lay yon sad summer time. Some day a'ill tell ye ma story, Weelum, for you an' me are auld freends, and will be till we dee.'

MacLure felt beneath the table for Drumsheugh's hand, but neither man looked at the other.

'Weel, a' we can dae noo, Weelum, gin we haena mickle brichtness in oor ain bames, is tae keep the licht frae gaein' oot in anither hoose. Write the telegram, man, and Sandy 'ill send it aff frae Kildrummie this verra nicht, and ye 'ill hae yir man the morn.'

'Yir the man a' coonted ye Drumsheugh, but ye 'ill grant me ae favor. Ye 'ill lat me pay the half, bit by bit—a' ken yir wullin' tae dae't a—but a haena mony pleasures, an' a' wud like tae hae ma ain share in savin' Annie's life.'

Next morning a figure received Sir George on the Kildrummie platform whom that famous surgeon took for a gillie, but who introduced himself as 'MacLure of Drumtochty.' It seemed as if the East had come to meet the West when these two stood together, the one in travelling furs, handsome and distinguished, with his strong, cultured face and carriage of authority, a characteristic type of his profession; and the other more marvellously dressed than ever, for Drumsheugh's top coat had been forced upon him for the occasion, his face and now one redness with the bitter cold; rough and ungainly, yet not without some signs of power in his eye and voice, the most heroic type of his noble profession. MacLure compassed the precious arrival with observances till he was securely seated in Drumsheugh's dog-cart—a vehicle that lent itself to history—with two full-sized plaids added to his equipment—Drumsheugh and Hillocks had both been requested—and MacLure wrapped another plaid around a leather case, which was placed below the seat with such reverence as might be given to the Queen's regalia. Peter attended their departure full of interest, and as soon as they were in the fir woods MacLure explained that it would be an eventful journey.

'It's a' richt in here, for the wind disna get at the snaw, but the drifts are deep in the Glen, and th'ill be some engineerin' afore we get tae oor destination.'

Four times they left the road and took their way over fields, twice they forced a passage through a slap in a dyke, thrice they used gaps in the paling which MacLure had made on his downward journey.

'A' seleckit the road this mornin', an' a' ken the depth tae an inch; we 'ill get through this steadin' here tae the main road, but oor worst job 'ill be crossin' the Tochty.

'Ye see the bridge hes been shaken' wi' this winter's flood, and we daurna venture on it, sae we have tae ford, and the snaw's been melting up Urtach way. There's nae doot the water's gey big, an' it's threatenin' tae rise, but we 'ill win through wi' a warste.

'It might be safer tae lift the instruments oot o' reach o' the water; wud ye mind haddin' (holding) them on yir knee till we're ower? an' keep firm in yir seat in case we come on a stane in the bed o' the river.'

By this time they had come to the edge, and it was not a cheering sight. The Tochty had spread out over the meadows, and while they waited they could see it cover another two inches on the trunk of a tree. There are summer floods, when the water is brown and flecked with foam, but this was a winter flood, which is black and sulley, and runs in the centre with a strong, fierce, silent current. Upon the opposite side Hillocks stood to give directions by word and hand, as the ford was on his land, and none knew the Tochty better in all its ways.

\* From "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," published by Fleming Kevell Co., Toronto.