

is done; and for sending my Menie hame
 aetin' I'll gie him a hame-comin'!"

"No, no, it wasna Willie's wyte," replied
 Menie, "it was mine, it was a' mine. But
 Dinra be angry." And here the maiden un-
 bloomed her grief, and the old woman took
 part with her saying, "son as he's mine ye
 just served him as he deserved, Menie."

Her heart grew lighter as her story was
 told, and they sat by the window toge-
 ther, watching one party after another return from
 the fair. But Willie was not amongst them;
 and as it began to wax late, and acquaintan-
 ces passed, Menie ran to enquire of them if
 they had seen anything of Willie, and they
 shook their heads and said, "No." And it
 grew later and later, till the last party, who
 went to the fair, had passed; singing as they
 went along; but still there were no tidings
 of Willie. Midnight came, and the morning
 came, but he came not: his mother became
 miserable, and in the bitterness of her heart
 she upbraided Menie, and Menie wept the
 more. They sat watching through the night
 and through the morning, listening to every
 sound. They heard the lark begin his song,
 the poultry leap from their roost, the cows
 low on the milk maidens, and the ploughman
 prepare for the field, yet Willie made not
 his appearance. Time grew on till mid-day,
 and the misery of the mother and Menie in-
 creased. The latter was still dressed in the
 apparel she had worn on the previous day,
 and the former throwing on her Sunday gown,
 they proceeded to the town together to seek
 for him. They inquired as they went along,
 and from one they received the information;
 "I thought I saw him wi' the sodgers in the
 afternoon." The words were as if a light-
 ning had fallen on Menie's heart; his mother
 rang her hands in agony, and cried, "my
 bairn!" and she cast a look on poor
 Menie that had more meaning than kindness
 in it.

They reached the town, and as they reach-
 ed it, a vessel was drawing from the quay:
 she had recruits on board, who were to be
 sent to Chatham, from whence they were
 to be shipped to India. Amongst those re-
 cruits was Willie Forbes.

When he rushed in madness from the dan-
 gerous room, he met a recruiting party on the
 street; he accompanied them to their quar-
 ters; he drank with them; out of madness
 and revenge he drank; he enlisted; he drank
 again; his indignation kindled against Menie
 and against his rival; he again swore at the
 remembrance of her refusing him her hand:
 he drank deeper; his parent was forgotten:

he took the bounty; he was sworn in, and
 while the fumes of the liquor yet raged in
 his brain, maddening him and drowning re-
 flection, he was next day embarked for Chat-
 ham. The vessel had not sailed twenty yards
 from the quay, Willie and his companions
 were waving their hats, and giving three
 cheers as they pulled off, when two women
 rushed along the quay. The elder stretched
 out her arms to the vessel: she cried wildly.
 "Give me back my bairn! Willie! Willie
 Forbes!" He heard her screams above the
 huzza of the recruits, he knew his mother's
 voice, he saw his Menie's dishevelled hair;
 the poisonous drink died within him; his hat
 dropped from his hand: he sprang upon the
 side of the vessel; he was about to plunge
 into the river, when he was seized by the
 soldiers and dragged below. A shriek rang
 from his mother and from Menie; those who
 stood around them tried to comfort and pity
 them, and by all but themselves in a few days
 the circumstance was forgotten.

"Who will provide for me now, when my
 Willie is gane?" mourned the disconsolate
 widow, when the first days of her grief had
 passed. "I will," answered Menie Morris-
 son; "and your home shall be my home, and
 my bread your bread, and the husband o' the
 widow, and the father o' the orphan, will
 bring our Willie back again." The old wo-
 man pressed her to her breast, and called her
 —"her mair than daughter." They left the
 farmstead, and rented a very small cottage
 at some miles distance, and there, to provide
 for her adopted mother, Menie kept two
 cows, and in the neighbouring markets her
 butter was first sold, and her poultry brought
 the best price. But she toiled in the harvest
 field—she sewed—she knitted—she spun—
 she was the laundress of the gentry in the
 neighbourhood—she was beloved by all, and
 nothing came wrong to bonny Menie Morris-
 son. Four years had passed, and they had
 twice heard from Willie, who had obtained
 the rank of serjeant. But the fifth year had
 begun, and from a family in the neighbour-
 hood Menie had received several newspa-
 pers, that, as she said, she "might read to
 her mother what was gaun on at the wars."
 She was reading an account of one of the
 first victories of Wellington in the east, and
 she passed on to what was entitled a Gal-
 lant Exploit. Her voice suddenly faltered—
 the paper shook in her hands. "What is't—
 oh! what is't, Menie?" cried the old wo-
 man; "Is't anything about Willie?—my