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## TALES OF THE LINKS OF LOVE.

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### LILLYMERE.

CHAPTER XIII.—Continued

"Who comes? Who comes?"  
"The bride, no doubt; who else can it be?"

"No, no, Luggy. It is but nine o'clock. The bride and her friends do not come here at present. They meet me, the best man, and my people at the Manse at twelve. Then, after the nuptial knot is made—that is the grand name for it—and we twain are one, we make a procession of decorated waggons, the music in front, fiddles and bagpipes, flutes and drums, and arrive here about two to dine. Then after dinner begins the daft half of the day."

"Master, why does a decent man like you make a daft half of the day? Is it becoming in a good man?"

"That may depend on how daft we make things. Drinking is not becoming, I concede that to you; but we shall have several pots and kettles of boiling water, and concoct as we go on, every form of the cup which cheers but not inebriates. And the music will abound and resound, and we shall sing songs and dance."

"Ah, Mr. Ramasine; but is not singing worldly songs and dancing sinful?"

"My mother does not think dancing or singing and liting sinful. And my mother is, and has ever been, both a good and a useful woman."

"Laird, I differ with you about dancing; and think it likely to lead young people to evil ways. And for so much feasting, is it not wasteful?"

"Luggy, you know the folk around call me a 'near' man, a 'hard' man, and I know not what else. The women call me a 'wizend old stick,' all because I work early and late; spending little money, wasting no time. I would not be the Laird of Ramasine's Corners this day were I a wasteful or an idling man. So, d'ye see? As many as may come, just to quiet them, and to have a really cheerful, downright happy time, are to feast this day—the happiest day of my life—to the top of their bent. Laird Ramasine's wedding will be spoken of, I'll warrant. Yet, Luggy, you are a good lad. And oh, but you are fortunate in having no beard to shave; and no face for one to grow on like my face. What with wrinkles in the skin, and getting over the bones, round about my long chin with this plague of a razor—I think the devil has had my best razors, both of them—I'll never get through. I'm in real pain with last night's fooling, and this wizend hard face and nervous hand."

Cried Luggy, interrupting:  
"Here comes Larrik, running. He has news."

"Haste ye, Laird, haste ye," that youth called, "they want you out along Concession Road. They have a waggon and span of horses. Miss Hayvern's chest of drawers is in the waggon, and all her providing. Clapper Hayvern—in his best sailor dress, ready for the wedding—sits on top of the chest of drawers playing the violin. And Taura Durra, the raging red short-horn, is led by a rope to the ring in his nose behind the waggon; Joseph, sitting on Tibby's muckle kist, offering the beast handfuls of hay; and the beast refusing to move a step forward if Clapper Hayvern stops playing the fiddle. And a little while since Taura Durra lay down and roared; and now the brute is up again rampaging; and Clapper playing and playing. They do not know what to do. You must come and help, they say; else they will not get to the Minister's Manse with the bride to meet you in time."

"Larrik, that's an awful speech ye've made. Don't you see I'm not half shaved? Never will be shaved; and no cutting-stone in trim to cuttle the blades. See? Don't either of you help them with Taura Durra. Let the red savage tire them out, and go back. For, see, if that brute comes here as part of Tibby's dowry, you two—Luggy and Larrik—will have the trouble and danger of feeding and guiding him. I do not want any dowry with my bride. Take a knife, go quietly to the waggon and cut the rope. Let the dogs loose; take them with you. When you cut the rope, Bawty and Nigger will soon chase Taura Durra home to Lot Four. There let the creature stay. Four thousand dollars for the plague! My certy, the fool, Clapper Hayvern, and his money were soon parted."

Soon after, in about half-an-hour, Larrik returned, saying:

"The rope was neatly snigged by somebody, and red Taura Durra is already in his pasture, Nigger and Bawty at his heels and flanks."

"I fear Miss Hayvern, my bride, may think this an ill omen; but so it must be. Oh, this weary shaving; the razors, both of them, are like saws; let me hone and strap and hone them as I may, they are no better. What is the matter now? Who wants me, Nelly?"

"It is the waggon with the bride's providing, Laird. A chest of drawers; beds and bedding; one great chest, and two smaller; an eight-day clock for the hall, and furniture for the bride's chamber."

"Ah! I must see to the proper reception of those goods, Nelly, half shaved though I be. Mother, the Taura Durra is not coming, the dogs have chased him home; be thankful. Now, let Miss Hayvern's things, the bride's outfit and furniture, be honourably placed in the best chamber. And I must finish my face and get dressed. Hope the new patent leather shoes, the pumps of fashion, aren't too small. Again, again, the pest of a thing! I have to hone, and hone, and hone the razor. And it's getting near time to dress and be away. Yes? I'm here; who is it? Who wants me?"

"One of the maple sugar boilers on the outside fires; the Evil One himself is in it. A pudding has leapt out of the pot. It is rolling, and rolling in the ashes. Come, Laird, come see what is the matter?"

"Wal-a-day! on the happiest of my life. Wal-a-day! Only shaved on one side, and interrupted again. But the plum puddings of all things must not be spoiled. Now, what is the matter?"

"You see how the pudding in its bag rolls about; it is bewitched!"

"Sure enough, it rolls, and rolls. The d, and the d, and the d's in the thing!"

"Laird," said Luggy, demurely, "do not swear on your wedding day."

"Luggy, cut it open. Let's see the inside." The bag being slit open, a stream of heated quick-silver ran from the pudding.

"Oh, Luggy, Luggy! And oh, Larrik, Larrik! If I knew which of you put quick-silver in the pudding, I'd gowf your haffits; my wedding day though it be. Now, be good lads, and don't play pranks."

Having again returned to the shaving, the Laird resumed; "I must, and will have this beard off. Yes, at last, after honing and honing the razors some progress is made. I'm here, mother; what has happened?"

"Bawty, the dog, has come home with young Rob Swan, gored and torn by Taura Durra's horns; and Nigger, he says, is killed outright. You should insist on the red savage being killed too, right away."

"Oh, no; a four thousand dollar creature; I could not ask them to kill it. This is all bad for my bride, and me. Now, I go on to finish my toilet. Don't interrupt again."

"Master, master! be quick. Here comes the Hayvern waggons, with their fine party, the bride and best maiden, and Joseph. Horses and waggons grandly decked, and Clapper in one waggon, dancing a hornpipe to 'Jack Robinson,' played on his own fiddle. They have gone right away to the Minister's Manse."

"Well, good luck and joy go with them. I'll soon follow, when I have done scraping and rasping at this beard. Now, it may do. And then to get on this really handsome, genteel suit of wedding clothes. I feel so fine; so fine. No wonder, when a man is born a gentleman, he wants to continue in fine clothes always. Ah, but I've worked and worked for my fine linen and sumptuous apparel. Yes? What is it? Who is it, Nelly?"

"All your friends from Conway. Ocean Horn, the groomsmen, Jenkin Ramasine, and his sisters. Oh, the satins and lace! so finely dressed! Make haste, Laird."

"I'm making haste, Nelly. But the silk stockings take time to be flyped, and tenderly drawn on, but look well and feel nice when they are on. And now the garters of blue, knitted by Tibby's own hands. Really pleasant to wear—silk stockings and blue garters. And pretty, too! I have a shapely foot and leg. Now, the ——. Well? What is it, Luggy?"

"The white mother pig, and the black mother pig, and the young ones, have eaten the plum pudding, mercury, and the brandy sauce, and are all mad."

"Luggy, you have given them the brandy sauce. I would not have thought this of you. Larrik may do tricks, but you ——. Now, Luggy, let me alone with all other news; I'm dressing. The wedding shoes, they are on, and look nice; very neat, indeed. And this figured white silk vest, and gold studs in the shirt; the turnover collar and white tie; and hair nicely frizzed up; I shall look a real bridegroom, presently. Now, the black dress-coat, ——. What is it, Luggy? What is the matter now?"

"The kitchen lum is all in a low."

"The d— and d— low ye, Luggy! Let it burn out; I'll sweat you at ringing waggon wheels the morn, be sure of that. Now, the black dress-coat is on, and, my back seen in the large glass! Really, it becomes the occasion greatly. The hat, best London made. And white kid gloves. Lace-edged handkerchief, a present from Tibby, scented in essence of roses. Now, money in the pocket for fees; and for any rowdy callants from Conway that may come, threatening to cut the bride's gown if they do not get money. And money for,

— What is the matter, mother? What has happened?"

"Luggy has blown himself up the lum! He was luying powther to make another explosion; and it went off and set him on fire. If it were not that he is half dead, I'd say, serve him right, and ask you to lick him into the bargain."

"We'll no lick him to-day—this day of happiness; but he'll get a sweating at ringing waggon wheels the morn's morning. Now, one last look at myself in the glass, as a single man, and bridegroom. Who would have thought it possible that Tom Ramasine could have been made to look so fine? Come here, mother! What think you of the head of the family, now?"

"Tommy, you are a well-dressed gentleman; but a better man than dress can ever make you. A dutiful son to me, you have always been; as to her, you will be—a good husband. May she be worthy of you! My blessing be on you, Tommy, my son. And may His blessing be ever on you and yours! Go now, and complete the great work of the day. The waggons and horses are at the door, decorated; and the people all so comely to look upon, and so happy, await you in the waggons."

"Lastly, mother; be ready with short-bread and buns when we come home, to throw over the bride's head as she enters this door, and do it with your own hands. Will you?"

"I'll do it with my own hands. Would not forget that, of all things."

"Now, mother, one thing more; I do not think you have kissed me since I was a bairn; will you now?"

"That I will, Tommy. There—and with your old mother's blessing."

### CHAPTER XIV.

DONAL CLANDONAL, THE FLYING PIPER.

Four players on violin and violincello; four flute soloists; two drummers; and three pipers, belonged to the two circles of the bride and bridegroom's friends, and came to the wedding with instruments to be led by Clapper Hayvern. In compliment to that intense British man-of-war's man, all but the Highland pipers wore the summer dress of sailors; straw hat with ribbons, blouse of blue, white collar turned over, and dancing shoes.

Two veteran pipers, one with flowing locks of grey hair, the other with it cut in army fashion. Rotherick McTotherick, and Sandy Gordon, were arrayed in the garb of the Gael, according to their two clans.

The third piper, Donal Clandonal, a young gentleman of fortune, came to the wedding as pupil of McTotherick. About two weeks previously he appeared in Conway for the first time, with his beautiful sister Flora and her maid, none knowing from whence they came, except that they were last from the States. They boarded at the Castle, the high class hotel, dressing well and paying money in the town with hands accustomed to draw cheques freely, and these the Bank of Inkle duly paid.

All Conway town, the young ladies of the upper circles, talked and fluttered fans, muslins, silks, laces, giddy heads, and sensitive pulses about that young gentleman. For some quality, which none knew exactly the meaning or limits of, he was termed the Flying Piper. It might be a name derived from his wondrous dancing—gracefully neat, or wildly bounding. It might follow from unexpected appearances, or sudden departures. It may have been the appellation given by the Ossianic Highlander, Rotherick McTotherick, in first glow of pride at enrolling such a distinguished pupil.

Clandonal was not, as yet, an eminent piper, though excelling in most other accomplishments. He wore frequent changes of richest or rarest fancy tartans, displaying jewels, not many in number, but the limited few of great price, as alleged by the Conway goldsmiths. He sang the music of any nation he might be asked to sing, and the songs of his native land in a voice of glorious compass and richness, with melting pathos, or in emphasis heroic, yet, withal, rather a feminine voice. He played most fashionable instruments, including the harp, and now aspired to excel in the ancient Highland slogan, music of the Land of Men.

Clandonal's age? Some named twenty, others eighteen; others twenty-five; and some declared his years to be hidden under the witchery of a mystic beauty seldom seen in men, and not frequently beheld even in women. They said he might be thirty or over, yet possibly not twenty. All agreed that Donal's feet and limbs were exquisitely perfect. That the blue eyes were of sweetest softness, or if resenting impertinence, of fiery defiance, so instantaneous as to be dangerous. The mild, very mild moustache, was his only sign of a beard, and that became a question. Was it real, or unreal? The profusion of curling dark brown hair was also questioned. It descended on the shoulders from under the velvet bonnet blue and eagle feather, so glossy, curly, richly luxuriant that one or two of the upper, and several of the lower stratum of the middle circles, doubted if the curl was natural, or did the sister and maid aid it by art? The hair was natural, none doubted

that. For Donal had the grace when in the bank opening his account with the Inkle to uncover. Other gentlemen kept their hats on in the bank.

About the hair, the Apothecary Snell remarked:

"To evolve this luxuriance of tresses nature may have exhausted the fountains of vitality, which in other persons enrich the growth of beard."

Doctor Inglis, who had small respect for Snell, or the opinion of any mere Apothecary, and none whatever for the music of Bannockburn, retorted:

"The fountains of vitality superabound in this youth, as seen in the flexibility of muscle, and his endurance—his almost superhuman endurance; blowing, blowing into that bag-pipe and dancing; dancing and blowing, rending all nature in tortures, yet not himself tortured. Dancing as angels may if such blessed beings ever dance; blowing as the infernal may if there be any Scotch down that way, which I am happy to think there are not; that prudent people have foresight to avoid residence with the Dark Prince, by scaring him beforehand."

Instead of resuming their coaches and waggons after the marriage, the wedding party at suggestion of the bridegroom preferred to walk. They formed in procession, the Minister in hat of broad brim, turned up much behind, and a little less at the sides, pulpit gown and bands, paced in front of the happy pair, or by their side making pleasant remarks, "chatting like a secular man almost," Tibby whispered.

In front of the Minister, the four flutes, four violins, two drums; two pipers, and heading them—heading all—the gay, the gallant Donal Clandonal, arrayed in Royal Stuart tartan. Slender in form for a man, but handsome; charming in the velvet bonnet blue and feathers; flowing curling hair; and in plaid of splendour with its gems so rich and rare. And wearing all the other attachments of a Gael possessing the world's open sesame—a treasury unknown to emptiness. And, in addition to that talisman, being endued with artistic sensibility; having perceptions of the beautiful, exact information about clans and tartans. And, grand above all, boundless Highland pride, inflamed by the Ossianic Rotherick McTotherick.

The bridegroom, as already said, suggested a walking procession, instead of carriages and horseback, as the distance to Ramasine Corners was not far, the path smooth and clean, skirted by a soft carpet of short grass, cropt close by sheep and lambs. To which the bride readily assented. She was expensively and tastefully dressed, seen to advantage only in walking; and the soft short grass quite dry at mid-day, felt pleasant to graceful feet shod in prettiest satin. He, in perturbation of a morning's troubles as we saw, overcame all, and issued from his dear, dotting mother's door, as a dutiful son and bridegroom should.

If they did not now walk on the smooth clean path, or short soft grass, how could he, Laird Ramasine, enjoy glimpses of the bride's fairy slippers with diamonds on the tiny buckles? She wore a pearl necklace, and diamond bracelets also, gifts of her brother, the far travelled sailor. Or, how enjoy a few brief delectable moments in glimpses of his own glistening dancing pumps and silken hose, if not walking? So, the procession was on foot; and after them came many people in couples, or threes, or fours, or in single files, or in groups. Talking, laughing, merrily jesting people old and young. And after them the Conway coaches, and light spring waggons of farmers. Boys and dogs, bounding and bounding over the fences to get ahead with the music, and be dumb in admiration of the Flying Piper, Donal Clandonal.

On arriving at the Corners the procession might have been received with noise of guns, but Luggy had burned himself too severely to explode any more gunpowder for a long while to come, if ever again. Doctor Inglis, who had been sent for, apprehended as possible the total loss of Luggy's eyesight, and directed him to be removed to Conway Hospital.

Laird Ramasine's mother stood in the porch in her gray silk, lace cap, and crape shawl, with several maiden helps beside her nicely dressed and blooming, white and red roses in their hair, all ready with trays of shortbread and buns, which they bountifully threw in the air over the bride's head. At these many of the company scrambled, some catching pieces flying. The Minister in fine humour using his clerical hat to catch the pieces, and succeeding. All the music striking up—flutes, fiddles, pipes, drums. At which Clandonal sprang—the Flying Piper truly—upon one of the open air tables set for dinner, and nimbly among plates, dishes, glasses, cutlery, water jugs, flower vases, danced the Highland Fling. Which, not to be outdone, Clapper Hayvern danced on another table among similar impediments.

Then the whole calmed down, and quietly dined, or in some manner refreshed; the bridegroom in his natural kindness preferring to lose much of the ceremonial due to himself, to condole with and soothe the suffering Luggy.

To be continued.