# The Braes of Yarrow An Historical Tale of the Sixteenth Century.

A 'sowie' was a species of wooden roof ased in attacks upon fortresses, and was run up against the walls, to protect the besiegers from the shower of stones usually pitched from the battlements, whilst they forced an entrance beneath its shelter. The mame of this instrument of war has been in modern days given to the square-shaped hay-stacks in many parts of the country.

Under the sowie the battering-ram was used again. The iron gate rung with the concussion; a number of the bars snapped, and many of the stanchions gave way. Another shout and another discharge of stones, but this time with little effect, for they mostly slid off the wooden shield, and fell harmlessly into the fosse. Two or three stones, however, broke through the roof, and maimed a few men.

Again the ram was propelled against the gate, and as it broke down a dozen blazing torches were dropped upon the sowie, which speedily took fire, and promised soon to become useless. It was the last effort of the stout defenders to keep the enemy without the walls, and it proved of little service.

The battering-ram was now used as a bridge, and upon it the raiders rapidly crossed the fosse one after another. The passage into the court was defended by two old men, but one soon fell beneath the blow of a long Jeddart axe, and the other hastily fied.

And amidst all this terrible din and confusion, whilst the agonising groans of the fallen and the fiendish yells of the victors made the air hideous, Lady Spens, the delicate beauty of Halstane, had rallied her handful of faithful vassals upon the battlements, and by her own calm bearing and brave words cheered them to continue the desperate struggle for tife. When, however, she perceived an entrance had been gained, she knew that further attempt to defend their home was useless. Little mercy was to be expected from Tushielaw or his followers if they were true to their repute, But what little hope she might obtain she resolved to seek for the sake of the few trusty ones who were still with her.

They had number

way.

She advanced now to the parapet to wave her handkerchief in token of submission.

She drew back shuddering—It was too

She drew back shuddering—It was too late.

Thick blue clouds of smoke ascended upon all sides, wreathing and curling serpent-like. The principal weapon of defence had been turned against the defenders, and the tower was on fire.

The men who had crossed the fosse had torn down the burning sowie, and had recklessly thrust blazing portions of it into every ignitable corner. At the same time others speedily formed a rude bridge with some loose planks, and drove the cattle out of the court, and admitted as many of the assailants as was thought necessary to complete the work.

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The first to cross the bridge was Tushielaw, who made instantly for the spiral staircase leading to the battlement. He was met by Ding-a'-doon, who was begrimmed with dust and drunk with excitement, and otherwise bore indications that he was working hard and enjoying himself. The heavy axe, which rested upon his shoulder as he hurried towards the point where he met his chief was a sickly sight. A sickly sight, too, was the half a dozen begrimmed and excited men who followed him.

A signal from Tushielaw, and they followed him close as he sprung up the narrow winding staircase. Twice the passage was contested, but the strong arm and thorough hardihood of the leader broke down all barriers. At the last turn of the stairs, however, the struggle became flereer than it had yet been, for the men who defended this place fought as men only fight when resolved to die.

The assailants were forced backward, and Tushielaw ground his teeth as he found the action of his arms hampered by those behind him almost as much as by those in front. He lost his balance, and the long sword of a white headed old man, whose eyes burned with the enthusiasm of youth, was raised to strike him down. But the devil favoured his minion and Ding-a-doon, using his long Jeddart axe over the shoulder of his chief, parried the blow, and cleft the white head in twain. With an angry triumphant shout Tushielaw and his followers sprang over the body and out upon the embatilement.

The others seized the cry, and none could answer it.

Lady Spens and her daughter had disappeared.

Confusion followed: men ran hither and contained the followed in the partied the blow harded chiek of hers? roored Tushielaw.

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Haw, haw, haw.

Attracted by the sound they looked about and presently discovered the manikin, with a face rendered more hideous than usual by being blackened over, with his red hair and his clothes in the same condition, seated upon the side of a mouth of a white chimney holding his sides as if fearing they would burst with the laughter which seemed to convulse him.

Tushielaw advanced to him fariously.

Speak, imp of the toul fiend, and give one good reason for your mirth, else you shall laugh in another key. What have you seen?

Horner continued his laugh despite the angry regard fixed upon him.

Weel, he answered at intervals, 'whilst ye were wasting time fechting your way up the stair I came up the lum quietly, and got to the tap in time to see my lady, the bairn, and Andrew Howie skelping aff this gate.

He slipped from his perch, and passing

rich own after them. Gie's a hand o'your lance, man.

He snatched the weapon from the man who was standing nearest, probed the hole he had uncovered, and by reaching his long arm down touched the bottom with the lance. He thereupon dropped into the hole and slid down the lance. He called to those above, and Tushielaw followed him, next Ding-a-doon and two others.

They found themselves in a narrow dark passage. They groped their way along after Hornie, who suddenly stumbled upon a door which burst open, and supplied some light to the passage. They now entered a large chamber, but it was so densely filled with smoke that they could see nothing, and were glad to step back to the passage for sir. 'Confusion.' growled Tushielaw, faming with rage and disappointment; 'let the place be surrounded and every corner searched. Half of my share of the day's capture goes to whoever funds the Lady Spens or the bairo. She shall either die or be in my hands fornight.'

There was wilder hurry and confusion than

The Rewards, amounting in all to nearly \$2,000, are offere for the apprehension of the murderer of Mr Featherstonehaugh, of Westmeath. The landed proprietors of the countributed a large portion of the sum. Three men, arrested on suspicion, are now in gaol at Mullingar—two of them being tenants on the estate, and one a servant boy to a farmer.

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