

"You wolf, you mangled his throat with your own bloody fangs—but we have traced you to your den, and the ghost of Hugh Gemmel, who was as pleasant either with lad or lass as any boy that ever emptied a cup or had a fall upon heather, will shake hands with you by moonlight, by and by. You may meet either in the churchyard, down by the Loch, where your canting Covenanters will bury you, or down at Yarrow-Kirk, where Hugh was put to bed with the worms, in his red coat, like a soldier as he was. By the Holy God of Israel—(is not that a lump of your own slang?)—this bayonet shall drink a stoup of your heart's blood!"

Mark Kerr knew, in a moment, that there was no hope of life. He had confessed being present on the occasion charged against him; and a sentence of death, which an angel's intercession could not have got reversed, was glaring in the eyes of all the soldiers. Each seemed to kindle into fiercer fury as he caught the fiery eyes around him. Their oaths and execrations exasperated them all into frenzy; and a wild and perturbed sense of justice demanding expiation of their murdered comrade's blood, made them deaf and blind to every thing but the suggestions of their own irritated and inflamed hearts. A horrid sympathy possessed them all; and they were as implacable as a herd of wolves famished and in sight of their prey. There was no mercy in any one face there, else Mark Kerr would have appealed to that man, for his life was now sweet and precious, and it was a hard thing to die.

"I know his face. He is the very man that stabbed Hugh, when he was down, with his own bayonet. How do you like that, sirrah?" and one of the soldiers thrust his long bayonet through Mark's shoulder till the point was seen at his back, and then drew it out smeared with blood, and returned it to its sheath, with a grin of half-glutted vengeance. The wounded man staggered at the blow and sat down, nearly fainting, upon the seat, where a few minutes before his bride had leant her head upon his bosom. But he uttered not a word, and kept his eyes fixed, not reproachfully, but somewhat sadly, and with a faint expression of hope, on the men who seemed determined to be his executioners. The pain, the sickness, the sudden blasting of all his hopes, almost unmanned his resolute heart; and Mark Kerr would have now done much to save his life—and something, perhaps, even at the expense of conscience and faith. But that weak mood was of short duration—and the good and brave man braced up his heart to receive the doom of death.

He had no words to say to his bride; nor almost did he look at her—so full was his soul of

her image, and of holy grief for the desolation in which she would be left by his death. The dewy breath of her gentle and pure kisses was yet in his heart, and the happy sighs of maidenly tenderness were now to be changed into groans of incurable despair. Therefore it was, that he said nothing as he knelt down; but his pallid lips moved in prayer, and she heard her name indistinctly uttered between those of God and Christ.

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The soldiers presented their muskets—the word was given—and they fired. At that moment Christian Lindsay had rushed forward and flung herself down on her knees beside her husband, and they both fell, and stretched themselves out, mortally wounded upon the grass.

During all this scene, Marion Scott, the bridesmaid, a girl of fifteen, had been lying affrighted among the brackens, within a hundred yards of the murder. The agony of grief now got the better of the agony of fear, and, leaping up from her concealment, she rushed into the midst of the soldiers, and, kneeling down beside her dear Christian Lindsay, lifted up her head, and shaded the hair from her forehead. "Oh! Christian, your eyes are opening—do you hear me—do you hear me speaking?"

"Yes, I hear a voice—is it yours, Mark?—speak again."

"Oh! Christian, it is only my voice—poor Marion's."

"Is Mark dead—quite dead?" And there was no reply; but Christian must have heard the deep gasping sobs that were rending the child's heart. Her eyes, too, opened more widely, and, misty as they were, they saw, indeed, close by her, the huddled-up, mangled, and bloody body of her husband.

The soldiers stood like so many beasts of prey, who had gorged their fill of blood; their rage was abated, and they offered no violence to the affectionate child, as she continued to sit before them, with the head of Christian Lindsay in her lap, watering it with tears, and moaning, so as to touch at last, some even of their hardened hearts.

To watch by the dead all night, and to wait for some days till they could be coffined for burial, was not to be thought of in such times of peril. That would have been to sacrifice the living for the dead. The soldiers had gone, but they might, no doubt would, return and scatter the funeral. Therefore it was no sooner proposed than agreed to in the afflicted souls of them all, that the bridegroom and his bride should be buried even that very night in the clothes in which they had that morning been wedded.