

drop in the black cup given me to drink. You shouldna hae run a risk like that, Ann; for my sake, no to speak o' your ain. But I'll hae the doctor here soon, my lassie, and keep up if you can. I think shame o' mysel' for not noticing your white face before. I'm feared I hae been very selfish and vera unkind to you, Ann, my bairn."

"It isna in you to be unkind to man, woman, or beast, father. I didna speak, and you didna see. Folk be to complain ere they can expect help."

"O Ann!" he answered, "if God would only listen to my complaining as readily and willingly as I listen to yours! But he has hid his face far from me."

"O father, if"—

"Never mind, my bairn. I'll awa' to Port Braddon as fast as my pony will trot me there."

Now, Andrew had not been in Port Braddon for many months, and the changes going on there astonished him. Some capitalists had found out its excellent harbour, and its contiguity to the Irish coast, and had determined to make it the depot of a line of small steamers between the two countries. A ship-building yard and a new pier were in progress. Andrew had never seen so many men and horses and carts working together in all his life. There was something revolutionary in their very aspects; he could feel that the old town was passing away before them.

Indeed, many of the old houses were putting on new fronts, and new houses were being built in all directions. Almost the first ones Andrew saw were a row of small cottages, called "Grahame Terrace." In fact, the drowsy little seaport had been awakened; action, bustle, enterprise, were in every part of it. The wages of

stone-masons and builders had nearly doubled; several fresh stores had been opened, and there was a prospectus for a newspaper nailed up in the bar of the public, where Andrew always fed his pony. Everyone he met seemed full of business and pressed for time.

Quite in accord with all this stir and movement was the bright, bustling, important Free Kirk minister, who was the first person to accost Andrew after he entered the town. He said he rejoiced to see him again—and that his place in the kirk had missed him too long. He hoped he had quite recovered, and was sure his old friends would be delighted to welcome him back to kirk on the next Sabbath morning.

He quite ignored the fact that Andrew had always refused to see him in all his pastoral calls. He would not notice the dour, disapproving face that answered all his pleasant platitudes. He was not even dashed by Andrew's curt, "Good day to you, sir,"—the only words he chose to say in reply to so many kind hopes and wishes. Perhaps it was a generous oblivion on the minister's part, but Andrew's perversity only considered it an additional offence.

"He is just the maist exasperating o' men," he said to Ann, when he told her of the interview. "He treated me as if I was a bairn—a spoiled, petted bairn, wha had to be humoured, and whose anger wasna worth the minding."

"I am so sorry, father."

"Aye; so am I. That never-mind way o' his isna meenisterial. I wad hae respectit him mair if he had said to me, 'Carrick, you are wrong. It is your duty to come to kirk; and you grieve God, and are going to the Devil, by not being diligent in the ordinances.' If he had spoken in that fashion, I wad hae answered him; and good