

ended at nineteen! So at least Mary McArthur told herself.

But all the same, there—a pillar for support, a buckler for defence, was Alexander McQuhrr, strong, undemonstrative, dependable. One day she had cut her finger, and he was rolling it up for her daintily as a woman. They were in the shearing field together. Alexander had the lint and the thread in his pocket. So indeed he anticipated her wants silently all his life.

It had hurt a good deal, and before he had finished the tears stood brimming in her eyes.

"I think you must get tired. I bring all my cut fingers to you, Alec!" she said, looking up at him.

He gave a kind of gasp, as if he were going to say something, as a single drop of salt water pearly itself and ran down Mary's cheek; but instead he only folded the lint carefully in at the top, and went on rolling the thread round it.

"She is learnin' to love me!" he thought with some pleasure, but he was too bashful and diffident to take advantage of her feeling. He contented himself with making her life easier and sweeter in that hard upland cantonnement of more than military severity, from whose rocky soil Yabel and his sons dragged the bare necessities of life, as it were, at the point of the bayonet.

All the time he was thinking hard behind his broad forehead, this quiet Alexander McQuhrr. He was the third son. His father was a poor man. He had nothing to look for from him. In time Tom would succeed to the farm. It was clear, then, that if he was ever to be anything, he must strike out early for himself. And as many a time before and since, it was the tears in the eyes of a girl that brought matters to the breaking point.

Yes, the wet eyes of a girl—that is, of Mary McArthur, as she looked up at him suddenly in the harvest-field among the serried lines of stooks, and said, "I think I bring all my cut fingers to you, Alec!"

Something, he knew not exactly what, appealed to him so strongly in that word and look, that resolve came upon him sudden as lightning and binding as an oath—the man's instinct to be all and to do all for the woman he loves.

He was unusually silent during the rest of the day, so that Mary McArthur, walking beside him down the loaning to bring home the cows, said, "You are no vexed wi' me for anything, Alec?"

But it was the soul of Saunders McQuhrr which had come to him as a birth-right—born out of a glance. He was a boy no longer. And that night, as his father Yabel stood looking over his scanty acres with a kind of grim satisfaction in the golden array of corn stooks, his son Alexander went quietly up to him.

"Father," he said, "next week I shall be one-and-twenty!" In times of stress they spoke the English of the schools and of the Bible.

His father turned a deep-set irascible eye upon him. The thick over brooding brows lowered convulsively upon him. A kind of illuminating flash like faint sheet lightning passed over the stern face. A week ago, nay, even twenty-four hours ago, Saunders McQuhrr would have trembled to have his father look at him thus. But—he has bound up a girl's finger since then, and seen her eyes wet.

"Well, what of that?"

The words came fiercely from Yabel, with a rising anger in them, a kind of trumpet heralding the storm.

"I am thinking of taking a herd's place at the term!" said Alexander quietly.

Yabel lifted his great body off the dyke-top, on which he had been leaning with his elbows. He towered a good four inches above his son, though my father was always considered a tall man.

"You—you are going to take a herd's place—at the term—you?" he said slowly and incredulously.

"Yes," answered his son; "you will not need me. There is no outgate for me here, and I have my way to make in the world."

"And what need have you of an outgate, sir," cried his father. "Have I housed you and schooled you and reared you that, when at last you are of some use, you should leave your father and mother like a day-labourer on Saturday night?"

A day labourer on Saturday night gets his wages—I have not asked for any!"

At this answer Yabel stood tempestuously wrathful for a moment, his hand and arm uplifted and twitching to strike. Then all suddenly his mood changed. It became scornfully ironic.

"I see," he said, dropping his arm, "there's a lass behind this—that is the meaning of all the peat-carrying and milking and handfasting in corners. Well, sirrah, I give you this one night. In the morning you shall pack. From this instant I forbid you to touch aught belonging to me, corn or fodder, horse or beastial. Ye shall tramp, lad, you and your madam with you. The day is not yet, thank the Lord, when Abel McQuhrr is not master in his own house?"

But the son that had been a boy was now a man. He stood before his father, giving him back glance for glance. And an observer would have seen a great similarity between the two, the same attitude to a line, the massive head thrown back, the foot advanced, the deep set eye, the compressed mouth.

"Very well, father!" said Alexander McQuhrr, and he went away, carrying his bonnet in his hand.

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And on the morning that followed the sleepless night of thinking and planning, Alexander McQuhrr went forth to face the world, his plaid about his shoulders, his staff in his hand, his mother's blessing upon his head—and, what was most of all to a young man, his sweetheart's kiss upon his lips.

For in this part of his mandate Yabel had reckoned without his host. His wife, long trained to keep silence for the sake of peace, had turned and openly defied him—nay, had won the victory. The "man of violence" knew exactly how far it was wise to push the doctrine of unquestioning wifely obedience. Mary McArthur was to bide still where she was till—well, till another home was ready for her. And though her eyes were red, and there was no one to bind up her cut fingers any more, there was a kind of pride in her face too. And the image of the young sailor man over seas utterly faded away.

At ten by the clock Yabel McQuhrr, down in his harvest field, saw his son set out. He gave no farewell. He waved no hand. He said no word. All the same, he smiled grimly to himself behind the obedient backs of Tom and Abel the second.

"There's the best stuff o' the lot in that fule laddie," he growled; "even so for a lass's sake left I my father's house!"

And of all his children, this dour, hard-mouthed, gnarl-fisted man loved best the boy who for the sake of a lass had outcasted himself.

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It was to a herd's house, shining white on a hillside, a bonnie burnie thrilling below, the red heather surging about the garden dyke on all sides, that Alexander McQuhrr took his wife Mary, a year later. And there in the fulness of time my brother Willie was born—the child of the cot house and of the kail-yard. In time followed other, if not better things—first a small holding, then a farm—then I, Alexander the second. And still, thank God, we, the children of Mary McArthur, run with all our cut fingers to her steadfast, loving, silent man, Saunders McQuhrr, son of Yabel, the Man of Violence, and Wrath.

I think we learned the trick from my mother.

There is an easy, simple way to tell if a diamond is genuine. Make a small dot on a piece of paper with a lead pencil and look at it through the diamond. If it shows but a single dot the diamond is genuine. If it shows more than one or a mark appears scattered, it is false, no matter what the cost.

A Lesson in Patience.

"Mother," said Mary, "I can't make Henry put his figures as I tell him."

"Be patient, my dear and do not speak so sharply."

"But he won't let me tell him how to put the figures, and he does not know how to do it himself," said Mary, pettishly.

"Well, my dear, if Henry won't learn a lesson in figures, suppose you try and teach him a lesson in patience. This is harder to teach, and harder to learn, than any lesson in figures; and perhaps when you have learned this, the other will be easier to both."

A Long suffering Dog.

My brother once finding a little chicken about two weeks old with a broken leg undertook to perform a surgical operation. He split a quill toothpick in two, used it as a splint for the damaged member, and then kept the sufferer in his room, to see how his experiment would work. In a day or two the little creature was running all over the house, and its only care was to find at bedtime a better substitute for the down shelter to which it was accustomed than the cotton-lined box we provided. It soon noticed our cocker spaniel, stretched out in front of the parlor fire, and cautiously approaching, cuddled up to him.

The onlookers recommended the restless dog to keep quiet, and soon the infant, pursuing its investigations, slipped under one of the long silken ears, which were the pride of the family—and of the cocker. This was too much, and "Coaly" jumped up with a growl, but after some coaxing lay down again; and the chicken immediately snuggled back in that tempting refuge. "Coaly" with one eye on us and an indignantly contemptuous expression, lay still while this spoiled darling kept up its exasperating "cheep! cheep!" merging into the three-toned twitter which means "I want to go to sleep" right in his very ear.

He occasionally manifested his injured feelings by an upturned corner of the lip, with a gleam of white teeth, but actually endured this outrage of his self-respect for several weeks, until the invalid, completely restored, was returned to the bosom of its original family.—Los Angeles Times.