

"Danny," said the Laird, and went forth into the grey afternoon, tall and tottering, and Danny at his heels.

The Woman stood on the steps of the house behind him.

"It will be your death, mark me!" she shrilled; "you will live long enough to repent it and no more. And when it comes to pass as I tell you, and you lie in your grave, do not turn on me and say I never warned you."

"If you said as little as I will say then," husked the Laird, "I would be better pleased."

"I ken ye care nothing for me," cried the Woman, "or what Missie will think of me—" the tears in her eyes. "But ye might think of Danny. For you will be taken and he will be left—and what then?—poor lone mannie!"

"He will come with me," said the Laird.

"With you!" cried the Woman, "Then I will be left my lone."

"While you live you'll not lack for company," said the Laird.

"Company!" scoffed the Woman. "Robin!"

"Na," said the Laird. "Your tongue," and marched on.

But Danny, with his heart of a gentleman, turned and cantered back to his Woman to tell her with dear eyes that all would be well; for he, Daniel, son of Ivor, would surely bring his dear lord home to her again secure.

So she blessed him, and they parted.

She watched them down the drive; and then shuffled off to the kitchen.

"The Laird's daddled off to his own funeral," she sobbed, and sat down.

The old man in the door turned.

"It is here," he said.

"What?" she cried.

"The end of all," he answered; and held out his hand, and in the palm of it a flake of snow.

*(To be continued.)*