

LINKED LIVES.

By Lady Gertrude Douglas.

CHAPTER X.

THE GLASGOW FAIR.

"But soon that glorious course was lost. And treacherous proved the deep; Ne'er thought they there was peril most When tempests seemed to sleep."

—HOWITT.

Every year during the month of July a great fair is held in Glasgow. Fairs are held all the world over, and I do not know that the Glasgow one differs from others of its kind. The young go there for amusement, and, if they are well-intentioned, they may find it innocently enough; but the probabilities are terribly strong that they will not leave the fair exactly as they came to it.

It is not a place to which a guardian angel would with pleasure accompany his charge, who, he knows, will see and hear much that ought to shock a pure mind, and he would naturally dread lest contact with evil should spoil the beauty of the soul committed to his care.

So much, and no more, can be said for those who go to the fair merely for the sake of amusement—amusement which their hitherto innocent hearts intend to be absolutely harmless. But these are in the minority; by far the greater number of the persons who, during the latter fortnight of July, through the fair, belong to the ill-intentioned portion of the community. There the "profession" (thieves) muster strong; there, too, come abandoned characters from the lowest haunts of vice in the city. The bold, bad girls; the drunken, dissolute women; the foul-mouthed, idle men, who will neither work nor starve, and who therefore contrive to live in wickedness at their neighbors' expense.

There are boys and girls, children and old people, young men and maidens, disgracing themselves by intoxication, by swearing, and other profane talk; outraging common decency by their wild, loose behavior, and thus plainly demonstrating that they have forgotten the existence of their immortal souls—souls created, oh, stupendous thought! for the eternal enjoyment of Heaven's beatitude. Many an innocent girl, still in her teens, has had to date her ruin from that cursed Glasgow Fair!

Many a home has been broken up; many a poor wife and mother cast adrift to shift for herself, or go to the bad, because her weak, foolish husband has suffered himself to be led into bad company during the season of that same fair.

The prisons, before its close, are full to overflowing; the policeman's duty is made tenfold hard to him; mischievous demons seem to be let loose upon the town—and the cause of so much evil is the love of money! Money!—that men will insist upon amassing to themselves, in spite of the misery, temporal and eternal, which their greedy passion causes to their fellow-creatures.

Katie Mackay had been just two months in her situation when the Glasgow fair recurred. So far she had given every satisfaction to her mistress. She took to all her new duties with a cheerful alacrity which pleased Mrs. Royson. They were not light ones either, for Katie was the only servant, and there were eight in the family. She had to scrub, clean, wash, and iron—in fact, to make herself generally useful—for through Mrs. Royson was a hard-working woman, and did a great deal herself, she expected a great deal from her servant, and the place was one which an idle girl would not have kept for a week.

On Sunday afternoon she, however, generally got some free time to spend as she liked, and Katie invariably on these occasions betook herself to the Convent to see the "Mothers." Into Glasgow she rarely went, except on Sunday mornings, to Mass, and, as she always attended an early one, she was not likely at such an hour to meet any of her former acquaintances. Hither to all had gone well with Katie; she was perfectly contented in her situation, she liked her mistress and her mistress liked her, and she had no time to herself during the week, so that she could not, even had she wished it, have gone into Glasgow to make inquiries about her mother, or any of the old set.

On the 16th of July, the first day of the fair, it is the custom with the Sisters of the good Shepherd to gather together those of their former children who have gone back from the school into the Convent reception-rooms, to which all the "out children," as they are called, are invited. Their "Mothers" are present to entertain them, and the afternoon, up to a late hour in the summer evening, is passed in walking about the grounds and gardens, the girls thus enjoying themselves in a pleasant, innocent manner.

required permission; and Katie, for the first time for nearly five years, found herself free to wander at her will through the Glasgow streets.

She had no intention of wasting her time by re-visiting any of her old haunts; she meant to go straight to Lizzie Logie's house in Maxwell street, and she thought, if they had a mind later on in the evening, they could take a little walk together. She wondered if she should see anything of the Kerrs. Not very likely, for Lizzie Logie had heard that they had removed from Glasgow, and had told Katie so in talk some months ago.

Still it was just possible, for if they were anywhere near Glasgow they would surely come for the Fair season; and Katie rehearsed twenty times in her own mind the reception she should have to give to any advances on their part towards a renewal of their former friendship.

It is a hot July afternoon, but Katie does not mind the heat. She goes along at a tremendous pace, with a heart full of bright sunshine, which reflects itself upon her face, in spite of its flushed coloring.

As she nears the town her heart begins to beat rather more quickly than usual, for she cannot help wondering if she will meet with any old acquaintances. Passing by the Cross, she lingers for some minutes, gazing alternately up the High Street and down the Saltmarket. Katie thinks that it would be rather fun just to see, without being seen, and it is with a slight feeling of disappointment that, perceiving no familiar face, she continues her quick walk through Argyle Street.

Her dangerous wish is however realized a few moments later, for, turning the corner of Maxwell street, where Lizzie Logie lives, Katie suddenly finds herself face to face with Jeanie Kerr.

The recognition of each other by the two girls is instantaneous, for though five years have undoubtedly worked changes in both, they have had too much to do with one another not to be able to see at a glance the old friend under new colors.

Jeanie is in no way altered for the better. She is nineteen now, and as coarse and depraved looking as ever. It is she who speaks first, after giving utterance to a scream of surprise.

"Katie!—wee Katie Mackay!—it's niver ye!"

"Wee Katie Mackay!" echoes Katie, drawing her tall, slender figure proudly to its full height, and looking down upon Jeanie, who is quite half a head below her—"wee did ye say, Jeanie? I's nae sae wee as ye'll allow that!"

"Och, niver heed!" responds the other roughly, "ye ken what I's meanin'; ye war unco wee when I see ye last, eh, Katie? But I's that proud to see ye, ma heart's just like to burst thro' ma bodice!"

"I didna ken ye war in Glaskie, Jeanie. I heard tell ye had flittit these two years an' mair."

"Och, lassie, ye ken it's here the day an' there the morrow wi' the likes o' us. Howsomever, mithe's ta'en a fine house in Edinburgh, but we cudna hae done ithe-wise than to come till Glaskie for the Fair."

"Come on I'll let ye see," answers Jeanie, passing her arm familiarly through Katie's, and making an effort to draw her along with her; but Katie hastily withdraws herself, answering with decision.

"I's no comin', Jeanie; ye maunna seek to mislead me nae mair; I's gotten a situation, ye ken, an' I maun behave mysel', an no gang wi' ony bad company."

"In Edinburgh, wull ye no win in tull see her, lassie?"

"Maybe some day," says Katie, doubtfully. "I canna mak' nae promises."

"Ye're come to be awfu' bonnie, Katie!" remarks Jeanie, still lingering, as Katie, having reached Lizzie Logie's number, stands still to bid a final good-bye to her former friend; "but in the name o' a' that's luckie, what gars ye dress sae dowly?"

"Just mind yersel', Jeanie Kerr," answers Katie, pointing, and vexed, in spite of her better sense, at this allusion to her excessively plain and old-fashioned attire.

"I dinna mean to vex ye, lassie. Dinna bleeze up sae muckle. Wull I no get seen' ye ony mair?"

"I dinna ken. I dinna think it," replies Katie, hurriedly, for she hears Lizzie's step coming down the stairs, and does not wish to be caught talking with Jeanie Kerr. "Guid nicht, maybe I'll see ye another time."

"What's yon lassie, Katie Mackay?" This last somewhat suspiciously, from however, she had had, and drinks of various kinds, which, together with cakes, "sweets," and other such like eatables, are pretty safe to attract the idle crowd, especially the young, who are rarely rigid Sabbatharians.

"Will we have an ice?" asks Steenie as they pass one of the tables, where pyramids of pink mixture, supposed to be strawberry cream, are being served out in glass cups.

"Ay," answers Katie readily, but Lizzie demurs, glancing around her uneasily.

"Och! no, Katie, it's owre late; come on, we sudna buy an' sell on a Sunday, ye ken."

"We'll, I's nae carin'," says Katie good-humoredly, instantly turning away from the ice-stall; "niver heed them, Maister Steenie."

The young man laughs, but makes no further attempt to detain his companions, and they walk on quickly through the lower part of the Fair, and are on the point of leaving it safely behind them, when a circumstance occurred which might be attributed to "ill-luck," only that there is no ill-luck in the dispensations of Providence.

Temptation is rather the opportunity offered to the soldier of Christ to rise from the ranks, and to earn for himself the proud title of conqueror! The hour was come when Katie's courageous resolutions were to be severely tested; the evil spirit had found his opportunity, and the Good One has to stand by and see his charge confronted with the enemy.

For the second time to day, to her extreme vexation, Katie finds herself again in the company of Jeanie Kerr. If Katie had only seen her a minute earlier, she would have turned off in another direction, or would have retraced her steps, so as to avoid her; but she does not perceive her approach until an exclamation from Jeanie makes her look up quickly, to see, not only Jeanie, but several others with her, with whom Katie had been, in former days, unfortunately acquainted.

Among the rest, leaning upon her like the Evil Genie of her infancy, Katie recognizes at a glance her sister Maggie. There are several men among the party, and one of these seems to know Steenie, for he exclaims, "Hallo, Steenie!" and clasps him familiarly on the shoulder.

Steenie shakes his head abruptly, walks past the group who have surrounded Katie, and calls to his sister to "come on." Lizzie, however, determined not to leave Katie, stands still, waiting till Katie joins her; and Katie does not detain her long, for, in spite of Jeanie's entreaties, and Maggie's half scornful, half reproachful expostulations, she steadily refuses to turn back and go "a bit o' the way along wite them."

and Steele accompanies his sister and her friend.

It is a very pleasant walk; the three young people have good spirits and good consciences; and they are thoroughly satisfied with each other's society. The sky is blue above them; a soft breeze, very refreshing after the great heat of the day, is blowing in their faces as they walk along; the world seems a very fair spot to each one of them, but perhaps to Katie even fairer than the rest.

Nine o'clock was the hour fixed by Mrs. Royson as the latest moment for Katie's return. Accordingly Katie, in obedience to her mistress's instructions, is very careful to set her face betimes in a homeward direction.

Lizzie and Steenie announce their intention of seeing her safely on her way for which purpose they cross the river into the Broomielaw, and saunter leisurely down the side of Glasgow Green nearest the Fair. Being Sunday, the fair is, of course, not open, that is to say, the shows are not going on, and the stalls are closed. Leos, however, are to be had, and drinks of various kinds, which, together with cakes, "sweets," and other such like eatables, are pretty safe to attract the idle crowd, especially the young, who are rarely rigid Sabbatharians.

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"Awa! ye gang, then," bursts out Maggie at last, "ye ill nattered, un-natural lassie that ye are! Siccan an intolerable specimen o' pride as I never seed."

"Och! dinna heed them Katie," calls out Lizzie indignantly. "Jist come awa' an' leave them to thesels, the bad lot!"

Lizzie's exclamation provokes an impatient rejoinder from more than one of the noisy group, and her honest face flushes painfully at having herself stigmatized as a "reformatory dell" together with Katie, whose passionate temper would certainly cause her to burst forth into an open quarrel, if Lizzie, with her better sense and wiser self-control, did not interfere. She lays her hand firmly on Katie's arm, draws her onwards, almost by force, and quickens her pace that they may overtake Steenie.

"Kent in Glaskie," answers Steenie, evasively.

"Whaur hae ye seen him afore, Steenie? I dinna like the looks a' him."

"The de'il tak' it if I do either. But ye ken, lassie, it's no sae easy for a man to mak' name but guid acquaintanceships; it's no the best o' company one's fa' in wi' in toons like Glaskie, an' I's leith, an' sic like places."

"Hoo do ye ca' him?" persists Lizzie, with a look of increased misgiving.

"If ye maun ken a' the ins an' outs," answers Steenie, reluctantly, "it's Willie Cameron. He was ane o' the mates aboard the Jessie when we gaed oot to America yon time. He had gotten hissel' oot o' quod—the Lord kens hoo, an' ye may believe we didna ken it at the time—but he worked his passage oot to America to escape the police."

Then Steenie, remembering the bold, admiring gaze which Cameron, as he passed, cast upon Katie, becomes moody and silent, nor does he take any further part in the conversation until, having reached the lane leading to the farm, Katie stands still, and, with a bright smile, bids him good night.

Steenie's honest face glows a ruddier red than usual. Poor Steenie! Would it have been better if he could have known there and then how, vanishing from his sight, Katie scarcely gives him so much as a thought again that evening?

Foolish Katie! Her mind is taken up with the remembrance of the dark, insolent, but alluring eyes, whose glance of admiration at herself she too, as well as Steenie, has noticed, and which she does not care to forget. She yields to the vanity, the softness in her disposition, the attractions of externals, and is blind to the good near at hand. Gazing after a sudden phantasy, which is awakening evil in her heart, she misses, or rather passes by, unheeding, the path that might have led her to happiness. Some day, looking back upon the past, Katie may have to say, with Guinevere,

"Ah! my God, What might not I have made of Thy fair world, Had I but loved Thy highest creature here?"

It surely was my profit had I known, It would have been my pleasure had I seen."

TO BE CONTINUED.

TWICE SAVED.

FOR THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

Great drifts of snow lay like mountains over the fields and meadows. Merry sleigh-bells rang out on the frosty air, mingled with the sounds of gay voices. In the midst of the forest lay a lake, icebound, and covered over with groups of happy children. On the frozen surface burnt a large fire, and now and then the skaters formed rings around it, and glided nearer and nearer the flames, when, at a given signal, they separated, skating swiftly to the bank, and trying who should first reach his own place by the fire again.

Suddenly a child's voice rang out in terror on the air. All looked towards the spot whence the sound proceeded. A great opening in the ice showed that some one had broken through. Suddenly a head appeared and two little hands grasped the icy edges, but they broke away, and once more the child went out of sight.

A tall lad dashed from among a group of skaters, and glided rapidly towards the spot.

The good woman herself lay on the floor before the kitchen fire, only too glad to give up her comfortable bed to the preserver of her child.

Next day when Harry left her she said: "It's only a poor widdy I am, an' I can't reward ye fur yer bravery, but I can pray fur ye night and day, an' if ye wouidn't be above acceptin' this I'd be proud to have ye take it. I'll keep ye from all harm."

She placed in his hand a badge of the Sacred Heart. He thanked her, and assured her politely that he would keep her little gift. He was a quiet, thoughtful boy, and, non-Catholic as he was, he wondered what the sacred emblem meant.

"Father," said Mrs. Murphy, as the priest stood at the door of her little school to speak a kind word to the children, on his way back from devotions, "there's a poor woman very sick down in Mullins' Alley. She's very sick, indeed, and won't let anyone send for the priest. Perhaps if your reverence would just look in she might be reconciled to the Church."

"Does she belong here, Mrs. Murphy? I think I know all the inmates of Mullins' Alley. I manage to get a sight of them at least at Easter."

"She's here off and on, Father. I think she's from the country. To my knowledge she has never put her foot inside a church in this city."

"Well, I'll just call there now, Mrs. Murphy. Thank you for telling me, and the priest turned away.

A few steps brought him to Mullins' Alley. Used as he was to visiting the poor and wretched, Father Watson always shuddered when he reached this den of crime. Heaps of reeking fish and half-cad human forms met his eye, and on his ear fell curses and words of blasphemy.

Pushing his way up the rickety staircase, the priest opened the door, and by the dim light that came in through the dirty window, discovered a woman's form stretched on a rough bedstead. A candle stood on the table beside her, and Father Watson lit it, and scanned the features of the woman before him. She did not seem to be more than thirty years of age, but sin and shame had set their seal upon her. Her eyes were wide open, and her breathing thick and heavy.

"What can I do for you, my child?" he asked.

"Nothing."

"What are you doing here?"

"No answer."

"You do not belong to my parish?"

"Not a word."

"My poor child," said the priest, "you are dying. You must not face your Creator with your soul stained with sin. I have come to save you, and to forgive you your sins in the name of Almighty God."

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