

"Oh, ay, sir," said John, entering into his master's humour, "yon's all very well once in a lifetime or so, but nae oftener."

"Why, man, you acquitted yourself grandly," said his master. "Mrs. Bremner and I felt quite a thrill of pride when we read your eloquent words, and she said we could not possibly expect to keep you at Halliwell after it."

"Tell Mrs. Bremner, with my best respects," said John, quietly, "that I never came back to Halliwell with a better heart than this morning."

"She'll be glad to hear that, I can assure you," said Bremner; "but really you had a fine gathering, and everybody in Spitalhaugh from end to end could speak about nothing yesterday but your speech. I am sure Mrs. Fletcher must be very proud of you."

A somewhat comical look crossed John Fletcher's face.

"She's got something else to take up her heid wi' yesterday and the day, sir," he answered. "We brocht a bairn back with us from Edinburgh."

"A bairn!" echoed Mr. Bremner, in surprise. "Where did you get it?"

"We found it on the doorstep o' my guid-mother's house," answered John. "It's a foundling, and the bonniest wee chap you ever saw."

"And are you going to keep it?" asked the mill-owner, much interested.

"Mary says so," answered John.

"Well, the bairn may congratulate itself," said Mr. Bremner. "It has fallen on its feet. Mrs. Bremner will be greatly interested to hear this; I shouldn't wonder if she came down at once to see it."