

splendent beauty, at his feet, with a salver of medical cordials in her hand. Near them stood a young man. On the entrance of Halbert, the earl raised himself on his arm, and welcomed him. The young lady rose, and the young man stepped eagerly forward. The earl inquired anxiously after Wallace, and asked if he might expect him soon at Bothwell.

"He cannot yet come, my lord," replied Halbert; "hard is the task he has laid upon his valiant head; but he is avenged; he has slain the governor of Lanark."

"Slain!—how?" demanded the earl. Halbert gave a particular account of the anguish of Wallace when he was told of the sanguinary events which had taken place at Ellerslie; of the events that succeeded; and of the death of Heselrige—stating that, when the governor fell, Wallace made a vow never to mingle with the world again till Scotland should be free.

"Alas!" cried the earl, "what miracle is it to effect that? Surely he will not bury those noble qualities within the gloom of a cloister?"

"No, my lord, he has retired to the fastnesses of Cartlane Crags."

"Why?" resumed Mar, "why did he not rather fly to me? This castle is strong; and, while one stone of it remains upon another, not all the hosts of England should take him hence."

"It was not your friendship that he doubted," returned the old man; "love for his country compels him to reject all comfort in which she does not share. His last words to me were these—'I have nothing now to do but to assert the liberties of Scotland, and to rid her of her enemies. Go to Lord Mar; take this lock of my hair stained with the blood of my wife. It is all, most likely, he will ever again see of William Wallace. Should I fall, tell him to look on that, and in my wrongs read the future miseries of Scotland, and remember that God armeth the patriot.'"

Tears dropped fast from the young lady's eyes. "O my uncle!" cried the youth; "surely the freedom of Scotland is possible. I feel in my soul that the words of the brave Wallace are prophetic."

The earl held the lock of hair in his hands; he regarded it, lost in meditation. "God armeth the patriot!" He paused again; then, raising the sacred present to his lips, "Yes," cried he, "thy vow shall be performed; and while Donald Mar has an arm to wield a sword, or a man to follow him to the field, thou shalt command both him and them!"

"But not as you are, my lord!" cried the elder lady; "your wounds are yet unhealed; your fever is still raging. Would it not be madness to expose your safety at such a crisis?"

"I shall not take arms myself," answered he, "till I can bear them to effect; meanwhile, all of my clan and of my friends that I can raise to guard the life of my deliverer, and to promote the cause, must be summoned. This lock shall be my pennon, and what Scotsman will look on that and start from his colours? Here, Helen, my child," cried he, addressing the young lady, "take this lock of my hair, have this hair wrought into my banner. It will be a patriot's standard, and let his own irresistible words be the motto—'God armeth me.'"

Helen took the lock, and, trembling with a strange emotion, was leaving the room, when she heard her cousin throw himself on his knees. "I beseech you, my honoured uncle," cried he, "if you have any love for me, or value for my future fame, that you will allow me to be the bearer of your banner in the army of Sir William Wallace."

Helen stopped to hear the reply. "You cannot, my dear nephew," returned the earl, "have as good a much favour that I would grant with so much joy. To-morrow, I will collect the peasantry of Bothwell, and with those of my own followers you shall join Wallace the same night. Helen, who, ignorant of the horrors of war, and only alive to the glory of the present cause, sympathized in the ardour of her cousin, with a thrill of delight hurried to her own apartment to commence her task.

Far different were the sentiments of the countess. As soon as Lord Mar had let this declaration escape his lips, alarmed at the effect so much agitation might have on his enfeebled constitution and fearful of the perilous cause he ventured thus openly to espouse, she desired her nephew to take Halbert, and see that he was attended with due hospitality. When the room was left to the earl and herself, she remonstrated with him upon the facility with which he had become a party in so treasonable a matter. "Consider, my lord," continued she, "that Scotland is now entirely in the power of the English monarch. His garisons occupy our towns, and his creatures hold every place of trust in the kingdom."

"And is such a list of oppressions, my dear lady, to be an argument for longer bearing them? Had I and other Scottish nobles dared to resist this overwhelming power after the battle of Dunbar; had we, instead of kissing the sword that robbed us of our liberties, kept our own unshaken within the bulwarks of our mountains, Scotland would now be free. I should not have been assailed by our English tyrants in the streets of Lanark; and to save my life, William Wallace would not be now mourning his murdered wife, and without a home to shelter him!"

Lady Mar paused, but resumed, "That may be true. But Scotland is lost for ever; and by your attempting to assist your friend in this rash essay to recover it, you will only lose yourself also, without preserving him. What would you have? Now that the contention between the two kings is past; now that Baliol has surrendered his crown to Edward, is not Scotland at peace?"

"A bloody peace, Joanna," answered the earl; "witness these wounds. An usurper's peace is more destructive than his open hostilities; plunder and assassination are its concomitants. I have now seen and felt enough of Edward's jurisdiction. It is time I should awake, and, like Wallace, determine to die for Scotland, or to avenge her."

Lady Mar wept. "Cruel Donald! is this the reward of all my love and duty? You tear yourself from me; you consign your estates to sequestration; you rob your children of their name; nay, you

stimulate our brother Bothwell's son to head the band that is to join this madman Wallace!"

"Hold, Joanna!" cried the earl; "speak that word again, and you forfeit my love! What is it I hear? You call the hero who in saving your husband's life, reduced madman. Was he mad because he protected the Countess of Mar from being left a widow? Was he mad because he prevented her children from being fatherless?"

TO BE CONTINUED. LARRY O'NEILL.

Half an hour past noon on a bright May day, Larry O'Neill, for lack of anything better to do, dropped into Christie's salerooms. Some necessary legal business had obliged him to leave his retirement in Donegal, and when he found the family solicitors were not to be hurried into any lawyer-like speed, he found time heavy on his hands. Once he would have had no difficulty in spending a few days pleasantly enough in London, but that was prior to the time of the occurrence that had transformed the light-hearted Larry O'Neill into a gloomy and morose recluse.

The famous salerooms were pretty well filled, and Larry found an unoccupied chair and looked indifferently at the next seat, turned towards him, eyed Larry doubtfully for a few minutes, and then held out his hand.

"Captain O'Neill, isn't it?" the man said eagerly.

Larry's face darkened.

"No—I am in the service no longer, Mr. Hilton," he said quietly.

"Well, you're Larry O'Neill, anyhow," Mr. Hilton said, "though I doubted the fact for a minute. I never knew you had a taste for brics-a-brac."

"Oh, I haven't," Larry smiled slightly. "I merely strolled in here because I had nothing else to do. Are you purchasing?"

"I have just thought a Kan-he-rase," Mr. Hilton replied. "It's very unique. Then he sighed. 'One has to cultivate an interest in something or another.'"

"I suppose," Larry assented indifferently and rose to his feet. Mr. Hilton did likewise.

"There is nothing else I want," he explained. "Come to my flat for luncheon, will you, Larry?"

Larry began an excuse. Mr. Hilton interrupted him.

"You'll do me a kindness, really old fellow," he urged. "I'm very lonely at times, and then Larry remembered that Mr. Hilton's wife, to whom he had been tenderly attached, had died at San Remo seven or eight years before.

"Thanks, then I will," Larry assented, "but I should warn you that I'm not the best of company."

"Neither am I," Hilton responded. Soon afterwards the two men were seated at a simple, well-cooked luncheon in a quiet street not far from Piccadilly.

"I couldn't bear the country," the older man confessed, "nor the house where Jane and I had lived so long alone together. My nephew, who will succeed me, occupies the house in the summer. I brought a couple of old servants with me to London."

Larry was sympathetically silent.

"But you, Larry, why have you turned hermit, Jane liked you—for her sake, excuse what might seem an impertinent question," Mr. Hilton went on after a moment.

Larry looked across the table.

"Do you not know?"

"Know!" Mr. Hilton shook his head. "But, there—perhaps my question roused painful memories. Don't—"

Larry laughed a hard bitter laugh.

"Painful memories are seldom long away from me," he said. "You know I went to India."

"Well, I was in command of a troop during a period of unrest among the natives. A certain tribe was disaffected and we feared a rising. It took place, and though we had been in a measure expecting it, we were surprised at the moment I was in command, and I blundered hopelessly."

"How was that?"

"I don't know in the least, I felt drunk, stupid, dazed, and my man had to help me into the saddle. What orders I gave I have no idea, but we were beaten back ignominiously, disgracefully, and all through me. Only for Tyson, the next in authority, matters would have been worse. As it was, India and England rang with the miserable story. There were some who said, because I was a Catholic and an Irishman, that I was a traitor."

"But could you not account in any way?"

"In no way. I have no recollection of anything really till our defeat was accomplished. I was a ruined and disgraced man. For myself, though I loved service, it would not have mattered, but my father—the old man believes we are descended from Com of the Hundred Fights. You can guess the blow it was to him to hear his only son described as a coward or a traitor."

"Larry, you are neither."

"I was one or other to all men. My father never openly reproached me or questioned me. Ah, Hilton, I think I could have borne it better if he had. I retired to Carrickduan, and I have tried, God knows, to make the best of things. Some times I see a look on the old man's face that seems a look on an explanation, and I can give none. I wonder you did not hear of the thing at the time it occurred."

"When was that?"

Larry mentioned a date.

"Ah! My wife was dying then, abroad," Mr. Hilton said. "I was only interested in that fact. And then—things are speedily forgotten. Some new sensation turns up."

Larry nodded, a deeper shadow overspreading his face.

"I seldom leave home," he said, after a moment, "but I had to come here. A piece of land was sold to the railway company. I dreaded meeting any of the set I once knew. I need not have feared—not things alone, but people, are forgotten. You are the first to recognize me."

Mr. Hilton played nervously with his fork. He had liked Larry O'Neill well

in the days long past, and ventured on a question hesitatingly.

"And you—you are engaged Larry. Did the marriage come off?"

"No—how could it? I released Miss Trevor. She accepted her release."

"Miss Trevor—Constance Trevor," Mr. Hilton thought a moment. "She is unmarried yet. I saw her at some art show not long since—as beautiful as ever. Did she act under compulsion? Her father was rather determined."

"There was no compulsion. Constance simply thought as the world thought—I was either a traitor or a coward."

"Strange!"

"To none more so than me," Larry said. "How could any one account for what was unaccountable? There was only one person who believed in my honesty and courage."

"Who was that?"

"Mollie Blake. Miss Trevor's mother was Irish, you know. That's how my acquaintance with the family began. Mrs. Trevor was Mollie's aunt. Poor Mollie! She was an orphan, unprovided for, and exceedingly simple, young, unformed, and quite ignorant of the world, too. Yet her vigorous and foolish championship gave me comfort. I wonder what became of the child?"

Mr. Hilton shook his head.

"Like you, I have not mixed much with my kind."

"There was a long silence. Mr. Hilton was not an adept at the art of making conversation. He tried to think of something to say about while Larry sat grave and abstracted, his thoughts far back in the past. The host was relieved by a summons from his manservant, and left the room. When he returned he carried a vase in his hand. Larry had not moved.

"This is my recent purchase," Mr. Hilton began. "It belonged to Sir Stephen Meredith, once Foreign Secretary. He died a year ago."

"Yes," Larry responded. "I know. A sister of his was married to an officer in my—my regiment. Mrs. Tyson was a pretty, hysterical little woman, but very kind. She was much affected by that unfortunate affair. More than she had the least right to be, seeing we were the nearest acquaintances."

Mr. Hilton had no desire to go back to the unsatisfactory subject. He began divesting the vase of its inner wrappings.

"Just look at this, Larry," he said, "even if you aren't an art critic, the vase will appear."

There was a loud crash. The precious vase had slipped from its owner's hands and fallen on the side of the brass fender.

"Oh!" Larry ejaculated. Mr. Hilton was gazing at the fragments in consternation.

"What a pity!" Larry said. "And the thing is shattered, I fear. No patching of it up?"

"No, no," Mr. Hilton stooped over the pieces and lifted a couple of sheets of paper. Half mechanically he began reading them.

"God bless me, God bless me!" he cried. "How on earth—what on earth!" He dropped into a chair, and went on reading, while Larry retreated to the windows and looked out. When he turned from his momentary contemplation of the opposite houses, Mr. Hilton was still reading, with distended eyes, the thin, crumpled sheets of paper.

"Larry, Larry! Do you know what this is? It is my—my marvellous, most wonderful. How fortunate I am to find it! God bless me!" Mr. Hilton ejaculated excitedly.

"What is the matter, Hilton?" Larry inquired.

"And you here! Why it is simply astonishing, dramatic!" Mr. Hilton tried to compose himself, and held forth the sheets. "This is a letter from Mrs. Tyson to her brother, Sir Stephen. He must have stuck it in the vase."

"Indeed!" Larry observed.

"And forgotten about it. He was absent-minded, it is said, or perhaps he compromised with his action. One doesn't know, can never know," Mr. Hilton said, "read the letter, Larry."

"Why should I read what was not intended for my eyes?"

"Nor for mine," Mr. Hilton laughed; then added solemnly: "Why, Larry, it is your justification. It was Mrs. Tyson's—'drugged.'"

"Drugged!"

"Yes. She was nervous about her husband going into action, into danger—a poor, foolish, goose of a woman she was, I should judge. She obtained some powerful native drug from an Indian servant, which she determined to administer to her husband when the hour of danger arrived. The dose was warranted to produce a form of illness that would render the person taking it quite unconscious. The illness was to resemble

WIT AND HUMOR. Couldn't Fool Him.

At a dinner, recently, William J. Bryan was joking about his repeated attempts to be elected President, although Mr. Bryan considers them no joke, at that.

"After a time," he said, "I shall be in the position of the man, somewhat worse for wear, who came into a dance in Texas. The floor manager saw him and let him out. He came back. Then the floor manager pushed him out. He came back. Finally, the floor manager kicked him out, and he rolled down a flight of stairs. At the bottom of the stairs he considered the matter. 'I know what it means,' he said. 'They can't fool me. Those people in there do not want me to attend that dance.'"

An old barber, living in an English market town, recently made a clever

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reply to a farmer who went to his shop to get shaved. It was market day, and several people were awaiting their turn, when the agriculturist, who was wealthy, but inclined to be mean, entered and addressed the barber as follows:— "I say, Billy, farming pays very badly nowadays; thou ought to shave us for half price."

"Nay, nay," said Billy, who knew his business well. "I ought to hev double price now, for farmers' faces are twice as long as they used to be."

Scotland has a great reputation for learning in the United States, and a lady who went over from Boston recently expected to find the proverbial shepherd quoting Virgil, and the laborer who had Burns by heart. She was disillusioned in Edinburgh. Accosting a policeman she inquired as to the whereabouts of Carlyle's house.

"Which Carlyle?" she asked.

"Thomas Carlyle," said the lady.

"What does he do?" queried the guardian of the peace.

"He was a writer—but he's dead," she faltered.

"Well, madam," the big Scot informed her, "if the man is dead over five years there's little chance of finding out anything about him in a big city like this."

Mr. Justyn, said the editor, looking over the new reporter's story of the political meeting, "in this write-up of yours you say 'resistless waves of applause from the audience fairly overwhelmed the speaker.' Look at the absurdity of that figure of speech. How could a 'resistless wave' of applause or anything else come from an 'audience,' Mr. Justyn?"

It could come from a sea of upturned faces, couldn't it?" insisted the new reporter.

A rather pompous looking member of a certain church was asked to take charge of a class of boys during the absence of the regular teacher. While endeavoring to impress upon their young minds the importance of living a Christian life the following question was propounded:—

"Why do the people call me a Christian, children?" the worthy dignitary asked, standing very erect and smiling down upon them.

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