"Ay! An' he liket it that ill that he's vowed he'll never come back here fou, an' as there's nae fear o' him ever bein' sober, I'm a' richt sae lang as it's there. Dinna meddle the ditch in my time, Mr. Robert. Better a dirty ditch than a pest o' a man!"

Strathbog was en tête. It was Mollie Wedderburn's wedding day, and everywhere there was brilliant sunshine—over the strings of flags stretched from one side of the High Street to the other, on the bunting that was displayed at every available point at Robert's offices and pits; on the crimson cloth which was laid down the steps of the parish church and right out to the street. Inside the grey old building, gay with stately palms and innumerable roses, an attempt had been made to exclude it by pulling down the blinds, but it had made its way in at the edges, and flickering over the pews, and, falling athwart the space beside the choir rails, made a blaze of light on the spot where bride and bridegroom would stand while they took each other for better or worse, for richer or poorer.

Every one was astir, every one was excited. The church was packed to suffocation when Lyall and his best man walked up the aisle, and