

is tall and straight, wi' hands and feet like a lassie's; he had brown, curling hair, sae thick and glossy! and cheeks like the rose, and a brow like the snaw, and the blue een, wi' a glint in them, like the light of the evening star!—Na na, ye are no like my Malcom, though ye are a guid enough body, I dinna doubt, and a decent woman's son."

Here the masquerading merchant, considerably taken down, made a movement as though to leave, but the hospitable dame stayed him, saying: "Gin ye hae travelled a' the way fra India, ye maun be tired and hungry. Bide a bit, and eat and drink wi' us. Margery! come down, and let us set on the supper!"

The two women soon provided quite a tempting repast and they all three sat down to it—Mrs. Anderson reverently asking a blessing. But the merchant could not eat. He was only hungry for his mother's kisses—only thirsty for her joyful recognition; yet he could not bring himself to say to her—"I am your son." He asked himself, half grieved, half amused—"Where are the unerring, natural instincts I have read about in poetry and novels?"

His hostess, seeing he did not eat, kindly asked if he could suggest anything he would be likely to relish. "I thank you, madam," he answered, "it does seem to me that I should like some oatmeal porridge, such as my mother used to make, if so be ye have any."

"Porridge?" repeated the widow. "Ah, ye mean *parritch*. Yes, we hae a little left frae our dinner. Get it to him, Margery. But, mon, it is cauld."

"Never mind, I know I shall like it," he rejoined, taking the bowl, and beginning to stir the porridge with the spoon. As he did so Mrs. Anderson gave a slight start, and bent eagerly toward him. Then she sank back in her chair with a sigh, saying, in answer to his questioning look—

"Ye minded me o' my Malcom then—just in that way he used to stir his *parritch*—gieing it a whirl and a flirt. Ah! gin ye *were* my Malcom, my poor laddie!"

"Weel, then, gin I *were* your Malcom," said the merchant, speaking for the first time in the Scottish dialect, and in his own voice, "or gin your braw

young Malcom were as brown and bald and gray, and bent, and old as I am, could ye welcome him to your arms, and love him as in the dear auld lang syne. Could you, mither?"

All through this touching little speech, the widow's eyes had been glistening, and her breath came fast; but at that word, "*mither*," she sprang up with a glad cry, and tottering to her son, fell almost fainting on his breast. He kissed her again and again—kissed her brow, her lips, and her hands, while the big tears slid down his bronzed cheeks; while she clung about his neck and called him by all the dear old pet names, and *tried* to see in him all the dear old young looks. By-and-bye they came back—or the *ghost* of them came back. The form in her embrace grew comelier; love and joy gave to it a second youth, stately and gracious; the *first* she then and there buried deep in heart—a sweet, beautiful, peculiar memory. It was a moment of solemn renunciation, in which she gave up the fond maternal illusion she had cherished so long. Then, looking up steadily into the face of the middle-aged man, who had taken its place, she asked, "Where hae ye left the wife and bairns?"

"At the inn, mother. Have you room for us all at the cottage?"

"Indeed I have—twa good spare-rooms, wi' large closets, weel stocked wi' linen I hae been spinning or weaving a' these lang years for ye baith, and the weans."

"Well, mother dear, now you must rest," rejoined the merchant, tenderly.

"Na, na, I dinna care to rest till ye lay me down to tak' my lang rest. There'll be time enough between that day and the resurrection, to fauld my hands in idleness. Now 'twould be unco irksome. But go my son, and bring me the wife—I hope I shall like her; and the bairns—I hope they will like me."

I have only to say, that both the good woman's hopes were realized. A very happy family knelt down in prayer that night, and many nights after, in the widow's cottage, whose climbing roses and woodbines were but outward signs and types of the sweetness and blessedness of the love and peace within.—*Little Pilgrim.*