

THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN SHUTTERS

their morning rounds, a brave procession for a single town! Gourlay, standing great-shouldered in the middle of the road, took in every detail, devoured it grimly as a homage to his pride. "Ha! ha! ye dogs," said the soul within him. Past the pillar of the Red Lion door he could see a white peep of the landlord's waistcoat—though the rest of the mountainous man was hidden deep within his porch. (On summer mornings the vast totality of the landlord was always inferential to the town from the tiny white peep of him revealed.) Even fat Simpson had waddled to the door to see the earts going past. It was fat Simpson—might the Universe blast his adipose—who had once tried to infringe Gourlay's monopoly as the sole carrier in Barbie. There had been a rush to him at first, but Gourlay set his teeth and drove him off the road, carrying stuff for nothing till Simpson had nothing to carry, so that the local wit suggested "a wee pareel in a big eart" as a new sign for his hotel. The twelve browns praneing past would be a pill to Simpson! There was no smile about Gourlay's mouth—a fiercer glower was the only sign of his pride—but it put a bloom on his morning, he felt, to see the suggestive round of Simpson's waistcoat, down yonder at the porch. Simpson, the swine! He had made short work o' him!

Ere the last of the earts had issued from the yard at the House with the Green Shutters the foremost was already near the Red Lion. Gourlay swore beneath his breath when Miss Toddle—described in the local records as "a spinster of independent means"—came fluttering out with a silly little pareel to accost one of the carriers. Did the auld fool mean to stop Andy Gow