

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

"Oh, mother!" Janet screamed, yielding to her terror when her mother weakened. "Oh, mother, I'm feared! I'm feared! Oh, mother, I'm feared!"

"Come!" said her mother; "Come!" and drew her by the wrist. They went into the parlour.

The post was a square-built, bandy-legged little man, with a bristle of grizzled hair about his twisted mouth, perpetually cocking up an ill-bred face in the sight of Heaven. Physically and morally he had in him something both of the Scotch terrier and the London sparrow—the shagginess of the one, the cocked eye of the other, the one's snarling temper, the other's assured impudence. In Gourlay's day he had never got by the gateway of the yard, much as he had wanted to come farther. Gourlay had an eye for a thing like him. "Damn the gurlie brute!" Postie complained once; "when I passed a pleasant remark about the weather the other morning, he just looked at me and blew the reek of his pipe in my face. And that was his only answer!"

Now that Gourlay was gone, however, Postie clattered through the yard every morning, right up to the back door.

"A heap o' correspondence *thir* mornins!" he would simper—his greedy little eye trying to glean revelations from the women's faces, as they took the letters from his hand.

On the morning after young Gourlay came home for the last time, Postie was pelting along with his quick thudding step near the head of the Square, when whom should he meet but Sandy Toddle, still unwashed and yawning from his bed. It was early and the streets