

A Son of Erin

The morning after his return from Edinburgh, when Mr. Bremner came down from Halliwell House to the mill, he sent for John to go to his private room. Mr. Walter Bremner was a fine-looking man in his early prime, a man of no mean gifts, and who knew how to turn them to the best possible advantage. Although he had inherited a considerable fortune from his father, and a thoroughly established and lucrative business, he did not fold his hands and allow things to drift. He was constant in his attendance at the mill, believing rightly that a flourishing concern cannot afford altogether to dispense with its head. His relaxation was politics, and he had half promised that one day he might be induced to represent his own burghs in Parliament. He was married to a charming wife, and had some little children who made the sunshine of the fine old house standing high on the wooded slope above the town. Altogether, fortune seemed to have bestowed her highest favours on Walter Bremner, and it would have been hard to find in the whole breadth of Scotland a more prosperous or happier man.

John Fletcher entered his master's room nothing loth. Between them there existed the most perfect understanding, a feeling of good-fellowship and community of interest which was almost brotherly, so that there was nothing incongruous in Mr. Bremner rising from his chair and shaking his employee warmly by the hand.

"Well, John, have you got back from your great jaunt?" he asked with a twinkle in his pleasant grey eye; "and do you find it quite easy to step from your pedestal down to the level of commonplace things?"

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