

# The Braes of Yarrow

An Historical Tale of the Sixteenth Century.  
CHAPTER XXV.—THE PILGRIM'S REVELATION.  
"Then sth ye needs" quoth he, "will know my shame."

And all the ill which chaunt to me of late,  
I shortly will to you rehearse the same,  
In hope ye will not turn misfortune to my blame."

The pilgrim lay upon a simple palliasse.—His face was haggard and his eyes were dull. At his feet knelt one of the friars, who held up a large oaken cross, upon which the eyes of the apparently dying man were fixed. The chamber was dimly lighted by a single lamp, which sufficed to show the severe simplicity of the furniture and to inspire a sense of awe in the prevailing cold silence of the place.

Father Michael and his marked companion had entered the room and had been standing several seconds beside the pilgrim's couch before he showed any sign of having observed their presence.  
"You are devout, my son," said Father Michael softly.  
The man slowly, and, as it seemed, reluctantly, withdrew his gaze from the sacred emblem and turned his dull eyes upon the speaker. His eyes seemed to brighten, and he made a feeble effort to extend his hand. Father Michael took the hand.

"Do not exert yourself—you are too much exhausted. I have brought the friend you desired to see."  
"Ah, holy father, I am indeed sorely exhausted; but I have found much strength from your prayers and the prayers of the good man you left with me. I am very weak, and I feel that my last minute is close at hand, else I would try to tell you all the gratitude that fills my heart."  
"We have our return if we have given your last moments some Christian comfort."  
"You have, you have"—a hollow cough stopped his utterance.

The cough continued several minutes and appeared to leave him utterly helpless, for he lay with arms outstretched and a vacant glazed look in his eyes, as if he had spoken his last.  
Father Michael regarded him anxiously; and after a brief silence spoke—  
"My son, I dare not hide from you what is written upon your face—your end is near.—Wherefore, say quickly that which you may desire to have done, for time passes swiftly."  
The man made several efforts to speak and, failing in that, he made a feeble motion with his hand, the meaning of which was not intelligible. The friar bent down and placed his ear close to the invalid's mouth.

"Leave me—good father—leave me—for a little time with the friend who brought me here," were the words which were spoken so faintly that they were with difficulty caught.  
"Do you fear to speak before us?" queried Father Michael, surprised.  
"No, no, I will tell you all, good father—but—fears confuse me—I can explain—it is the prayer of a dying man—you will not deny it."  
"Would ye not be shriven?"  
"Yes, but not in the presence of other than yourself—grant my prayer."  
"As you will."  
Father Michael beckoned to his brother monk, and together they noiselessly quitted the chamber.

Spens had been standing hitherto a little in the background, but obeying the motion of the pilgrim's hand, he now stepped close up to the couch. He noted that the man seemed started on looking up and observing the black mask which covered his face.  
"Are you he who lured me from the road and carried me hither?" was the faint query.  
"I am he," answered Spens, marvelling what could be the nature of the mysterious communication he was evidently called upon to receive.  
"Why do you hide your face?" gasped the dying pilgrim.  
"I have reasons."  
"You will not trust me with them?"  
"I cannot."  
The man drew a long breath which might have been accounted a sigh of regret. He seemed to be regaining strength rapidly from the instant the friars had left the room.—This, however, did not strike Sir Walter as particularly notable.

"Water."  
A jar stood close at hand, and the parched lips of the invalid were speedily moistened.  
"Thanks, thanks, my friend—I am better now. But bend near to me, for my voice is feeble, and the effort to speak exhausts me."  
"Delay then till the morning."  
"The man shook his head hopelessly.  
"The morning will be too late."  
"Nay, nay, you will recover."  
"I cannot trust to that. I must find some friend whose hand is strong and whose heart is generous—I must find him at once. Are you the man?"  
"My hand is none of the weakest, and as for my heart—well, it has never yet refused pity to the unfortunate. But before pledging myself to you I must know the nature of the service you would have done."  
"It is honorable."  
"Without doubt, and I divine by your eagerness it must be of import."  
"Ay, it is of high import, for it concerns the good name of a noble lady—perhaps concerns her life."  
"And you can save her?"  
"I could have saved her had not this illness come upon me. But now—you see how powerless I am."  
"Then you would have me undertake the work?"  
"That is what I would implore you to do."  
"You cannot understand the circumstances that hamper my actions, and I cannot explain them. But to this I pledge myself that, these circumstances permitting, I will do the service you desire."  
"I cannot thank you enough for that pledge; but you will know how much I feel when I tell you without your promise my death would have been miserable, my spirit would never have found peace."  
"Be satisfied, I will not be easily turned from the accomplishment of your desire."  
"I believe that—I believe that."  
"Who is the lady?"  
"Give me your hand."  
Spens obeyed, and somehow as the pilgrim grasped his hand, he felt a chill as if a cold draught of wind had passed through the chamber. At the same time a strange fancy flashed upon his mind—that a diabolical gleam of triumph had been for an instant faintly visible in the dying man's sunken eyes. But he endeavored to thrust the fancy aside, and in the endeavor he remembered with some surprise the titanic exhausted condition of the man only a few minutes previous, and contrasted it with the comparative ease with which he spoke now. That, however, might be accounted for by the great anxiety of the man to relieve himself of a matter which evidently weighed heavily upon him.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE FREE GRANTS.—A correspondent of the *Grillia Examiner* writes as follows: "The Government if a little tardy in attending to the colonization roads and general internal improvements of the country, must be awarded great credit for their kindness, liberality, and promptitude in following up the Muskoka-Territorial District Act in such unmistakable good faith, by providing very efficient public officers, Registry books &c., and for the immediate construction of a Court Room, Registry Office and Lock-up. The establishment of the Crown Land Agency is proving to be a signal success. The beneficial results are already most marked. Of the hundreds who have visited the District this summer in search of land, there has not been a solitary instance of complaint. Indeed, a large proportion of the locations take place by candle light, in order to impose as little sacrifice of time upon strangers as possible. Hotel accommodation is kept

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Wynham Street, Guelph, July 25, 1868. daw tf

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All kinds of Summer Drinks such as Soda Water, Lemonade, Sarsaparilla, Ginger Ale and Ginger Beer.

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All orders left at the Depot, or addressed to the undersigned will be promptly attended to.  
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A COMPLETE assortment of the latest patterns of Shoe Tools, Shoe and Machine Thread, Machine Silk, Shoe Pins, Shoe Nails, Shoe Tacks, Heel and Toe Plates, &c., wholesale and retail.  
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Toronto, 1st April, 1868. d

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Guelph, May 14, 1868.

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HENRY ORTON,  
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