

Fergus at his work. He can't be very bad if he's took to his carving so quick.'

But Fergus was bad after all, as events proved.

He went to work as usual the following morning, and for the next ten days; and then, one afternoon, a fellow-workman brought him home in a cab. He had fallen down fainting at the workshop, and the master had told him to go and nurse himself; he was not fit to be out.

No doubt the master was right. Fergus had evidently gone on as long as he could get his body to obey his will. It could do no more, and in spite of utter unwillingness, he had to submit to go to bed, and—oh, misery!—to depend upon his landlady for supplying his needs. His helplessness was complete, and he fainted again before his mate, who had good-naturedly remained to give help, could get him into bed.

Mrs. Huckerby's bewailings and lamentations were many and sincere, and louder than Fergus could well bear. He turned his face to the wall and begged to be left alone. She obeyed with surprising alacrity, but only to return again in half an hour with a cup of tea, an egg, and a bit of toast; and it was not her fault if the egg was somewhat stale, and the toast unbuttered.

He was obliged to rouse himself to eat, if only to get rid of her officious attentions; to his surprise he found that the food actually revived him. The terrible faintness passed off and he felt himself again.

His respect for Mrs. Huckerby went up. 'After all, these women know more than we do, perhaps, about some things,' he thought.

A slight increase of docility was the result, and she was encouraged to talk about the doctor. That, however, roused all his obstinacy; he refused to see one on any consideration whatsoever, declared he was all right, and should get up the next morning—nothing should keep him in bed. Surely he could do as he liked!

Somehow there was a sternness of resolution in this man, expressed as it was in the fewest words, which daunted Mrs. Huckerby

more than all the noisy bluster to which she was accustomed when her husband did not find things to his mind; and she made haste to assure Fergus he should have his own way.

He showed his satisfaction, and also his disbelief in his own prophecy of a quick recovery, by bidding her take out of a box all the money she found within, and to put it to such uses as might be necessary till he was able to 'do' for himself.

'And now, guid-wife, you will just go downstairs, and I will do very well. If I am wanting anything I will rap on the floor with my staff there. And if I don't rap, don't come up till morning, and I will do very well.'

'But maybe you'll be took faint again,' said she, hesitatingly, as she put the shepherd's crook within his reach.

'Not I! I will do well. Good-night to ye,' said the resolute voice. With his eye upon her, she could not but obey.

'Eh me!' she ejaculated outside the door, 'but he's got a will o' his own, has Fergus! and him looking as white as a ghost. I don't like him being alone i' the dark.'

Mrs. Huckerby and her children always went to bed early, as an economy in oil and fuel. To the tired woman it seemed as if she had hardly been asleep an hour, when she became conscious of some sound. A moment's startled listening convinced her that Fergus was rapping on the floor above.

'There now! he's bad again—was there anything so unfort'nat?' she thought, as she hurried on her clothes.

Yes, Fergus was indeed ill.

When she rushed up, she found him lying panting for breath. The struggle was so severe that the bed shook under him; his features were drawn, and his brow gathered in anguish.

She opened the window, and then flew to raise him as best she could.

The paroxysm was prolonged, and most harrowing to see. She thought he would die then and there, and perhaps he thought so too, for he grasped at her hand—the one