

## Choice Literature.

### HEATHER BELLES.

A MODERN HIGHLAND STORY.

#### CHAPTER XVI.—GREAT DOINGS IN GLENARTAN.

Eleven months have elapsed since the events narrated in last chapter and those it is now our duty to record: Many things had happened in the interval.

It will be remembered that in the last letter which Roderick McKay, while still at Mentone, received from Mr. Craig, the lawyer informed him that Sir Arthur Munro, he Laird of Glenartan, and the Rev. William Macintosh, Free Church minister of Glen Feoch, had both been removed by death. The consequences of these events deeply concern some of those in whom we are interested.

Sir Arthur Munro had been a bachelor all his days, so that there was no immediate heir to his fortune and property. One result of this state of things was that, for reasons connected with the succession which it is needless for us to detail, the trustees thought proper to expose for sale the estate of Glenartan. The upset price, as advertised, was £50,000. Mr. Craig, W.S., was present when the estate was put up in the auction room in Edinburgh, and, after a spirited competition, it was knocked down to him for the sum of £65,000. From his known affection for the famous Highland glen, it was supposed that the lawyer himself was the purchaser; but in course of time it became known that Mr. Graham, the sheep-farmer, was in reality the new proprietor. Ere the winter set in, Castle Dealachd was in process of extensive improvement and renovation, and it was expected to be fully ready for occupation again before the next summer was far advanced. As to its future occupants, public gossip and rumour were utterly at fault. Mr. Graham never intended to remove from the farm, but on the contrary expressed his strong desire to spend his remaining days at the old house of Altbreac. As the result showed, the mansion house was all along destined to be the home of Archibald Graham and his fair young bride, when their union had been consummated.

The death of Mr. Macintosh in Glen Feoch was a sad loss, not only to his own people, who equally loved and respected him, but to the whole community and district, in which his very name was a tower and bulwark on the side of genuine godliness and humanity. Mr. Morrison was appointed Moderator of Session during the vacancy; but his labours, though somewhat prolonged, were by no means arduous or unpleasant. As "his father's son," in addition to his own substantial merits, the eyes of the congregation were early directed to young McKay; but various circumstances hindered a rapid decision. At length, early in the month of April, 1886, at a largely-attended meeting of members and adherents, the Rev. Roderick McKay, preacher of the Gospel, was unanimously chosen to be their minister. After the usual meetings of Presbytery, one to moderate in a call and another to hear the trial discourses of the young "Probationer," his ordination was fixed to take place on the 12th of June. It was a great day in Glen Feoch. As on sacramental occasions, crowds of people came from all the parishes round for many miles; and Glenartan, as was natural, furnished a large proportion of the worshippers, to whom a walk of five miles on such an errand was a mere trifle. At the close of the solemn services, in which two members of the Presbytery had taken part, Mr. Morrison accompanied Roderick McKay to the door of the church, and there the young minister received a hearty welcome from his people, who pressed forward eagerly to shake him by the hand.

On the following Sabbath Mr. Morrison preached in the forenoon, and at the close introduced the new pastor to his congregation in solemn and well-chosen words. In the afternoon Roderick McKay himself occupied the pulpit, and struck the key-note of all his after ministry in a vigorous masterly discourse from the words, Psalm cxlix. 2: "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King."

A month later the Free Church of Glenartan was the scene of a double marriage which stirred the whole glen with enthusiasm and joy. The announcement, as copied from the columns of the *Scotsman* of two days later date, ran as follows:

"At the Free Church, Glenartan, Ross-shire, on the 12th instant, by the Rev. Alexander Morrison, Archibald Graham, Esq., junior, of Glenartan, to Caroline Craig, daughter of Colonel Craig, Esq., Kensington Gardens, London.

"At the Free Church, Glenartan, Ross-shire, on the 12th instant, by the Rev. Alexander Morrison, the Rev. Roderick McKay, Free Church minister of Glen Feoch, to Florence, second daughter of George Graham, Esq., of Glenartan."

After the ceremony was over on the day in question, the whole party met at Altbreac House to enjoy Mr. Craig's princely hospitality. The company included, besides the relatives of the parties, Mr. Wyatt and his nieces from London; Dr. Anderson, the medical man of the district; the Rev. Andrew Stewart, the college companion of McKay; and many more whose names we need not recount. After a sumptuous déjeuner, Mr. Morrison rose to propose the health of the newly-married couples. He had had but little practice in the delicate art of after-dinner oratory; but acquitted himself well. Though no reporter was present, we are able from a private source, which shall be nameless, to put on record the language he used.

"Mr. Craig, Ladies and Gentlemen,—According, I believe, to general custom in Scotland, it is now my duty, as officiating clergyman on this occasion, to ask you to drink to the health of the happy pairs who have this day been united in the holy bonds of matrimony. The task is one which may well appal a sad and sober bachelor such as I am. (Hear, hear.) Let me speak of the ladies first. If it be the case, as the wise man has said, that he that 'find-

eth a wife findeth a good thing,' surely the declaration is tenfold more true if the wife be one who, from her excellent virtues, will prove an honour to her husband and an ornament to his home. In her who was so lately Miss Caroline Craig, young Mr. Graham is the happy husband of one who has carried captive the esteem and admiration of all who know her. In the high station and position she will now be called to occupy she will diffuse, I am certain, a sweet Christian influence, which will bless and gladden many a heart and many a home in Glenartan. (Loud applause.) And what shall I say of the other lady? You will pardon me if I cannot forget that she is now a minister's wife. No minister should be without one—(Hear, hear, and laughter)—a day longer than he can help—(laughter)—though all are not so fortunate in the search as my friend Mr. McKay has been. I cannot tell, and I question if he himself knows, when the tender passion took its rise in the breast of the young minister of Glen Feoch. That question is almost antiquarian in its character—(oh, oh)—and need not trouble us to-day. He will find in his lady-love not only a noble partner and admirable housewife, but one who will cheer him in his anxieties and aid him in his labours. My discrimination of human character is utterly at fault, if Mrs. McKay does not prove the *beau idéal* of what a minister's wife should be. (Loud cheers.) If I venture now to speak of the husbands, it shall be in briefer, but I trust not colder, terms. I believe there is not a soul in Glenartan who does not rejoice that Mr. Archibald Graham is to occupy Castle Dealachd, though none of us wish to see him its absolute proprietor for many a day to come. I have enjoyed the privilege of his intimate acquaintance for many months back, and I hope to retain his valued friendship. He will be no 'absentee' from the glen—(Hear, hear)—and will, I am sure, do everything in his power to promote the comfort and prosperity of its inhabitants. (Loud applause.) As to my young friend, McKay, whom I may almost call my son, I shall only say, though it be in his presence, that if he preaches the grand old Gospel as he did on the first day, when he stood before his people as an ambassador for Christ, I augur for him a blessed and fruitful ministry. I am sure we wish for them all, that in long and useful lives they may enjoy the best blessings of heaven." (Long-continued applause.)

The toast was received with enthusiasm. Shortly after, the two newly-married ladies, followed by some others, slipped out of the room to prepare for their departure; and when they had been absent some little time there were symptoms that their husbands also meditated a stealthy flight. This could not be permitted; so the whole company gathered in the passages and lobbies. At length the two brides, leaning on the arms of Richard Craig and the young minister, Mr. Stewart, respectively, made their appearance, and in their far from royal progress toward the door, were heartily pelted and beaten by the laughing ranks through which they passed, in token of how glad the company were to see them off the premises. When the two gentlemen came upon the scene they found it impossible to make their exit without a dismissal still more vigorous and effective, and were glad when, with aching heads and shoulders, they reached the comparative shelter of the carriages. At length the two conveyances, with a pretty white slipper neatly landed on the roof of one, and an old brown shoe on that of the other, bounded away and carried these tell-tale tokens all the way to their destination. As no one was supposed to be in the secret of the direction of their flight, we shall only say for the present, that the two couples parted at the head of the avenue, and were soon lost to the view of each other and of the company generally.

After returning to the dining room several other toasts relating to the party were duly honoured, but it is needless for us to detail them all. One only we shall mention. The minister of Glenartan proposed the health of Mr. Craig, the lawyer, their worthy and highly-esteemed host on the auspicious occasion. That gentleman's speech in reply will form a fitting close to the record of the day's enjoyment. It ran as follows:

"Mr. Morrison, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I thank you most heartily for the kind but too flattering manner in which the toast of my health has been proposed and received. I cannot, and need not, conceal my profound interest in the important proceedings of to-day, and in the future fortunes of the happy couples who are now putting for a time a wide distance between them and us. Regarding these our friends I shall only say that I heartily endorse what has been so admirably spoken by Mr. Morrison. Pardon me if for a little I speak of myself; the minister has put me on my defence. He expressed the hope, which you were kind enough to adopt by your applause, that I might imitate the example of the young people who have left us. (Hear, hear.) I think I might fairly ask him, though I shall not use Scripture language, to accept for himself the advice he has bestowed on me. (Hear, hear.) But, passing that by, I fear I am now getting beyond the age at which I am likely to venture on so perilous—(Oh, oh)—I beg pardon, I mean, so momentous a step. I have indeed heard of one who was told that, even at an age not far removed from mine, he was not beyond the possibility of mending his ways. What he himself says of it is this:

'I lately thought no man alive  
Could e'er improve past forty-five,  
And ventured to assert it.  
The observation was not new,  
But seemed to me so just and true,  
That none could controvert it.'

No, no, says Johnson, 'tis not so;  
That's your mistake, and I can show  
An instance if you doubt it.  
You, sir, who near are forty-eight,  
May much improve, 'tis not too late,  
I wish you'd set about it.'

(Laughter.)

In my case, however, ladies and gentlemen, there is one weighty objection which tells against any thought of my quitting the ranks of the single. I have been and am so

happy in my present condition that I dread the thought of any change. In the garden of my inner being there grows and blooms at present a sweet flower called Heart's-Ease, and I really should not like to have it torn up by the roots, as does on very rare occasions happen when one has taken a 'leap in the dark' into matrimony. I mean to try to keep the bright blossoms a little longer yet.

'There is a little flower that's found  
In almost every garden ground,  
'Tis lowly, but 'tis sweet;  
And if its name express its power,  
A more invaluable flower  
You'll never, never meet.'

(Applause.)

"But I must turn from my poor lonely self to some more worthy theme. I could almost have wished that we had a third marriage to-day, though that might have proved too much for the nerves of some of us. I cannot think of the two young ladies who are gone without the sweet face of another who is still among us rising to my view. She is one of the lovely but modest belles of Glenartan. She has grown side by side with those who have been so ruthlessly plucked from us to-day. Yet I rejoice to believe that she is not unnoticed or unknown. If I may venture to judge by little things which I have heard and little things which I have seen, there is every probability that, like the late Miss Florence Graham, she will land some day in a cosy manse, and be at once its ornament and its joy. (Applause.) Ladies and gentlemen, there is another matter regarding which I venture to say a word, for I think I may call it an open secret among us. We have had with us on this occasion fair daughters of the South as well of the North; and we are glad to have had their presence. If reports and indications are to be trusted, we may hope that the gallant young officer whom I see near me will soon lead to the altar one of these fair sisters as his bride. We can only wish for the Lily of Glenartan and the Rose of London homes as happy, and a future as bright as those which we believe will be the lot of the young people who have been united in holy bonds to-day. I thank you for your indulgent attention, and trust that during the rest of this evening we shall enjoy our social pleasures as they would desire we should, who are speeding away from us, we know not whither—happy to escape from our society and sweetly content with their own." (Loud applause.)

As the evening hours ran on there was innocent mirth and gaiety in the old house of Altbreac; and no one of those who shared in its joys ever repented or forgot the day when the young laird and the young minister were married to HEATHER BELLES in Glenartan.

THE END.

#### AUTHOR AND PUBLISHER.

The old question of the relations between authors and publishers has been opened recently in London with a great deal of vigour in a society of British authors. It was very plainly intimated that the conduct of publishers justifies the familiar views which regards them as ogres fattening complacently upon the brains of wretched authors. The traditions of Grub Street, of genius enslaved by greed, have been practically revived. But instead of grudgingly rewarding enormous labour with a paltry pittance the publisher is now accused of concealing and cooking his accounts, and so swindling the confiding and helpless poet, novelist, historian or philosopher. This is a remarkable indictment, and it is one that could not have been brought in this country. A society of authors here would be composed of those who best know the generosity and uprightness of publishers, and at the very moment when the controversy in London was proceeding, the Easy Chair became aware of instances of the remarkable, although undoubtedly also the shrewd and well-considered, liberality of American publishers.

The kind of complaint which was made in London comes generally from those who measure the returns of their work by their own estimate, not of its excellence only, but of its marketable value. The sale of a book, however, bears little relation to its intrinsic worth, and a work may be much noticed and praised and yet not be largely sold. The reviewers of books are not generally buyers of books, and there is, in fact, no means of ascertaining the real extent of the sale, and consequently of the returns, but inspection of the accounts. It follows, therefore, that an author may easily persuade himself that his book has been in great demand, and that his profits are very large, when actually the sale and the profits have been small. But the publisher's accounts cannot be falsified nor the author swindled without the connivance of clerks; and even if publishers—who in this country certainly are among the most reputable merchants—should wish to defraud the author, they must first corrupt their clerks to make them accomplices. But how many publishers would choose to put themselves as criminals in the power of their clerks? The aspersion upon the London publishers, therefore, was more serious than the authors who virtually made it could have been aware.

The allegation omits one vital fact which a leading American publisher points out. In this business contract between the author and publisher one of the parties assumes all the cost and risk, and bears all the possible loss of the adventure. Now it appears that when the author is unknown a large proportion of the books fails to pay expenses. In that case, however, the author-partner does not share the loss, and the publisher-partner alone is the loser. If the transaction should be regarded wholly from the ordinary business point of view, and the contract should require the possible loss arising from the enterprise to be shared by the partners, the number of books published would be greatly diminished, because the author would not care to risk a loss. It is found by experience, however, that with an adequate "plant," and with sagacity, energy and devotion the publisher, like other merchants, can afford to assume the risk. This is a valid argument for his receiving also a larger share of the profit. And still an-