

needed and deserved. His growth had been slow, and though he had made no moan over the common toil allotted to him, they saw that he was above it, that it was by mental gifts he would rise, and not by the labour of his hands. On the evening of the second day after the interview with Mr. Bremner a message came from Halliwell asking Rob to go up at once. No sooner had the messenger gone, however, and Rob was preparing to follow him, than a second knock came to the cottage door. Mary opened it. She was surprised to behold on the threshold Mr. Bremner and a strange gentleman, elderly and of benevolent aspect, though under his shaggy white brows there gleamed a pair of very keen and penetrating dark blue eyes.

"Good evening, Mrs. Fletcher," said Bremner. "We have followed hard upon the messenger. I suppose he has been here. Captain Byrne suddenly thought he would like to make your acquaintance as well as Robert's, so now I have the honour to present you to him."

Mary's face, sweet and comely as it had been twenty years ago, expressed genuine pleasure as she bade them come in. She was one of those rare and natural souls it was impossible to catch unawares or at any disadvantage.

"Robin is just getting ready, sir, to go up to Halliwell," she said. "Please to walk in. We hae but a sma' biggin', sir," she added to the stranger; "but ye are kindly welcome to it."

She opened the door of her little sitting-room, which smelied sweet of lavender and thyme, drew up the white blind to let the glow of the setting sun come in and bade them be seated. All the time she was

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