

Jeannie Sinclair, OR THE LILY OF THE STRATH.

What a pitiable sight it was to see that handsome youthful face, so pale and death-like, with the masses of dark wet hair lying in disorder on his brow.

'It flutters feebly,' murmured the youth. 'If help was rendered him at once he might still be saved.'

He looked up and saw Ned running at his utmost speed to where they were, and Jeannie herself, some distance behind, but coming in the same direction.

'Ned was the first to reach the river side. 'Is he dead, Maister Robert?' he huskily asked, for at sight of Jeannie's pale face, closed eyes and motionless form he dreaded the worst.

'No, not quite. There is a spark of life still. Get some of them to take him to the house as fast as they can, strip him, lay him in warm blankets, and rub him well, and there is a chance that he will come round.'

'Thank God for that!' cried Ned, starting away again to meet the people, and despatch the females of them back to the house to prepare things needful, while the rest he urged forward to carry up the body.

Thomas Sinclair caught him by the arm, and with wild agitation asked all that had occurred. In rapid sentences Ned told him all he knew—Jeannie's danger, and the inevitable destruction which must have overtaken her but for the interposition of the brave youth. He said nothing of his own important share in the rescue.

'But what is he, Ned? Who is the preserver of my precious hair?' 'That's your hair, Ned, I can tell you, Maister Sinclair, I foregathered w' him at the hill-top, an' we had a very pleasant crack the gither. He has the look an' the manners of a gentleman at any rate. Liket him weel the moment I cast e'e on him, an' this noble deed he has done, at sic sair risk tae himsel', mak' him out a brave, generous, true-hearted chield. I pray the Lord he may be bro't roond.'

'Amen tae that, Ned. If no, I'll give for him little less than I wad ha'e done for Jeannie hersel', an' ye ken, Ned, that her death wad ha'e broken my heart tae gither.'

'An' mair hearts than yours,' responded Ned. 'But, thanks tae Providence, an' the brave darlin' o' this young lad, she is scathless. I wad shoot that bull though, Maister Sinclair.'

'This very night,' said the farmer, with wrathful emphasis. 'He'll no get the chance o' playin' sic anither crack.'

'When they get to where the body lay, Jeannie was kneeling on the grass, and, with streaming eyes, was tenderly supporting the head upon her lap, and with gentle fingers laying the wet tresses back from the marble brow.'

'Oh, father!' she exclaimed, 'he saved my life. This generous stranger saved me only to sacrifice himself, for, I fear—oh, I fear—he is dead!'

'Gud God, he looks like it,' groined Thomas, when he caught sight of the white, death-like countenance.

'No, Mr. Sinclair,' interposed the youth, who had brought Desmond from the river, and who waited there in his wet clothes only till the body was conveyed away to the farmhouse.

'His heart still beats,' he added. 'The pulsation is feeble, but it rightly handed in time, there's a chance for him still.'

'I'm rae glad tae hear that, Maister Robert,' said the farmer. 'What a mercy it was that ye were sae near hand, tae get him out. Oh, dear, I wish we had him up at the house. Praise be blessed, yonder comes Watty w' the back barn door.'

This facility for transport having arrived, the inanimate youth was lifted from the ground, and the procession began its mournful march to the house, where preparations had already been made for the prompt adoption of means to effect recovery.

In the excitement and agitation of the moment, the good farmer forgot to ask the rescuer to go the farm-house likewise, and have his clothes changed, and when at length he did remember, and looked round for him, the young man was gone.

'Mercy me, exclaimed the farmer as they neared the Holme, 'I'll wagner the doctor has been forgotten tae be sent for.'

'No, sir,' answered Watty; 'Miss Wilson ran awa' for him just as I came doon.'

In the doorway appeared Grizzy, wiping her hands and making many pantomimic expressions of grief, though the awe that ever comes in the presence of death or the absence of animation prevented her from giving vent to her feelings in a more direct manner.

'My bairn, my bairn, what's this?' she whispered, as she flung her arms round Jeannie's neck. 'It seems ye had ha'e been killed the hadna saved ye.'

'True, mother, most true. To this unknown youth I owe my life. May heaven in pity grant that his life has not gone for mine.'

'Eh, but he's a bonnie young lad,' whispered Grizzy again, as Desmond was borne past and his uncovered face met her view.

Jeannie sobbed when she heard the words, for she too had thought him singularly fine in feature and noble in appearance, and the very manliness of his beauty made his hapless fate seem the more sad and pitiful.

The doctor had not yet come, but they at once set about doing what they considered necessary. The youth was stripped and laid on a soft bed, with a warm blanket under him. Hot irons were also laid to his feet, and a vigorous process of rubbing commenced to effect recovery.

In the adjoining room the women were congregated, waiting anxiously for the result, and looking for the coming of the doctor.

At length Miss Wilson burst in breathlessly to say that he was coming, and having given her information, she rushed forward to Jeannie and embraced her.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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References—Drs. Clarke & Orton, Messrs. Hoad and McGreggor and Cowan, Guelph; Drs. Buchanan & Phillips, Toronto; Drs. Elliott and Meyers, Toronto. Teeth extracted without pain. Guelph, 13th Jan. 1869.

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