

breezes, among the swaying thistles and nodding blue bells in snatches of old songs:—"Oh! send Lewie Gordon hame;" "A" would be right again, gin Jamie were come back."

A strange, deserted, sad, sullen world these English gentlemen yeomen, and grooms passed through in the hostile districts, like crossing Styx, and wandering among the shades of the dead, as to the Hessians the Northern pass appeared the mouth of Hell; but they were mostly practical men, thinking of the glories of Bath in the season, or the comforts of country-houses, of shot and shoulder-belts, of boots and tops and aching limbs within them, of grudged nights' quarters and "sweer" kail and porridge, or, if their imaginations were given to excursions, of hillside ambushes and the slogan of Highland savages.

The bitter jibes and muttered curses of the women fell on the soldiers like small stones on coats of mail; they were not worth resenting, so long as a war of words was all which the viragos ventured to wage. Yet were the strong women these Scotch wenches—some of them the terror of the yellow harvest field in their snoods or curches, or the randy fishwives of the white sandy shore. Most of them had drunk in Scripture with their Scotch blood and their mothers' milk, and were well read in the stories of Jael and Sisera, and the mother in Israel who threw down a piece of a millstone on the head of Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal; and the red coats had need to march warily through the steep narrow streets of the town.

A few of the spectators were of higher rank and gentler breeding, but not of opposite faith; these were at the windows, expressing their wrath by silent, stately scorn. One young woman of this class filled a narrow window with her hoop and her ruffles; while at the other window of the same tall, grey house, women and children, ladies and servants, clustered and hung by each other like frightened pigeons or sheep; but the girl set herself forth alone as a mark for the carbines should there be skirmishing in the streets, or volleys of insolent triumph, in voluntary testimony, knitting her smooth brow and setting her white teeth, to her hatred of the Whigs. She had thrown the window up and leant on the sill, and there framed by the window-frame in a setting of diamonds, the small window-panes glistening and sparkling behind her head, she was a conspicuous object and a striking contrast to the general forlornness and disarray,—the studied neglect and squalor. Not that it was a propitious face, for not a face there gloomed more determinedly; but it was the gloom of a summer shower shined in a rainbow: the pout of a girl, and a lovely girl—a rustic beauty growing up spontaneously like the convolvulus on sea brass, with the same wonderful combination of delicacy and wildness. A throat like a swan's, a head like a fawn's, eyes like the shy beautiful eyes of a game bird, and a mouth that spoke frank, rash, forward words of love and hate; a delightful, bold, fearless, trusting, tempting child's mouth, which, even as she bridled and frowned, burst apart, and showed the glistening teeth in their half appreciation and whole marvel at a grand spectacle, a rare show in the town. The entire figure was in holiday array, as Montrose dressed for his execution, in silk gown, worked apron, and gold chain with keys dangling at the side, lace stomacher, and little lace cap laid flat, like the cap of the Christ Church boys, on the top of the overflowing, crisp, girlish dark hair.

A young officer with a light step, a roving glance, and a gay, thoughtless heart, looked up and caught sight of the peerless picture, the one pleasant picture which the town presented. "Good morrow, my pretty maid, will you go with me?" he called out of the undisciplined ranks, giving a scrape and a swagger.

The blood rushed like fire over the beautiful young face, but as the other women screamed and fell back, she stretched farther forward, and facing the bold man, she drew her two arched brows into one straight black line, pressed her red lips together, and uttered the bare monosyllable "No," with an energetic rudeness that

caused a hoarse laugh to rise and ring among the old rough John Bull soldiers.

The young officer was a man of rank (as they say), and would linger and parley at will though he kept his comrades waiting. "And why not?" he demanded in explanation. "Because you are no an honest man," asserted the daring, confiding red lips, the wild eyes looking without winking at his dangling sword and silver-mounted pistols, the white throat swelling with fondness and fidelity to his foe; while a murmur and rustle of fear—an "Oh, Mause, tak' ent and dinna brag the soldier," shook like the wind among the slim willows and the birches, the group at her side.

The officer reddened a shade in approach to the hue, "angry and brave," of his coat, but he put the best face he could on the sharp retort. "How do you know that, my pretty maid?" he went on in mock defiance.

"By the colour of your coat," she answered, shortly; "no honest man wears siccan a coat on his back,"—and she shut the window with a bang and ran from it in sudden panic, as the commanding officer behind cried "Forward!" and the loiterers advanced in double quick time. Not before Captain Bernard, of Bernard's Court, in the words of Yorkshire, hailed a passer-by—"Who was that lass that answered from the window?" (He had learnt the term, like the poor gallant Frenchified lad who, with the two words "bonne lass," won the woman's heart of Scotland.)

"Lass!" grumbled the pawky gangrel, "she's name of a lass; she's the young ledly of Legs-my-lea" (*Scottie* for *Eccelesia Maria*, Church lands rechristened at the Reformation), "Miss Mause Mullian of Watergate that was; the Laird of Legs-my-lea wedded her and brought her hame a month syne; for him, you can speer word at her if ye want him, for he's gane like the lave of the men to the coals, or the peats, or the hay, or—aweel, the deil and their wives ken whar."

It happened that Captain Bernard was left, much against his will, to hold the town with two scores of his men; and before night the news was brought him that the Laird of Legs-my-lea had been in a tussle with the loyal militia of a landward town, at some miles' distance, had been wounded in the shoulder, had trailed himself home like a wounded dog, and was lying hid in his house in the town at that very moment. "Legs-my-lea!" cried the Captain; "by George, that's the husband of the saucy jade who spurned me!"

"YOUR WORSHIPFUL SERVANT MADAM."

The Laird of Legs-my-lea's house in the town was scant of room. People did not want either space or privacy in those days, but did the most exciting deeds, elbowing each other, in the centre of well-informed, interested spectators. Then there was trouble in the house, which makes a house smaller. Last month a bride had been brought home by a wildfire of a laird, who did not think "going out" and risking his head was sufficient business on his hands, but must marry a wife and risk her tender heart into the bargain. Now, a wounded man lay, boots and all, on the top of the quilt which Mause had patched, in the box-bed, that was not yet discarded from its position as a convenient article of furniture in a private sitting-room. It was highly convenient for Magnus the laird—the comely, despotic, generous young giant, who was not so much injured that he could not raise himself on his elbow, see what was going on in domestic economy, and put in his word when affairs went against his will, and in the fever and irritation of his wound he put in his word perpetually. It was horribly inconvenient for Mause—the lady, the laird's mother and her sister, and the lady's mother and her sister—all of whom had taken refuge in the one house of Legs-my-lea for comfort and company to each other, deserted as they were by their natural rulers and protectors.

The women had business of their own, to which they did not want the man over whose unexpected return they had laughed and cried three hours before, to be a witness. Mause was

fretted in the nursing of her husband by the interference of so many other nurses tending their advice unasked, as a right of kindred, though Magnus turned his back upon them and would allow no one to put a finger on him, not even his old mother, none save his seventeen years' old wife of six weeks.

In the meantime these good people took their ease in the erroneous impression that Cumberland's soldiers had marched through the town, and over the hills and far away, before Legs-my-lea's arrival. Engrossed by their own matter, they had not heard of Captain Bernard and his forty men coolly ensconced in the town-house.

It was a low-roofed, white-pannelled room in which the family commotion prevailed, full of the mingled simplicity and mystery which our ancestors loved. Unsophisticated as the room looked, it was choko full of secrets. The box-bed opened like a cupboard. The cupboard itself was entered by a moveable panel. Try to open it in the legitimate way, and a man would require an axe to split the wood asunder; but press a panel in one direction, and it slid away in a trice, leaving to view an innocent enough thing, in its uselessness—a carved buffet, whitened into curves and scallops, not worth the manoeuvre of getting at it, unless that it bore poor Mause's blue-and-gold starred china, one cup of which was broken already. (And Mause could have sat down and cried when the fracture took place, ere she knew what she was about, had not Legs-my-lea been still at her elbow to kiss the first big bright drop away; and had she not promised herself never again to trust the egg-shell cups in clumsy irresponsible fingers, but to wash them night and morning, like a good housewife, with her own dainty hands, and dry them with her satin damask napkins.) The very window to the garden was not a window, but a door—half glass, half pannelled wood—which opened with so low a step to the flower border, that, lift the latch, and wreaths of green and white periwinkle, purple and green clematis and single "red, red" roses leapt straight in, and wove a shifting, fading, exquisite summer carpet on the coarse homespun floorcloth.

In this room the somewhat ominous gathering of the couple's families and friends sat, like a bench of judges, masquerading in damask gowns, pinnets, top-knots, and mumbled and mowed and skirled their sentences on the improper behaviour of the inexperienced heads of the house of Legs-my-lea; took Mause to task sharply, and spoke out their minds indirectly to the chained at laird.

"What for did you don your best silk gown, my dochter?" insinuated old Lady Legs-my-lea, in a cracked voice, "that suld have been kept for the king's coronation or for the butter-saps at least."

"And you have torn your negligée that cost me ever so many pounds Scots, you wastrel bairn!" old lady Watergates, thrown so far off her guard as to confess to a price, flouted the youthful matron in another quavering pipe.

"All the town was there to see," pled Mause, in sensitive vanity; "was Legs-my-lea's wife to appear like a common woman or like no wife at all, but an unspersed lass?"

"You are a bauld wife of two months—no out, that a strange man suld mint to address you madam," her sister-in-law, Mistress Littlejohn, whose husband was only a clerk, and who was in his own person lauk, with high cheek-bones, warned Mause austere.

"And what garred ye answer the man, you cutty? He'll think you a light woman; but you were aye a forward lass, or you would not be where you are;" cried Peggy, the bride's unmarried eldest sister, who had red hair and many freckles, and who tossed her uncovered maiden head scornfully, and gulped down an indignant sigh:

"I couldna help it," urged Mause irrelevantly, "my heart just came into my mouth."

Legs-my-lea lay there like a lion that has been bit, with his yellow hair so tumbled free from its powder and pomatum that it was flying loose as a mane, and brushing Mause's soft cheek, when he pulled her down to him (much as it had