

The Braes of Yarrow

An Historical Tale of the Sixteenth Century.

CHAPTER LI.—THE DWARF'S STORY. But as higher drew, three Knights he stood...

'It behoves me to acquaint you, my lady, how it is that ye have found me so ready to take part in your cause and your goldman's...

'Ye ken that ye have been kind to the auld wife, and, what was mair to the purpose, the Knight of Haleside befriended my father...

'It is mair than three years since your father, Sir Matthew Kerr, then warden of the Middle Marches, when he attended with peaceful intent a March meeting...

'I remember,' said the lady sorrowfully. 'But do you ken who were his slayers for there were three of them, and only one has got his deserts...

'Whether he was his father or no—and that ye'll give me leave to doubt—Heron Barras struck the first blow, for I saw him do it.'

'Then, may the sweet Virgin obtain pardon for him,' moaned Mrs. Spens, subduing her emotions with all the strength of her command.

'Syne, when it was kent that blood was drawn a' the mirth of the day was changed like magic into the din of battle. There was riding and fighting, and swearing and tearing enow, and in the midst of the steer the three lions were all safe and sound...

'He carried Barras safely with him and got him across the border in a day or two hale and sound. Well, Sir Walter Spens learned through me how Sir Matthew had fallen; but what wasna sae weel, Tushielaw soon kent that he kent it. Guid reason why Tushielaw should set himself to work to get Spens out o' the road...

'As our duty bound us, we have tried to act faithfully.'

'And you have done it truly.'

'These words are sweet, lady, for it warms the heart to ken that those we serve value our service. Well, on the night before the battle of Flodden I was in the English camp. Two men in black mail with visors closed sought audience with the Earl Surrey on a matter of high import to England. The interview was granted.

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