

# Bob, Son of Battle

By Alfred Ollivant

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." : : : : : : : : :

(Continued from issue of November 14)

He stood up and lashed the colt, who quick on his legs for a young un, soon settled to his gallop. But, glancing over his shoulder, he saw a bounding form behind, catching him as though he was walking. His face turned sickly white; he screamed; he flogged; he looked back. Right beneath the tail-board was the red devil in the dust; while racing a furlong behind on the turnpike road was the mad figure of M'Adam.

The smith struck back and flogged forward. It was no avail. With a tiger-like bound the murderous brute leapt on the flying trap. At the shock of the great body the colt was thrown violently on his side; Kirby was tossed over the hedge; and Red Wull pinned beneath the debris.

M'Adam had time to rush up and save a tragedy.

"I've a mind to knife ye, Kirby," he panted, as he bandaged the smith's broken head.

After that you may be sure the Dalesmen preferred to swallow insults rather than to risk their lives; and their impotence only served to fan their hatred to white heat.

The working methods of the antagonists were as contrasted as their appearances. In a word, the one compelled where the other coaxed.

His enemies said the Tailless Tyke was rough; not even Tammas denied he was ready. His brain was as big as his body, and he used them both to some purpose. "As quick as a cat, with the heart of a lion and the temper of Nick's self," was Parson Leggy's description.

What determination could effect, that could Red Wull; but achievement by inaction—supremacy of all strategies—was not for him. In matters of the subtlest handling, where to act anything except indifference was to lose, with sheep restless, fearful forebodings hymned to them by the wind, panic hovering unseen above them, when an ill-considered movement spelt catastrophe—then was Owd Bob o' Kenmuir incomparable.

Men still tell how, when the squire's new thrashing-machine ran amuck in Grammoche-town, and for some minutes the market square was a turbulent sea of blaspheming men, yelping dogs, and stampeding sheep, only one flock stood calm as a mill-pond by the bull-ring, watching the riot with almost indifference. And in front, sitting between them and the storm, was a quiet gray dog, his mouth stretched in a capacious yawn: to yawn was to win, and he won.

When the worst of the uproar was over, many a glance of triumph was shot first at that one still pack, and then at M'Adam, as he waded through the disorder of huddling sheep.

"And where's your Wullie noo?" asked Tupper scornfully.

"Weel," the little man answered with a quiet smile, "at this minute he's killin' your Rasper doon by the pump." Which was indeed the case; for big blue Rasper had interfered with the great dog in the performance of his duty, and suffered accordingly.

Spring had passed into summer; and the excitement as to the event of the approaching Trials, when at length the rivals would be pitted against one another, reached such a height as old Jonas Maddox, the octogenarian, could hardly recall.

Down in the Sylvester Arms there was almost nightly a conflict between M'Adam and Tammas Thornton, spokesman of the Dalesmen. Many a long-drawn bout of words had the two anent the respective merits and Cup chances of red and grey. In these duels Tammas was usually worsted. His temper would get the better of his discretion; and the cynical debator would be lost in the hot-tongued partisan.

During these encounters the others would, as a rule, maintain a rigid

silence. Only when their companion was being beaten, and it was time for strength of voice to vanquish strength of argument, they joined in right lustily and roared the little man down, for all the world like the gentlemen who rule the Empire at Westminster.

Tammas was an easy subject for M'Adam to draw, but David was an easier. Insults directed at himself the boy bore with a stolidity born of long use. But a poisonous dart shot against his friends at Kenmuir never failed to achieve its object. And the little man evinced an amazing talent for the concoction of deft lies respecting James Moore.

"I'm hearin'," said he, one evening, sitting in the kitchen sucking his twig; "I'm hearin' James Moore is gaen to git married agin."

"Yo're hearin' lies—or mair-like tellin' 'em," David answered shortly. For he treated his father now with contemptuous indifference.

"Seven months sin' his wife died," the little man continued meditatively. "Weel, I'm on'y 'stonished he's waited sae lang. Ain buried, anither come on—that's James Moore."

David burst angrily out of the room. "Gaen to ask him if it's true?" called his father after him. "Gude luck to ye—and him."

David now had a new interest at Kenmuir. In Maggie he found an endless source of study. On the death of her mother the girl had taken up the reins of government at Kenmuir; and gallantly she played her part, whether in tenderly mothering the baby, wee Anne, or in the sterner matters of household work. She did her duty, young though she was, with a surprising old-fashioned womanliness that won many a smile of approval from her father, and caused David's eyes to open with astonishment.

And he soon discovered that Maggie, mistress of Kenmuir, was another person from his erstwhile playfellow and servant.

The happy days when might ruled right were gone, never to be recalled. David often regretted them, especially when in conflict of tongues, Maggie, with her quick answers and teasing eyes, was driving him sulky and vanquished from the field. The two were perpetually squabbling now. In the good old days, he remembered bitterly, squabbles between them were unknown. He had never permitted them; any attempt at independent thought or action was as sternly quelled as in the Middle Ages. She must follow where he led on—"Ma word!"

Now she was mistress where he had been master; hers was to command, his to obey. In consequence they were perpetually at war. And yet he would sit for hours in the kitchen and watch her, as she went about her business, with solemn interested eyes, half of admiration, half of amusement. In the end Maggie always turned on him with a little laugh touched with irritation.

"Han't yo' got nothin' better'n that to do, nor lookin' at me?" she asked one Saturday about a month before Cup Day.

"No, I han't," the pert fellow rejoined.

"Then I wish yo' had. It mak's me fair jumpety yo' watchin' me so like ony cat a mouse."

"Niver yo' fash yo'sel account o' me, ma wench," he answered calmly.

"Yo' wench, indeed!" she cried, tossing her head.

"Ay, or will be," he muttered.

"What's that?" she cried, springing round, a flush of color on her face.

"Nawt, my dear. Yo'll know so soon as I want yo' to, yo' may be sure, and no sooner."

The girl resumed her baking, half angry, half suspicious.

"I duno' what yo' mean, Mr. M'Adam," she said.

"Don't yo', Mrs. M'A—"

The rest was lost in the crash of a

quietly, and asked if he should help pick up the bits.

On the same evening at Sylvester Arms an announcement was made that knocked the breath out of its hearers.

In the debate that night on the fast-approaching Dale Trials and the relative abilities of red and grey, M'Adam on the one side, and Tammas, backed by Long Kirby and the rest, on the other, he cudgelled each other with more than usual vigor. The controversy rose to fever heat; abuse succeeded argument; and the little man again and again was hooted into silence.

"It's easy laffin'," he cried at last, "but ye'll laff t'ither side o' yer ugly faces on Cup Day."

"Will us, indeed? Us'll see," came the derisive chorus.

"We'll whip ye till ye're deaf, dumb and blind, Wullie and I."

"Yo'll not!"

"We will!"

The voices were rising like the east wind in March.

"Yo'll not, for a very good reason too," asserted Tammas loudly.

"Gie us yer reason, ye muckle liar," cried the little man turning on him.

"Becos—" began Jim Mason, and stopped to rub his nose.

"Yo' 'old yo' noise, Jim," recommended Rob Sanderson.

"Becos—" it was Tammas this time who paused.

"Git on wi' it, ye stammerin' stirk!" cried M'Adam. "Why?"

"Becos—Owd Bob'll not rin."

Tammas sat back in his chair.

"What!" screamed the little man, thrusting forward.

"What's that!" yelled Long Kirby leaping to his feet.

"Mon, say it agin!" shouted Bob.

"What's owd addled egg tellin'?" cried Lizz Burton.

"Dang his 'ead for him!" shouts Tupper.

"Fill his eye!" says Ned Hoppin.

They jostled round the old man's chair: M'Adam in front; Jem Burton and Long Kirby leaning over his shoulder; Lizz behind her father; Sanderson and Tupper tackling him on either side; while the rest peered and elbowed in the rear.

The announcement had fallen like a thunderbolt among them.

Tammas looked slowly up at the little mob of eager faces above him. Pride at the sensation caused by his news struggled in his countenance with genuine sorrow for the matter of it.

"Ay, yo' may well 'earken, all on yo'. 'Tis enough to wake the deadies I says agin: We'll no rin oor Bob for t' Cup. And yo' may guess why. Bain't every mon, Mr. M'Adam, as'd pit aside his chanst o' the Cup, and that 'maist a gift for him'—M'Adam's tongue was in his cheek—"and it a certainty," the old man continued warmly, "oot o' respect for his wife's memory."

The news was received in utter silence. The shock of the surprise, coupled with the bitterness of the disappointment, froze the slow tongues of his listeners.

Only one small voice broke the stillness.

"Oh, the feelin' man! He should git a reduction o' rent for sic a display o' proper speerit. I'll mind Mr. Horn-but to let auld Sylvester ken o't."

Which he did and would have got a thrashing for his pains had not Cyril Gilbraith thrown him out of the parsonage before the angry cleric could lay hands upon him.

## CHAPTER X. RED WULL WINS

Tammas had but told the melancholy truth. Owd Bob was not to run for the cup. And this self-denying ordinance speaks more for James Moore's love of his lost wife than many a lordly cenotaph.

To the people of the Daleland, from the Black Water to the market-cross in Grammoche-town, the news came with the shock of a sudden blow. They

had set their hearts on the Gray Dog's success; and had felt serenely confident of his victory. But the sting of the matter lay in this way: that now the Tailless Tyke might well win.

M'Adam, on the other hand, was plunged into a fervor of delight at the news. For to win the Shepherds' Trophy was the goal of his ambition. David was now less than nothing to the lonely little man, Red Wull everything to him. And to have that name handed down to posterity, gallantly holding its place among those of the most famous sheep-dogs of all time, was his heart's desire.

As Cup Day drew near, the little man, his fine-drawn temperament strung to the highest pitch of nervousness, was tossed on a sea of apprehension. His hopes and fears ebbed and flowed on the tide of the moment. His moods were as uncertain as the winds in March; and there was no dependence on his humor for a unit of time. At one minute he paced up and down the kitchen, his face already flushed with the glow of victory, chanting:

"Scots wha ae wi' Wallace bled!"

At the next he was down at the table, his head buried in his hands, his whole figure shaking, as he cried in choking voice: "Eh, Wullie, Wullie, they're all agin us."

David found that life with his father now was life with an unamiable hornet. Careless as he affected to be of his father's vagaries, he was tried almost to madness, and fled away at every moment to Kenmuir; for, as he told Maggie, "I'd sooner put up wi' your 'hairs and h'imperences, miss, than wi' him, the venom that he be!"

At length the great day came. Fears, hopes, doubts, dismays, all dispersed in the presence of the reality.

Cup Day is always a general holiday in the Daleland, and every soul crowds over to Silverdale. Shops were shut; special trains ran in to Grammoche-town; and the road from the little town was dazed with char-a-bancs, brakes, wagonettes, carriages, carts, foot-passengers, wending toward the Dalesman's Daughter. And soon the paddock below the little inn was humming with the crowd of sportsmen and spectators come to see the battle for the Shepherds' Trophy.

There, very noticeable with its red body and yellow wheels, was the great Kenmuir wagon. Many an eye was directed on the handsome young pair who stood in it, conspicuous and unconscious, above the crowd: Maggie, looking in her simple print frock as sweet and fresh as any mountain flower; while David's fair face was all gloomy and his brows knit.

In front of the wagon was a black cluster of Dalesmen, discussing M'Adam's chances. In the center was Tammas holding forth. Had you passed close to the group you might have heard: "A man, d'yo' say, Mr. Maddox? A h'ape, I call him"; or, "A dog? more like an 'og, I tell yo'." Round the old orator were Jonas, Enry, and oor Job, Jem Burton, Rob Sanderson, Tupper, Jim Mason, Hoppin, and others; while on the outskirts stood Sam'l Todd prophesying rain and M'Adam's victory. Close at hand Bes-sie Bolstock, who was reputed to have designs on David, was giggling spitefully at the pair in the Kenmuir wagon and singing:

"Let a lad aloan, lass,  
Let a lad a-be."

While her father, Teddy, dodged in and out among the crowd with tray and glasses; for Cup Day was the great day of the year for him.

(Continued.)

## FARMERS' ASSOCIATIONS FOR ALBERTA.

Cooperation by farmers will help them solve many of their present difficulties in Alberta; a start will be well made by forming a Farmers' Association.