

rades fought their way. At the end of an hour's desperate struggle the dogs gave them a new lead; and there, under the shelter of a mighty rock, they came upon the wayfarer, over whose body the storm was spreading a winding sheet of spotless purity. Branthwaite knelt beside him. A pause of awful solemnity followed. The doctor burst into a passion of speech.

"It's you and me against death, lads. Here, Lanty, get a grip o' this bottle. Now then, the rest o' ye give me a lift with him. We'll have him on his feet, and if we don't shake life intil him it'll not be our fault."

Now, with regard to the other happenings, the farmer of Grayrigg has a somewhat hazy recollection. He remembers that many orders were given by the doctor, and that all were faithfully carried out, but the fact that has fastened itself on his mind is this—that when at last the stranger spoke he uttered the one word "Father," and that afterwards the voice of the doctor cut loud and exultant into the thunder of the storm. "Eh, man, this is mighty. It's your own laddie you've saved this night."

He is also apt to make light of that second struggle, when upon a stretcher made of coats and staves they carried the prodigal across the breast of the fell, but never will he forget the face of his wife when her son was given back to her. "Love," said he

For a spell the room was silent as the moors on a sultry day in June. It was a movement by the doctor that broke it, and when Robert looked on the grizzled face of David Branthwaite memory sprang into fulness of life.

"I remember now," he said. "I was coming home—and the storm beat me." "That'll do, my laddie," the doctor growled. "You've had enough storm for one night. You may get to sleep now."

But Robert was not to be silenced so easily, even though speech was a labor. "I was coming home—it was the letter that dragged me. I couldn't stay away," he said.

Between the father and the mother a glance of perplexity was exchanged. The doctor busied himself at the table, bending low over his task. Margaret passed her hand gently over her son's head. "We've sent you no letter, my bairn,"

"No. It was the doctor. I've brought it with me. I'm going to keep it for ever. He told me he was glad I'd found wealth and fame. Afterwards he told me that my mother had been ill, but I wasn't to worry—she was doing nicely. And then—he praised me for—for the devotion I was showing by sending her such beautiful gifts. And I'd given her nothing but shame and neglect! He also told me how my name was ever on your lips, yours and my father's. How through all the dale I was being held up as a model of what a son ought to be. He said something about the



"The cry seemed to come from down there."

to the doctor afterwards, "is just past telling."

Margaret met them at the door, standing outside in the driving snow. Lanty Armstrong had given her the message which David had sent so that she might be spared a harder shock. When he saw her darkly drawn against the flood of light, the doctor roared that other message for which she waited in trembling hope, "Ye're laddie's all right Margaret; his mother's nursing is all he wants."

Himself, he was not sure, but it was ever Branthwaite's way to beat back despair with the offer of hope until defeat could no longer be concealed. Far into the night they toiled in the old-fashioned bedroom, just the three of them, with now and again a maid showing a frightened face; the doctor with his coat off, sleeves rolled up, perspiration gleaming in beads upon his brow; the others waiting, helping, praying. Thus the new day entered, and, as the grandfather's clock downstairs struck three, Robert Steele came back from the Land of Silence.

Full of wonder his eyes wandered from point to point. They settled at last upon his mother; he whispered her name, and then "Father." Margaret stooped and kissed him.

saving grace of a pair of baby shoes, but I don't know what he meant. I understood all the rest—saw how you were trying to shield my name—it broke down all my empty pride. I didn't want money any longer—I wanted to look into my mother's face. I didn't want fame and the applause of men; I wanted to grip my father's hand. There was nothing else that counted. So I came home. They tried to keep me at Dale-foot, but I couldn't stay. I'd simply got to get home, and I lost the track—and now I'm going to sleep—a lad again—in my father's home."

Margaret sank upon her knees by her son's bedside, her face buried in her hands. Gently the doctor tip-toed from the room, and when Jacob followed he laid a heavy hand on the farmer's shoulder and growled a fearsome threat: "Man, if ye say but one word o' thanks. I'll strike ye off my list."

Still it was to Jacob to whom the honour of the last word fell. "I'm not g'ing to thank ye, David Branthwaite," he said. "for that's a thing that's beyond the power of tongues. And I'm not thinking that Margaret 'll put ye to confusion, but I've warrant that for the rest of her days your name 'll not be missing frae her prayers."

And, as the doctor himself has since observed, "What mair can a man desire?"

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