

ply to her fond forebodings, "ye need nae fash yersel about the bairn's beauty. He'll be braw enoo in good time. Why," he went on, with a sly twinkle in the corner of his honest gray eye, "ma mither always said there was not a homelier wean in the Orkneys than my ainsel, and yet surely ye canna say that I'm a bogie to look at noo."

"Indeed, you're not, Dugald, dearie," cried his wife, greatly comforted in heart. "There's not a handsomer man in the West, if it is your ain wife that says it;" and, drawing his shaggy face down to hers, she gave him a kiss of loving pride.

Dugald straightened himself up again, and filled out his chest. He appreciated both the kiss and the compliment. Though he might be the handsomest man in the West in no other eyes than his wife's, still that was something to feel proud about; for this he knew right well, that no man in the West had a bonnier or better wife than he possessed, and that Ailie Stewart, of Kildonan, had refused many an eligible suitor before her blue eyes fell favorably upon him.

It was well for the MacTavishes that they were so content and happy in each other's society. Their home lay far away from the rest of the world, and they must needs depend much upon themselves. Dugald MacTavish was chief trader in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company's fort known as Norway House, at the time of our story one of the most important posts established by that remarkable institution which, for so many decades, held sway over the vast territories indefinitely entitled Rupert's Land.