

"Hello, Madge, what pranks are you up to now?" queried a sharp-featured, grizzle-headed man, as she entered the gate from the opposite direction to that of MacKenzie's house.

"Nary a prank, except to watch the sojers," she answered with a smirk. "Be'n't they fine?"

Cronch looked at her keenly, but Madge never flinched.

"Yes, they're fine enough," he drawled; "but looking at soldiers is not the thing for daft folks like you. Home's the best place."

"By St. Andrew, when they fight for the King and keep down the rebels, a daft body might look at 'em," she returned, in seeming indignation.

"Get inside, girl, the wife says your work is waiting for you."

'Twas a soldier lad
That drove her mad
When Maggie was a beauty;
But now she's well
She still will tell
The lads to do their duty,

sang out the woman in piping tones, with a toss of her head, as she entered the kitchen.

"Madge hasn't improved much!" exclaimed the loyalist friend who had joined Cronch to ascertain the latest news.

"She's harmless though," was his answer. "She used to be both cunning and crazy—now she's got the jerks, but that won't matter so long as she does what she's told."