

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Surly Tim, pointing derisively at Red Aleck, "so this his your great fighter, his hit? Why 'e's a coward! Wot ha bloody, bloomin' hexcuse 'e 'as! 'e won't fight fur the sport of the crowd! Why don't 'e fight fur the honor hof Scotland,—beggarly, braggin' Scotland!"

Aleck's friends were angry and amazed, and one of them, who noticed the ill-repressed wrath of the young farmer, said:

"Why will ye no' fight, mon?"

"I'll tell ye why I'll no' fight," answered Aleck, calmly, "I promised my mither before I cam' awa' that I wouldna, and I canna brak' my promise to her."

"Ho! Ho!" jeered Surly Tim. "Wot ha bloomin' baby! So 'is ma won't let 'im fight, won't she? Come mates, let's get the girly-boy a doll to play with." And more of such insults, all of which Red Aleck, though inwardly on fire, submitted to with outward calmness. But when the Englishman applied some foul epithet to his mother, Red Aleck could restrain himself no longer. With one bound he was upon Surly Tim, and had clasped him round the body, including in the sweep of his grasp the prize-fighter's arms, which, thus fastened, were helpless; and with one exertion of his enormous strength, he raised him over his head and dashed him to the ground. Gazing at his fallen foe, Red Aleck exclaimed, half apologetically:

"Mither told me not to fight, but she did na say anything about wrestlin'!"

Under cover of the laugh raised by this innocent speech, Surly Tim was removed to his room, where he soon recovered from the effects of his fall. He raged with wrath over his ignominious defeat, and determined to bring on a regular ring-fight, in which he expected, by his skill, to overcome Red Aleck's strength; but he wisely made up his mind never again to get into the grasp of the young Hercules.

A few days after this episode all the settlement came together at a fair held

near the ship-yard. As was customary at fairs, there were sports of all kinds, at the most of which Red Aleck was easily the victor, for he was, as I have said, the strongest and most active in the settlement, with one exception. That exception was his brother, "Strong Archie," in whose grasp Aleck was a mere child; in fact, Archie's strength was so wonderful that he never took part in games, but stood in a class by himself. Many tales are told of his wonderful exhibitions; but, as Kipling, the man who found out all about the United States in a three weeks' trip, says: "That is another story."

While the festivities were at their height, Surly Tim, backed by his English friends, came upon the field and began at once to heap abuse upon the Scotch, but more especially upon Red Aleck, who he declared had taken him foul in their last encounter. Red Aleck begged his father for permission to fight the boasting stranger, but the old man steadily refused to give his consent; he had heard so much of the prize-fighter's skill that he feared for his young son. One of the strong characteristics of the Scotch is their filial obedience, and when Aleck saw that his father was inexorable, he did his best to keep away from Surly Tim, who, despairing at last of bringing about a ring fight, and yet not daring to precipitate another wrestling encounter, turned his attention from Aleck to others. But no one seemed willing to fight him; for Aleck's refusal, the cause of which was not generally known, dampened the courage of the boldest.

Surly Tim went about like a raging bear, shouldering this one, elbowing that one, and striking whoever stood in his path. Red Aleck watched him with wrathful heart, longing earnestly to be permitted to subdue the arrogance of the Englishman. Tim, in his boisterous career, was now approaching a group in which stood Aleck's white-haired father.