

runnin' on something that 'ud do away with himself. I don't suppose there was much truth in it, but it's always fine soil for a story where a handsome woman's planted, as I dare say you know, sir."

"What, is this handsome woman a local beauty, then?"

"She lives hereabouts, sir, if that's what you mean. But she's a Lon'on beauty too, so I'm told; and well she mebbe, for there isn't an eye, young or old, gentle-folk or village-folk, that can look at her bonny face once and not care to look twice. She's worth walking a good mile to see, is Lady Kildonan."

"Lady Kildonan; oh, she is the wife of the principal landowner about here, then?"

The old man evidently regretted that he had let slip the name of the subject of his talk. He answered rather reluctantly, and in a more cautious manner;

"Ay."

"They are popular in the district, then, Lord and Lady Kildonan?"

"She makes him popular, bless her. He's always porin' over 's books, is his lordship, but she's all over t' place like a sunbeam, on her horse, or in her carriage, or her little sleigh, leavin' a pound o' tea here, a can o' jelly there, with a word for every woman, and a smile for every man, and a kiss for t' children. She's a sight for sore een, she is."

"Is she young?"

"Let me see; she was born t' year my girl Janet was married; that's twenty-four year ago."

"And Lord Kildonan, what sort of an age is he?"

"Well, there's a matter of thirty years or more between him and 's wife."

"And his heart is bound up in his library?"

"So they say. Indeed, I think he'll turn into a