

The Rockwood Review.

and T

bridge the leaping sheep galloped and—stopped abruptly.

Up above in the crowd there was utter silence—staring eyes, rigid fingers. The sweat was dropping off Long Kirby's face; and, at the back, a green coated book-maker slipped his note book in his pocket and glanced behind him. James Moore standing in front of them all, was the calmest there.

Red Wull was not to be denied. Like his forerunner, he leaped on the back of the hindmost sheep. But the red dog was heavy where the gray was light. The sheep staggered slipped and fell.

Almost before it had touched the water, McAdam, his face afire and eyes flaming, was in the stream. In a second he had hold of the struggling creature, and, with an almost superhuman effort had half thrown, half shoved it on to the bank.

Again a tribute of admiration, led by James Moore.

The little man scrambled, panting, on to the bank and raced after sheep and dog. His face was white beneath the perspiration; his breath came in quivering gapes, his trousers were wet and clinging to his legs—he was trembling in every limb, and yet indomitable.

They were up to the pen, and the last wrestle began. The crowd silent and motionless, craned forward to watch the uncanny, white haired little man and the huge dog working so close below them. McAdam's face was white, his eyes staring, unnaturally bright, his bent body projected forward, and he tapped with his stick on the ground like a blind man, coaxing the sheep in. And the Tailless Tyke, his tongue out and flanks heaving, crept and crawled and worked up to the opening, patient as he had never been before.

They were in at last.

There was a lukewarm, half hearted cheer—then silence.

Exhausted and trembling, the little man leaned against the pen,

one hand on it, while Red Wull, his flanks still heaving, gently licked the other. Quite close stood James Moore and the gray dog. Above was the black wall of people, utterly still; below, the judges comparing notes. In the silence you could almost hear the panting of the crowd.

Then one of the judges went up to James Moore and shook him by the hand.

The gray dog had won. Owd Bob o' Kenmuir had won the Shepherd's Trophy outright.

A second's palpitating silence—a woman's hysterical laugh, and a deep mouthed bellow rent the expectant air—shouts, screams, hat tossings, back-clappings blending in a din that made the many-winding waters of the Silver Lea quiver and quiver again.

Owd Bob o' Kenmuir won the Shepherd's Trophy outright.

Maggie's face flushed a scarlet hue. Wee Anne flung fat arms toward her triumphant Bob, and screamed with the best. Squire and parson, each red-cheeked, were boisterously shaking hands. Long Kirby, who had not prayed for thirty years, ejaculated with heartfelt earnestness. "Thank God!" Sam'l Todd bellowed in Tammas' ear, and almost slew him with his mighty buffets. Among the Dalesmen some laughed like drunken men; some cried like children all joined in that roaring song of victory.

To little McAdam, standing with his back to the crowd, that storm of cheering came as the first announcement of defeat.

A wintry smile, like the sun over a March sea, crept across his face.

"We might a kent it, Wullie," he muttered, soft and low. The tension loosed, the battle lost, the little man almost broke. There were red dabs of color in his face, his eyes were big, his lips pitifully quivering. He was near to sobbing.—From *Red Wull* of Battle.