

shyly up, still trembling from the fright the fracas had given her.

'Dear me!' exclaimed Mr. M'Tavish. 'How odd! Why, we were all talking about you yesterday at the council, and your father promised to bring you in and show you to us this very morning. No wonder he's so proud of you; any man might be proud of such a boy.' And as he spoke these last words, his voice fell away into a sigh, for he had no son to inherit his honoured name and abundant wealth, and it was the one cloud upon his career of otherwise unshadowed prosperity. Then, brightening up, he added—

'But come along. It's nearly time for the council. I am going to have the pleasure of introducing you to my partners myself.'

Thus it came about that Archie appeared before the awe-inspiring council under the wing of its most important member, and was given a reception that bewildered him, so that he completely lost the use of his tongue, and could only blush his acknowledgments.

Henceforth Mr. M'Tavish took a deep interest in Archie. He had him much in his company, and drew out from him all the dearly cherished thoughts and plans that he had conceived concerning his own future. Brought up as Archie had been, far away from the cramping, conventionalising influences of city life, and yet not lacking in any of the attributes of sturdy, self-reliant manhood, the keen, kindly old magnate found him peculiarly attractive, and resolved to bring about the fulfilment of his fondest desires.