

"Will you stop till Friday and see me off, and to-morrow we'll have a day in the country somewhere; we'll go on the river, or to Oxford or Windsor, or wherever you choose, only say you'll stop."

"Oh, but!" said Tibbie, with colour a trifle heightened, "wouldn't that be rather a queer thing for you and me to do, Archie Mackerrow?"

"What's queer about it? It's no more than your duty to a countryman anyway, especially when he's the most forlorn one on God's earth. You sort of owe it to me, don't you know, for auld lang syne."

"I'd like to do it," said Tibbie frankly, "and I will."

She felt an extraordinary sense of contentment and well-being which undoubtedly increased in the course of the next day, which they spent entirely on the river, travelling by train to Maidenhead, where they got a boat, of which Archie Mackerrow, like all the Kyle lads, was absolutely master. It was a day of complete happiness for them both. But more than once Tibbie wondered what Alison would say if she could see them. Next morning, at half-past ten, she drove with him to Waterloo to see him off at the boat train.

"You won't desert me wholly after all this, Tibbie?" he said, turning to her in the cab as it made its way slowly in the long stream of vehicles towards the main platform.

"The breadth of the sea will soon be between us," Tibbie made answer. "But at least I can promise to write to you, and to send you my book."

"That's all I want meanwhile, and you'll never know just what you've done for me in these two days. Some day, perhaps, if you'll let me, and Heaven is kind enough to let us meet again, I'll tell you."

"Perhaps you'll write it," she said in rather a low voice, and looking straight ahead, somehow not caring just then to see his face.

"No, it belongs to the things a chap doesn't write,