

Charles had barely secured an entrance for himself and his prisoner when the three young ladies were seen approaching to find out the cause of the disturbance, and there was no need for him to give any reply. Elsie's exclamation was enough to reveal his identity.

"Charles Leslie," said Mr. Murray. "Oh! I've heard of you before. And your prisoner, who is he, and what has he done that you treat him thus?"

Elsie's look when she recognized Kilgour was one of quiet and dignified triumph, and she eagerly awaited the explanation.

"This mean poultroun," said Charles, "is Alan Kilgour, lately an aspirant for the hand of this young lady; but he takes a strange way of gaining the esteem of her best friends. Twice has he made an effort to do them grievous bodily hurt, and twice he has been foiled. I was making my way here with some letters from Mr. Forbes of Darvel to his daughters, and from my brother, Alistair Leslie, to his affianced bride, when this gallant Hanoverian officer fell upon me and tried to rifle the contents of my pockets. Fortunately for me, Mr. Murray, I learned one or two wrestling tricks while I was at the Aulton Grammar School, and the gentleman did not succeed as he expected."

Here Kilgour broke in. "This young rooster crows very crouselly, but perhaps he is not aware that I have the means of breaking up the pretty schemes of his young springald brother; aye, and I'll do it."

"There is no need for any bluster here," quietly replied Mr. Murray. "Your sleuth-hound has lost his fangs. But we are keeping you from the rest you seem sadly in need of. Mr. Leslie, follow me with your prisoner and we will find him a resting-place for the night."

Up two flights of stairs the three men went, until they found themselves in a small spareroom, scantily