## Guelph Evening Mercury

OFFICE:.....MACDONNELL STREET

THURSDAY EV'G, MARCH 5, 1868,

## The Maiden's Choice

OR, THE LAIRD OF BIRKENCLEUCH

A Tale of the Covenanters.

Poor girl! her position was very unfavourable to right reasoning and right action.

Duped and deceived; believing what was not; misunderstanding herself, and surrounded by misery and disgusting privations, what wonder that she was tempted to forsake her instincts and depart from the truth which resided in her nature? When she looked at the wretchedness with which her father's miserly doing surrounded her, and to the bleak prospect of cheerless dependence which a situation opened up, and contrasted these with the advantages which would be her's as the wife of Charlie Allan, let us not be surprised to find that the temptation grew every day stronger to make that escape from poverty which was in her power, and accept the case and wealth and pleasant experience which would he her's as the wife of Charlie Allan, let us not be surprised to find that the temptation grew every day stronger to make that escape from poverty which was in her power, and accept the case and wealth and pleasant experience which would, let be complained to marry Charlie Allan.

Oh! the joy this gave to the old miser. In a word, Itelen Chrigan finally congented to marry Charlie Allan.

Oh! the joy this gave to the old miser. In the excess of his cestacy he took her in his long skinny arms and strained her to his withered bosom. Then he rushed away to some solitary place to shrick out his vehement rapture at the prospect of adding in large abundance to his hoarded stores of gold.

Clartie Allan was no less exultant. The patience and perseverance with which he had altherto prosecuted his suit were nearly exhausted, and very soon he meant to adopt the strong measures he had all along mediated, but Helen's complance saved him from the extreme procedure, and he would now bear her to Birkeneleuch as a willing and a smilling bride. Once his, the restraint which he had been exercising, and which had galled him so severely, would be thrown off, and he would, without scruple, make an advantable of procedure and characteristic procedure. The complant of

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Charlie Allan was no less exultant. The patience and perseverance with which he had hitherto prosecuted his suit were nearly examsted, and vary soon he meant to adopt the strong measures he had all along mediated, but Helen's compliance saved him from the extreme procedure, and he would now bear her to Birkencleuch as a willing and a smilling bride. Once his, the restraint which he had been exercising, and which had galled him so severely, would be thrown off, and he would, without scruple, make her the mere minister of his selfish gratification.

her with means for making the necessary preparations.

'You'll give me the legacy, won't you?' said her father, in the most instinuating tones.

'You won't have any use for it, for you'll have far more money than you can spend; so you'll not grudge the hundred pounds to your poor old father, eh?

'Nay, you must talk to Charlic about that,' returned Helen, with a smile. 'If he is willing that you should have the money, I am.'

Jabez rubbed his hands in a very transport of delight, and, without saying a word to his daughter or anyone, went across the upland to Brankswood, to have a talk with Sir Gilbert Barton.

Barton.

He had not to go the whole distance to the mansion, for he came upon the Baronet seated on the edge of one of his own fields. He had been shooting all the morning, and, as the day was hot, the big sonsy frame of Sir Gilbert was hot too, and, tired and fatigued, he had sat down by the wayside to rest. Here it was that Jabez Cringan came upon him.

The Baronet noticed the miser's thin, bent, and shrunk figure, as he slowly advanced along the bridal path, and he purposely waited till he should come up.

'Weel, Cringan,' he exclaimed, in his usual hearty tone. 'Hoo's a' wi' ye, and hoo is that wrang headit lassie o' yours?—Ony appearance o' her comin' tae her senses yet?'

Todood day, Sir Gilbert; returned Jabez.
am glad I have met you here, for I was oa
y way to Brankswood to see you.

Ha, say ye sae? Puddin's and painches
n glad tae hear it. I hope yer errand is
e tell me that Helen is tae be married after

In , say ye sae? Puddin's and painches! I'm glad tae hear it. I hope yer errand is tae tell me that Helen is tae be married after a ??

'You are a shrewd guesser, Sir Gilbert.
That is precisely what I have come to say.'

'What! it's true then?'

'Quite true I assure you. The marriage is to take place in a fortnight.'

'Puddin's and painches, but that's blythenews indeed. The little cuttie, tae gang on in yon canusteeric fashion. But I kenned it wadna last lang. It's no in natur' for a guid hearted lassie fike Helen Cringan tae break her plighted troth, and hae nee reason for it. But can yon, her faither, no jalouse the meanin' o' her odd cantrip? Had Richard gien her only effence, think ye?

'She never explained the matter to me, answered Jubez, demurely.

'Odd sake, when she cam' tae me aboot it, she wad neither hup nor wynd. I couldna' get either buff or stye oot o' her. But never, answered Jubez, demurely.

'Odd sake, when she cam' tae me aboot it, she wad neither hup nor wynd. I couldna' get either buff or stye oot o' her. But never, nind, sin' its a' owre now, and the hank is come back to Brankswoot. But what are whe date for a hoose for them? Let me see. They'll just hae tae gang in wi' auld Peggy M'Queen, art the north lodge, till their ain biggin is ready.

'Jabez rubbed his lean hands together, and smiled meaning!y. 'I am affaid, Sir Gilbert,' he observed, 'that you do not understand the matter in the true sense.

'Understand it weel eneuch. Helen and Richard are tae be married in a fortnight, and what's difficult tae understand aboot that, I wad like tae ken?

'O dear no, Sir Gilbert, and so she is, but not to the young man Wayland.'

'No tae Richard Wayland who are to be married.'

'I did indeed, Sir Gilbert, and so she is, but not to the young man Wayland.'

'No tae Richard Wayland 'ejaculated Sir Gilbert, in the extremity of wonder.

'No, sir; but to a much more eligible husband, responded Cringan with a look of pride.

Weel, sir weel,' said the Baronet, uttering the words as if they were ready to

husband?

'Mr. Allan, of Birkeneleuch, Sir Gilbert,' replied Jabez, with an air of one who was giving a grand piece of information.

'What?' roared the Baronet, leaping to his feet as if an adder had stung him. 'Charlea Allan?' Did ye say Helen Cringan was tae be married tae Charlie Allan?

TO BE CONTINUED.

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