

But when, at the green dip of the road to Kersland House, where was the headquarters of Cornet Grahame's troop, a laughing voice flouted him in full song, there was, spite of the recent solemnity and the awful words of him whom all men counted a prophet, a sudden leap of gladness in the heart of Raith Ellison, who, in that sombre Cameronian household of Mayfield hidden like a whaup's nest in the bosom of the purple hills, had held through all his more youthful youth no promiscuous troking with womankind.

Especially had he been warned against the women of the Oppressor, who, as his blind father had so often informed him (on the highest Scriptural authority), "painted their eyes, decked themselves with ornaments, sitting by the wayside;" or who like the Sabaens from the wilderness (by which was undoubtedly meant the uncovenanted English), put "bracelets upon their hands and beautiful crowns of gold upon their heads."

Now this is what came to Raith Ellison out of the wood :

"Sweet Willie said a word in haste,  
Fair Annie took it ill.  
Oh, I'll never wed a tocherless May  
Again my faither's will."

Then yet more joyously, from the green covert rang out the reply of Fair Annie to such ungallant sentiments, the last two lines being delivered with a perfect peal of scornful laughter :

"If ye will never wed a wife,  
A wife will ne'er wed ye.  
Sae he is off to tell his mither,  
As fast as he could flee !"

Raith looked at the dense covert of leaves, where the hazel bushes grew close down to the track, sweeping the green foot-road on either side of the hard-trodden bridle-path with a pleasant sough as often as the wind blew. But the prospect did not tell Raith Ellison much. His heart halted, indeed, like a horse suddenly checked, and then plunged determinedly forward. The green leaves moved above the path. They waved. They were put aside.

And there she was—she whom the old man his father had called Jezebel. There was a crown of gold on her head. Bracelets of the same twined her wrists. But the lips were so rose-red, the teeth so marvellously small and white and regular, and the laughter in the eyes—dark eyes, the colour undecided—so disconcerting that it was some time before