Technical and Bibliographic Notes / Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

- [x] Coloured covers/ Couverture de couleur
- [ ] Covers damaged/ Couverture endommagée
- [ ] Covers restored and/or laminated/ Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- [ ] Cover title missing/ Le titre de couverture manque
- [ ] Coloured maps/ Cartes géographiques en couleur
- [x] Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/ Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- [x] Coloured plates and/or illustrations/ Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- [ ] Bound with other material/ Relié avec d'autres documents
- [x] Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion along interior margin/ La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la distorsion le long de la marge intérieure
- [ ] Blank leaves added during restoration may appear within the text. Whenever possible, these have been omitted from filming/ Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas été filmées.

- [ ] Coloured pages/ Pages de couleur
- [ ] Pages damaged/ Pages endommagées
- [ ] Pages restored and/or laminated/ Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- [x] Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/ Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- [ ] Pages detached/ Pages détachées
- [x] Showthrough/ Transparence
- [x] Quality of print varies/ Qualité inégale de l'impression
- [ ] Continuous pagination/ Pagination continue
- [ ] Includes index(es)/ Comprend un (des) index

Title on header taken from:/ Le titre de l'en-tête provient:

- [ ] Title page of issue/ Page de titre de la livraison
- [ ] Caption of issue/ Titre de départ de la livraison
- [ ] Masthead/ Générique (périodiques) de la livraison

- [x] Additional comments:/ Commentaires supplémentaires: Page 334 is incorrectly numbered page 34.

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below/
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

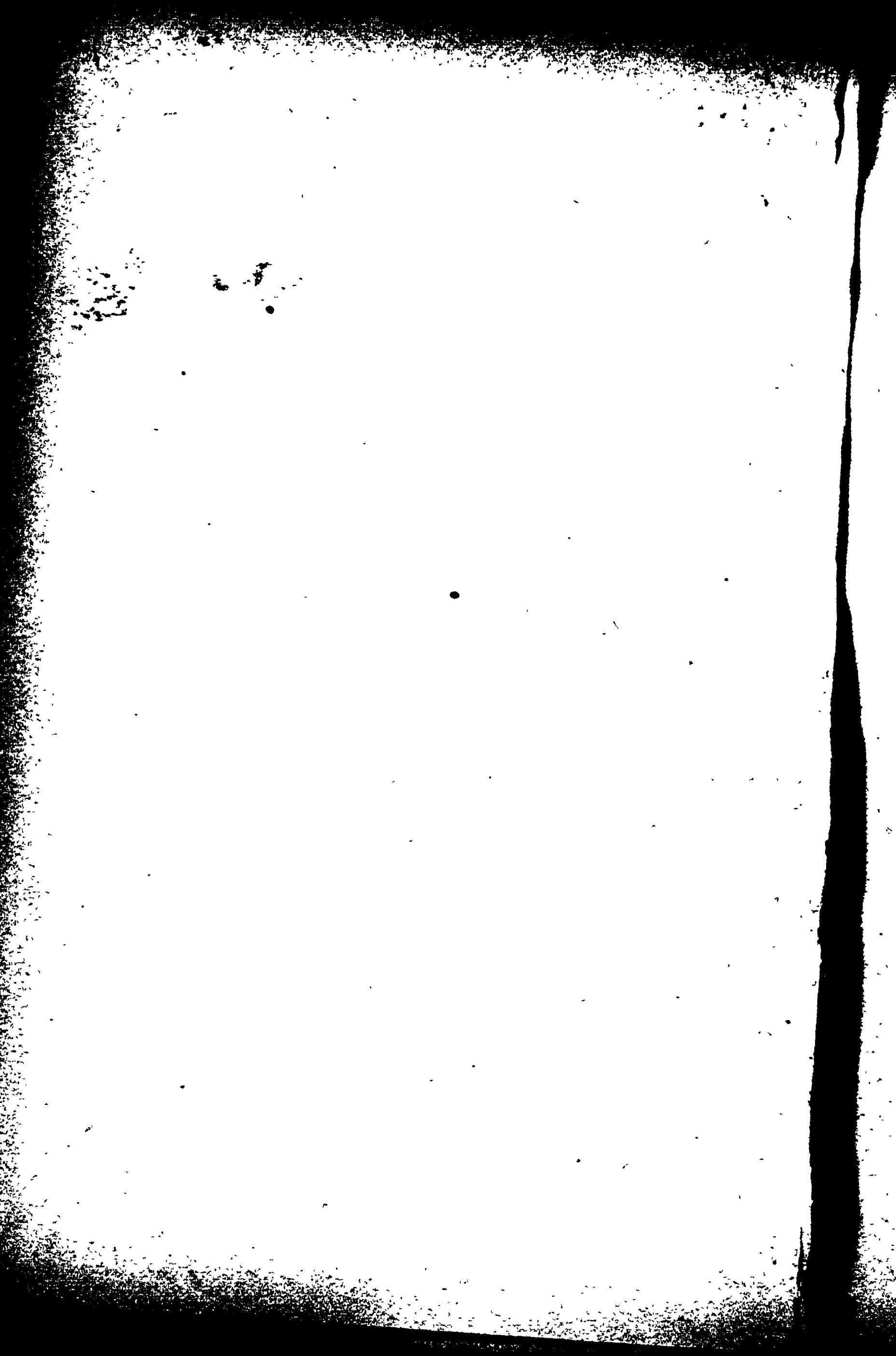
10X	12X	14X	16X	18X	20X	22X	24X	26X	28X	30X	32X
						✓					

CANADIAN COPYRIGHT EDITION

LOGIE TOWN

SARAH TYLER

THE NATIONAL PUBLISHING COMPANY



LOGIE TOWN

—BY—

SARAH TYTLER.

TORONTO:
THE NATIONAL PUBLISHING COMPANY.
1888.

PR5700
Y74
L63
1888

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the Office of the Minister of Agriculture, by THE NATIONAL PUBLISHING Co., in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight.

LOGIE TOWN.

CHAPTER I.

LIZZIE LINDESAY AND HER LOOK-OUT.

A GOOD many years ago, young Lizzie Lindesay looked out of her open window up and down the High-gate, the main street of Logie. It was so many years ago that there was not the slightest impropriety in the act, for Lizzie was of sufficient rank to render the requirements of propriety a serious consideration with her, while she was left very much to herself and did in a great measure what she chose.

Lizzie belonged to the upper ten of Logie—a small "landward town" of robust local colouring and individual character, before the days of the penny post, railways, and universal intercommunication.

As Logie was not a manufacturing town, and had no native industry save the Lauder Paper Mills, it was the more select and aristocratic in its higher strata of widows and maiden ladies, female representatives of neighbouring laird's families, retired naval and military officers, clergymen, bankers, lawyers, or "writers," and doctors. Its inferior strata ranged from substantial unpretending tradesmen down to jobbing gardeners, day labourers, and a few hand-loom weavers.

It so happened that Lizzie Lindesay could look over the open window—the performance not being yet tabooed in polite circles—by the hour, if she had the inclination, without being called to order and summoned to some more improving occupation. After all it is doubtful whether it was unimproving. That street was Lizzie's book, in which the crossings and corners were so many pages, the wayfarers, whether

men or beasts, with the little incidents of the pavement and causeway, words, sentences, and paragraphs. Lizzie had conned them many hundreds of times, and in one sense knew them by heart, but in the very familiarity lay the charm which enabled her to detect such subtle lights and shades and delicate touches, as invested the moving panorama with endless freshness and inexhaustible interest of detail and deduction.

First, as to the reader of this homely, vividly apprehended book. Lizzie Lindesay was a young girl of nineteen years, the only daughter and eldest child of Captain Lindesay, commonly known in Logie as "the auld Captain," to distinguish him from young ex-captains and lieutenants, promoted by courtesy to the title, already disabled and superannuated after Waterloó had given Europe a long peace. Lizzie was a womanly girl for her years, since life, though not so fast in its whirl, was more quickly lived then, and girls were women at nineteen as boys were men in more than name at one and twenty. William Pitt had ruled England when he was little older. Lizzie would have been still more womanly had the cares of a household rested on her shoulders, or had she even been deputy housekeeper under her mother. As it was, there was a young stepmother in the field, and Lizzie's superabundant activity and turn for sweeping reforms—the distinction of all rulers who come into action early, before prudence and forbearance stay their hands—were not wanted.

Lizzie, with her share of womanhood, was yet no more than a tall slip of a girl in outward form, slight and pliant of figure, with reddish auburn hair and blue eyes, bright and somewhat keen as her father's still gleamed behind his spectacles. In no other respect did the daughter resemble the father. He was a stout little man, as erect as a ramrod, except that he leant a little the wrong way on his backbone. Lizzie's features were not regular—rather charmingly irregular. Her straight nose was more than a shade too short. Her red mouth had not only a pout in its curves, it did not close tightly enough to conceal the even white teeth. Her chin, like her nose, was a little too short. But these small divergencies from the perfect rule were the merest jokes compared to the Captain's rugged eccentricities of feature, in the shagginess of his whitening eyebrows, the copper-like ball at the end of his broad nose, and the portentous length

of his clean-shaven, blue-bearded upper lip. Besides, Lizzie had never suffered from malignant small-pox, to which the Captain had been an infant victim, retaining the traces of the fell disease to hoary hair. Neither had Lizzie smelt gunpowder, and grown weather-beaten under the stress of foreign climates, whereas the Captain looked as if a mine had burst under his nose, and ploughed, seamed, and darkened his visage, till it was a right fierce and warlike countenance under his cocked hat.

Even without his professional adjuncts the auld Captain was undeniably a hard-featured "black-a-vised" (visaged) man. His daughter, on the contrary, taking after her mother, was a comely creature, a fair young woman, fair in the very flaws in her beauty, and fairest of all in the brilliant red and white complexion which belongs to auburn hair. Lizzie had a colour which freckles could not spoil. She had a dash of freckles, exposing herself as she did without fear to the sun —so large a dash that some of them stayed with her, to her mortification, over the winter. But if Lizzie had known it, the freckles only softened and mellowed with enriching flakes of pale brown the vivid red and white. It must have been a beauty with a complexion like Lizzie Lindesay's who first set the fashion of patches, generations back in the reign of good Queen Anne.

Lizzie wore her hair coiled high on the top of her head in a style not unknown in the reign of Queen Victoria. It was a style calculated to set off the pretty bearing of the well-shaped head and neck. In front the hair was in short, flat, clustering curls, well drawn back, and sloping upwards, so as to leave bare a brow of milky whiteness—much less freckled than the rosy cheeks. "An open-faced, bonnie lassie" was said of Captain Lindesay's daughter.

Though Lizzie was looking out of the open window with her bare head exposed to every blast that blew, the season was still spring, and her frock continued the sober brown merino, which would not give place to gay chintz, or delicate-hued nankin, or cloud-like India muslin, till June, when the budding hawthorn was come, and people were able to throw behind them with a quiet conscience the wary adage against easterly winds—

"Cast not a clout
Till May be out."

The ugly deformities of very long or very short waists to gowns had been alike exploded. Though the sleeves were still expanded *à la* wings, the peculiarity was not unbecoming, above all when it was found in company with a naturally slim young figure. The white muslin pelerine, which supplemented the low-cut bodice and covered the neck and shoulders, was altogether dainty, so was the breast-knot of primrose riband above the belt, which helped to confine the muslin apron, in itself equally dainty. The apron survived the little cap, which had been entirely banished where girls' toilets were concerned, except for early morning wear. There it lingered to mark the undress of the calico "wrapper," which in its turn pointed to the household duties still required from girls in a fair social position, the daughters of the smaller lairds and of professional men.

A slightly quaint, but decidedly graceful figure, Lizzie bent from the window, and looked up and down the street with no particular object in view. If any one said she was watching for young Adam Lauder strolling in from his own and his uncle's paper mills on the Cartburn, it was not true, or it was but partially true. Lizzie had no right to watch for Adam Lauder, and she was a girl strong on rights. Adam Lauder was not her property. He belonged as much—perhaps more—to Hay Melville, of Balmayne. At least he had looked as often at Hay and spoken twice to her where he had spoken once to Lizzie, every time he had the opportunity. True, Hay with her tongue quick as lightning provoked repartee, and the Melvilles were the reigning sovereigns—that is, the ruling lairds nearest Logie. The last consideration implied a kind of instinctive deference on the part of Adam, and a sort of glamour thrown over even his careless eyes.

It was, almost, a case of necessity that Hay Melville and Lizzie Lindesay should be friendly. There were few girls of their age and rank in the town and neighbourhood at this date, and as people went very seldom from home there was a natural association between the girls, which marked them out for friends, unless there was some striking difference of character. There was no such marked difference now. If it ever came to exist in full force, it was only dimly discernible at present. But the pair were no more than companions, and it was Adam Lauder's roving fancy which was to blame for the limitation.

Friends! had there not been some independence of spirit, some sense of justice in women, some magnanimity shared between these two, they would have been what they certainly were not, mortal enemies, open or secret, instead of friends.

Is it to be thought that there was much love lost between the bevy of damsels whom Willie—of Scotch song notoriety—left behind him at Melville Castle, on whom he showered his parting regards with such unwarrantable impartiality, swearing like a gallant Turk, to come back "and marry them a'."

No, Lizzie Lindesay could have denied with honest indignation that she was keeping guard at the window on the chance of Adam Lauder's turning the corner and appearing in the principal street of the town. If he should happen to cross her line of vision that would be a very different thing of course.

What did Lizzie see to afford her sufficiently pleasant and satisfactory occupation? The street was somewhat wide for the street of a small country town, and it was clean since there was little traffic to dirty it, but it was hardly grass-grown. The houses were not so picturesque as they would have been in an English town of the same age. They were all of gray stone, with roofs for the most part of cold blue slate, though here and there the warm red tiles lingered. There was an occasional gable with crow-steps to the street, and the line was broken by wynds and closes, and by a tree or a clump of bushes, where a garden abutted on the thoroughfare. As a rule the houses were without pretension, rigidly plain in their height and breadth, blinking out from formal rows of narrow windows on the causeway for the most part. Yet some of those houses, including that in which the Lindesays dwelt, were old town houses which the neighbouring gentry had occupied in the winter, when the little town figured as a miniature Edinburgh. The whole place was of far greater antiquity than might have been imagined from its general aspect. Like Rome, there was within its bounds an older Logie, of which scarcely an architectural relic remained. The sole traces were to be found in names, traditions, and accredited history. Logie had been the scene of courts and national parliaments in its day. It had possessed monastic establishments which had vanished piecemeal. It had owned a castle, of which it might be said, as of the Temple at Jerusalem,

that not one stone was left upon another. It had rejoiced in gates, of which the word "port," applied to two suburbs, was the only vestige. A renowned play, the acting of which had been an era in the spiritual and moral life of the kingdom, had been played at Logie. But all that ancient glory was long fled, and few people even wasted wonder upon it. The exception was in the case of one brooding owl of an elderly gentleman, who lived in a tiny house, presided over by a careful housekeeper, whose orderly soul he vexed by his small collection of mouldy books, worm-eaten fragments of wood, and rusty bits of iron.

Even the Logie of Lizzie Lindesay's experience was removed from the Logie of the present, alike by a racy individuality in the middle of its starched dignity, and by a vigorous stir and current of fresh life from the outer world. The last came and went with the coaches and four, which, with their red-coated drivers, their pealing bugles, their clusters of passengers, drew up with a flourish every forenoon and afternoon, accomplishing the great sensation of the day, and depositing a quota of travellers prepared to tarry a night, or a day or two as it might be, at the Crown Inn, a two-storied, widespread building, next door to the Lindesays.

Lizzie's view extended on the one hand as far as where two intersecting streets met. The junction received its name from the ancient market cross. The market cross itself had been hustled away bodily as an obstruction to traffic and a symbol of popish idolatry, but its very memory continued a landmark and helped to create a thoroughfare, which in the earlier part of the day was the Billingsgate of the town. There cadgers and cadgers' carts, and strapping fish-wives with their creels bringing a salt-sea flavour thus far inland, were ranged; and brisk bargaining went on between provident heads of houses and managing house-wives and the Maggie Mucklebackets of the situation.

Commanding the fish market in the morning, the corn market once a week, and the perennial high-place of Logie, the grim old jail still frowned through its barred windows, not without benefit to the prisoners within, who thus caught a glimpse of the brightest prospect in the town. Lax discipline permitted them to do more: small boxes and old stockings dangling from strings were lowered until brought within reach of charitable passers-by, who might deposit

in these extempore purses, pence, or if the donors were very generous, silver coins for the solace of the unhappy wights whose faces, unwashed and unshaven for the most part, peered eagerly down to ascertain the fate of the venture. Miserable women who had stakes in the fortunes of some of the prisoners occasionally squatted, with or without children, shrouded in grey duffle cloaks, on the pavement. There the poor creatures propped themselves against the grimy walls, and waited hours in sullen patience for the chance of seeing or exchanging words with members of the branded colony in durance.

In the opposite direction, Lizzie scarcely saw beyond the Crown Inn, where the High-gate ended. The street was intersected by one of the entrances to the town, so narrow—blocked as it was by small shops on the one side, and on the other a substantial mansion house of the date of the Lindesays' dwelling—that carts heavily laden with corn or hay had been known to get wedged in the aperture, and had to be then and there unloaded before proceeding further. Facing the Lindesays was a steep, somewhat sordid-looking wynd, between poor houses and a high moss-grown garden wall, the wynd bearing the sombre name of "The Corp Wynd." It was the chief access from that quarter of the town to the crowded kirk-yard. But constant contemplation robs even the well-defined path to the grave of any particular sadness, not to say terror. The Corp Wynd had a western exposure, and Lizzie had seen its squalor, and its melancholy associations, transformed and glorified under many a fine sunset.

CHAPTER II.

A PAGE OF LIZZIE'S BOOK.

LIZZIE LINDESAY knew every shop in addition to every house in the High-gate. Nay, she was acquainted, not only with the contents of the shops, she was also familiar with the characters and family histories of the shopkeepers. She knew the very horses and dogs. There was Geordie Cleghorn slowly travelling with his load of coals from the nearest coal-hill, so distant and toilsome an expedition that he

looked about him, as he sat in his corduroys, blue bonnet, and red worsted cravat on his cart-head, with an air of self-congratulation, and could only gently flick his hard-working mare "Meg," who had grappled courageously with the difficulties of the way. Meg had been a public benefactress in her time, when she had to struggle through snow-wreaths which had lain so long and been drifted so deep that there was not an ounce of coal or many wheelbarrows of peat remaining in Logie, and the minister had been on the verge of burning his worst kitchen table after he had disposed of all the "creepies" (wooden stools) in the house.

Yon big yellow mongrel of a dog was "Oscar," that watched day and night over the gilt lamb and the valuable haberdashery stock of Mr. William Young, the great Logie draper.

A tall, gaunt man, coming down the street in a shabby black coat, knee-breeches, and black worsted stockings, but with an irreproachable white neckcloth, in the folds of which reposed a pearl brooch, was the Rev. John Ochiltree, the minister of Logie.

He had an aristocratic as well as a clerical air, to which he was entitled, for if his stipend was not great he counted a long pedigree. His eloquence was rather massive than fluent, but it met with general acceptance. He represented the carnal as well as the spiritual learning of the parish. The man himself was a kindly, sensible, authoritative gentleman, whose orthodoxy was never questioned, even in polemical Scotland.

The minister looked up as he passed beneath Lizzie's window, and removed his hat with punctilious politeness, showing dark hair, which, though no longer powdered, was still neatly tied back with a black riband in a queue.

"Good morning to you, Miss Lindesay." The minister hailed his young parishioner cordially. "Fine weather for the spring wheat. How is the Captain? Not feeling his pains in this east wind, I hope?"

"Good morning to you, sir," Lizzie replied. "My father is well, thank you. His rheumatics are much as usual. How is Mrs. Ochiltree since she came back from the Wells?"

"Pretty fairly. Her headaches trouble her a bit at times. I tell her we must all have our prick of the thorn in the flesh. But she answers it is easy to preach, and that I had

better mind my own words the next time I have a fit of the gout."

"I am sure you bear it gallantly, sir," said Lizzie pleasantly. "Will you not come in, Mr. Ochiltree? My father has gone to the Coffee-room to see the papers, but he will be back presently, and Mrs. Lindesay is in the parlour."

"Another day," the minister promised, waving his hand. "I'm too late as it is," drawing out his great round watch with its heavy seals; "I'm bound for a meeting of the Presbytery, and I've to call on my sister in the Wynd as I go by."

Lizzie cheerfully nodded a *finale* to the interview, and smiled as she looked after the retreating figure. "I hope Miss Katie is not in trouble, that Mr. Mungy has not been keeping her up late again," Lizzie said to herself. She was thinking of the minister's maiden sister, an acknowledged gentlewoman—so thoroughly acknowledged that she had neither lost caste herself nor impaired the dignity of her brother's position by preferring to sell baby linen and lace in an improvised shop consisting of a room in her house in the Wynd, rather than be a burden on her reverend brother, with his ailing wife and his sons at the University of St. Andrews. Miss Katie had lately resigned her little shop with its fatigues and worries in order to receive and devote herself to a bachelor brother, returned with a competence from a long stay in Jamaica. But even this path of roses was not free from sharp thorns for poor Miss Katie's feet—diligent and dutiful feet, but treading more heavily and sternly in their very weariness on their lonely pilgrimage, than the minister's. Whatever the drawbacks of genteel poverty and the necessity of committing sermons to memory, his had on the whole paced flowerier as well as more frequented ways. "Auld Jameeky," as the irreverent nicknamers in Logie called Mr. Mungy Ochiltree, had contracted sundry habits—notably a taste for rum and water and wines, and the company of cronies as "drouthy" as himself, which hardly befitted a maiden lady's household, somewhat clerical too in its tone, from the near relationship of its mistress to the minister.

Night after night, as the neighbours, who in Logie knew everything, were well aware, Miss Katie was in the habit of dismissing her lass after "worship," in which the two

women alone had taken part, their shrill and quavering voices raising the psalm of praise, while Miss Katie "put up a prayer out of her own head," her fellow-worshipper, a loyal domestic, said admiringly, "as bonnie a prayer as gin it had been delivered by the minister himself." Afterwards, Miss Katie rolled up her sparse hair in curl-papers, tied on her night-cap to keep her thin cheeks warm, took an improving book, and sat down to read and nod over her single candle far on into the small hours. She grew always the grimmer and the more incensed the longer she sat, for Miss Katie was no West Indian slave to cower before the humours of Mr. Mungy. She had kept herself in all the comfort she cared for by her own energy and industry, before he returned from his plantation, and she could do it again. It had been as a mutual benefit that she had undertaken the task, which was not proving light, of looking after him.

At last an uncertain foot would be heard tramping up the Wynd, and a wavering knock, which more than Miss Katie recognized, sounded at the door. It was not opened without a protest and a parley—let who would hear.

"Wha are ye that raps at this time o' nicht, or rather morning?" Miss Katie gave the challenge through the key-hole. She would fain have affronted the transgressor, but for the sake of the minister's credit and Mungy's own character, she had to speak in a cautiously lowered tone, which would have roused the suspicions of any brain not hopelessly muddled.

"Whisht! whisht! Katie, woman, it's me, let me in without making a din," remonstrated Mr. Mungy.

But Miss Katie only opened the door sufficiently to insert her own lean person into the gap. "Do ye ken the hoor, Mungy Ochiltree?" she asked severely of the shambling, loose-limbed man, who retained sufficient sense to desire to enter without awaking attention.

"I should ken by a watch that has crossed the equator as well as by the toon knock," mumbled the delinquent, peevishly. "It's no that late, and it will no make it earlier to keep me standing in the gutter," in an accent of offended majesty.

"Whaur hae ye been and wha were ye wi', Mungy?" Miss Katie continued her searching investigations, as she opened the door a quarter of an inch farther.

"I'll mention no names, Katie, deil a ane." Mungy took his stand on the ground of honourable reticence. "Ye'll no draw them out o' me with red-hot pinshers." Then, unable to keep his mental balance, he suddenly lapsed into confidential confession. "But, woman, Katie, Elder Red," naming a respected office-bearer in his brother's church, "and Deacon Howie," another official in a still stricter secession church, "were the men."

Still Lizzie read on at the familiar page.

That rush of urchins and of little girls mingling indiscriminately and settling down coolly to play ball, to skip, to spin "peeries" or tops, to kick stones into chalked squares on the scantily-occupied pavement, in the game of "fal-lal" or hop-scotch, was the result of the "scule scailin'." The quiet streets of Logie formed the common play-ground of the scholars of the parish school. Those scholars were of both sexes and all ranks, the whole presided over by that terrible autocrat "the maister." Lizzie Lindesay had attended the parish school in her youth, as well as the Miss Murdochs' or "Murdies'" boarding-school later in life. Many a pawmie (a cut across the palm of the hand with a set of leathern tawse) she had been compelled to take, many a prank the hardy, healthy child had engaged in. She had said her lessons in the kirk when the school-house was under repair, and been sent as a punishment for trifling to stand beside Long Fowlis, the effigy of a Constable of Logie—a doughty figure of an armed man in stone, who in the flesh might have had something to do with the vanished Castle, and in his monument lay stretched on his back, with his arms folded, filling a recess in the kirk wall. Lizzie was without elder brothers, but she had never wanted champions and defenders among the rough lads who yet for the most part owed a species of allegiance to the lassies—especially to those of them who were bonnie and cheery, blithe and modest, as nimble with their feet, quick with their hands, and fearless in their hearts as these small heroines were good at their lessons.

Lizzie looked with an initiated eye half longingly at the troop boldly preparing to disport themselves among the complacent or imperturbable passers-by. "Wee Mysie Rymer has the medal," she noted. "But what ails Patie Stewart that he runs lame? Has he been climbing his garden

wall and missed his footing as he did once before, the loon?"

Another dignitary appeared, not unlike the minister in his air, only Shirra Fleming was portly where the Reverend John Ochiltree was gaunt, and the Shirra wore light Kerseymere, instead of black small clothes, a brown coat and a yellow vest, over which his plaited shirt-frill fell. The Shirra, too, looked with urbane glance around him, as well he might—was he not one of the three Merry-Andrews who were as notoriously the best of comrades over port wine and toddy, at whist and supper tables, as the gentlemen were excellent servants of the crown according to their respective degrees of legal rank in the offices of Shirra, Shirra deputy, and Shirra clerk? The trio formed a jolly fraternity, working well together on many a busy day, and when the work was done playing as well together, without a thought of the terrors of professional etiquette, or without the abatement of a jot of real dignity, on many a genial night. Mr. Andrew Fleming, Mr. Andrew Lamb, and Mr. Andrew Bonthron—their memories survive to other generations as "the three Merry-Andrews" (wags of the first water) of Logie Town.

At last, if Lizzie had any lurking expectation of such a conclusion, a young man turned the Crown Inn corner. He was a striking enough figure in his boots and tops, buckskins, and green hunting-coat, though he was not riding; a couple of foxhounds at his heels were the only traces of the sport he was extravagantly fond of in the season. He was a manly young fellow, over six feet, with something of a good-natured swagger about his fine person and the expression of his handsome florid face. He was whistling as he turned the corner, "*Hey! Maggie; ho! Maggie; hey! Maggie Lauder.*" But he at once looked up to a particular window of the Lindesays' house. Yet Lizzie was before him. She closed the sash with a hasty bang which might have reached his ears before he had fairly entered the High-gate. His laughing eyes, over bold, met nothing but blank panes of glass, where so lately a charming head had presented itself.

CHAPTER III.

A REASONABLY INDULGENT STEPMOTHER.

As Lizzie entered she heard her father's voice. The Captain had come back by "The Water Ends," the path between the Cartburn and the town bleaching-green. Where the green terminated the little river flowed at the foot of the Lindesays' garden, a door from which opened, after the fashion of a row of garden doors, on the narrow footway by the water. Standing in the garden doorway, and looking across the reflected light and shade caused by a group of poplar trees on the opposite side, a loiterer might see the plunge of a water-rat, or the leap of a trout, breaking the ripples on the shining surface before him.

Captain Lindesay did not summon his daughter, neither did she go to meet him. She knew beforehand it was his wife he wished. It was to her that he would seek specially to convey some piece of public news which interested him, or he might have come across a toy which had taken his fancy for the children, and he might call their mother as the readiest means of getting at her offspring.

The auld Captain had borne arms long before Waterloo. He had lain in waiting at Badajoz, and fought at Barossa and Vimiera, receiving a pistol-bullet here and a sabre-thrust there among the vineyards and cork-trees of Spain and Portugal. He could even go back in the record of his services to the disastrous retreat on Corunna, when he had been among the men who had seen Mòore stricken down at the last moment, and had only stayed their embarkation till

> "They buried him darkly at dead of night,
> The sod with their bayonets turning."

Withal, the Captain, who never liked to speak of the temporary defeat, far less the sorely pressed retreat of a British army before their French foemen, was still a hale, high-spirited, elderly man. Like many another brave veteran, he was, except on rare and fitful occasions, when he would blaze up like the eruption of a volcano, an easy-going man at home. He was even uxorious to his second wife, a

fellow-officer's daughter from another town and county. She was a young, fat, indolent woman, who seldom moved from her seat. She spent her time principally in indulging to excess and then in feebly and ineffectually checking the outbreaks of her brood of small sons. Somehow, in spite of her fat and her selfish gratification of herself in the present, with her disregard of the consequences to others in the future, the second Mrs. Lindesay had succeeded in establishing a reputation for delicate health and devoted maternal affection, which alike appealed to the chivalrous side of her husband's nature.

It is said that most men up in years have a special tenderness for the children of their old age. In addition, Captain Lindesay had always sighed for a son and mourned over Lizzie's sex during his first experiment in matrimony. Now he had three fine boys, and though strictly speaking they were at present little bullies rather than heroes, bellowing and whining alternately on the least provocation, all that would correct itself by-and-by. What was to be expected from such lilliputian soldiers—too juvenile to be any one of them in a jacket? Why Geordie still wore a tiny tailed coat with a frill round his neck, and Hill was not out of petticoats.

Lizzie was a girl in perfect health, not yet invested with the dignities and privileges of matronhood. Her father was kind to her, even considerate of her as of all women, and she simply adored him and what she religiously believed of his gallant exploits and honourable scars; but she was nowhere in his estimation, and she knew it, compared to his wife and sons. Mrs. Lindesay was also kind to Lizzie in a more lymphatic way, particularly when kindness meant letting things alone, and the elder woman's not troubling herself much with what concerned another person. In the first year of Mrs. Lindesay's married life the lady had done a little more, and had attempted some slight training where the unformed girl in her first teens was in question. Lizzie was instructed how to use a silver fork, enjoined both by precept and example to sit still, encouraged to practise her music lessons, mind her carriage, and do her hair justice in dressing it. She was given a few desultory lessons in embroidery and darning, and the rudiments of dress-making. Then the new babies came in rapid succession, and all these step-mother's

favours were relinquished with no great reluctance on the part of the receiver. Thenceforth Lizzie was left to herself, without even the resource of the babies to wait upon and work for; whether the resource would have been looked upon as a benefit or a burden it did not offer itself to Lizzie. Mrs. Lindesay had a little money of her own—an advantage she never lost sight of. This private means, together with the Captain's half-pay and pension, went a long way not only in maintaining a middle-class household, but also in procuring nursery aid at a time of low wages and cheap living. The mistress of the family, generally comfortably acquiescent and complacent, had some touchy points. She was jealous of all interference with her management of her children, or for that matter with her housekeeping, particularly on the part of her step-daughter.

Lizzie had a mind and will of her own on these and most subjects, and not very wonderfully, perhaps, the mind and will did not coincide with those of Mrs. Lindesay. However, Lizzie had the commendable sense for a young girl to withdraw with some natural dignity from the unequal contest.

There was no clash of discord in the Captain's household. He had not even to exert towards his wife and daughter the discipline he had exercised in his troop. Under the circumstances the harmony was regarded as conspicuous and admirable. Mrs. Lindesay was often pointed to by her superficial admirers, of whom she had many, as a model step-mother.

There was a little lurking bitterness in Lizzie's heart for various reasons. She dwelt practically as a stranger under her father's roof. She had not the least control of what, in her crude judgment, doubtless, was mismanagement, waste, and folly. She had no voice in the rearing of some of her nearest kindred, for whom she could have slaved if necessary, to whom she might have become tenderly attached. She might go her own way, provided it was a reasonably honest way, and follow such more or less harmless pursuits as were open to her, without even her own father's attending much or caring greatly. But the bitterness was far below the surface, deep down in Lizzie's rather proud and reserved heart, which she instinctively masked under a frank manner. The grievance was hardly acknowledged even to herself, in the wholesomeness and fidelity of her nature.

Lizzie worked quietly in her own room, occupying herself with some of her multitude of girlish occupations, netting with the help of a netting stirrup, knotting by means of a small ivory shuttle, drawing from and transferring engravings, copying sheets of music, writing extracts from the book that she was reading in her extract book. Her room was not too large or luxurious, but it was not the garret assigned to a Cinderella. Lizzie herself was perfectly satisfied with her quarters, nay, had she a private opinion after she had embellished her white dimity bed with a quilt of her own patching, and furnished the chimney-piece with a row of small-headed, huge-skirted, brilliantly-tinted "fan ladies," that the chamber was not only the abode of maidenly neatness and comfort, there was not a prettier room in Logie.

When the dinner-bell rang, Lizzie went sedately to the dining-room—a plain, almost gloomy, room, with the materials of its furniture strictly confined to mahogany and horse-hair. There she found her father already seated at the foot of the table, and her step-mother in the armchair opposite to him, and Lizzie was rewarded for her tact in not thrusting herself forward by a hearty, "Here you are, my lassie," from the Captain, and a cooler, but friendly enough, "Come away to your seat, Lizzie," from Mrs. Lindesay.

The party consisted only of these three. Dinner and supper were the two meals in the house which, by the master's ordinance, were kept free from the invasion of the children. Hill did not sit in his mother's lap, his moon face, comically like hers, surrounded by the stiff lace border of a stiff lace cap, in which loops of narrow white riband were thickly inserted. For it was held dangerous, well-nigh improper, to expose a baby's or small child's bald or slightly-thatched head to the gazer's eye, while the creature was still young. Geordie and Michael (pronounced "Mickle") did not push forward on each side of their maternal parent, seize whatever article of food or piece of the table equipage was within their reach, and clamour for a share in any delicacy unfit for their tender digestion—which, after all, partook of the infantine capacity of ostriches and cormorants. Captain Lindesay would have come down like a lion on any man or woman who offended against the rules of good behaviour at table, but he did not condescend to find fault with the children, who were their mother's property till they

were sent to the parish school. He did not even stipulate for the little boys being on good behaviour in his presence; he was content with banishing them to their nurse during dinner and supper, when the last was earlier than the boys' hour for going to bed, dinner and supper being the meals *de rigueur* of the day. Accordingly, the Captain could carve his mutton and sip his Edinburgh ale to his cheese in peace.

Captain Lindesay had been a smart as well as a brave soldier, and was still carefully scrubbed and shaven and brushed to the last thread of the faded uniform which continued his daily wear.

Mrs. Lindesay was not so nice in her every-day toilet as her elderly husband showed himself in his. She was both tawdry and slovenly. Her slippers were down at heel. The crape neckerchief, rolled up like a rope, and slung round her ample bare shoulders—for there was no middle ground then between the morning wrapper and the low-cut bodice alike for afternoon and evening wear—was soiled and crumpled. The turban cap looked as if the wearer had not forborne, on account of the purple gauze and Persian silk employed in the fabric's construction, to indulge in one of the many naps to which she was constitutionally prone, which she claimed as the refreshment due after her maternal toils and cares. The wiry ringlets beneath the cap, of a dullish yellow in colour, like the lady's eyebrows and eyelashes, were not merely out of curl, they were sufficiently rough to warrant a suspicion that the last combing and brushing which they had received had been of the most perfunctory description.

Few traces survived of Mrs. Lindesay's having been a garrison belle in another town, not so many years before, when she had been quite willing to vacate the post of honour in order to secure the rank of a matron even by the side of a mature mate and with a girl in her teens for a step-daughter. Mrs. Lindesay's chief remaining claim to personal attractions rested on a sort of languishing feminine elegance, much in vogue about this period. The elegance had charmed, and continued to charm, the auld Captain, whose mental definition of a fine woman had always been "an elegant female." In this light probably the absence of the scrupulous neatness which distinguished his own attire from that of his wife,

was, when coupled with certain pretensions to gentle breeding, regarded by him as that "sweet neglect" which pleased the poet better than the trimness of art.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY THAT WAS GOING THE ROUND OF THE TOWN.

MRS. LINDESAY leant back at ease in her chair, waited for the Captain to press her to have her plate replenished, blinked her slightly weak light blue eyes, and asked with the suspicion of a yawn: "Anything going on to-day, Mickle?"

"Nothing that I know of, my dear," answered the Captain, "beyond the unaccountable fact that the 10th has been ordered to Barbadoes—to Barbadoes! Why, it has just come back from Madras. It ought not to have been sent to any Indy of them for the next dozen years."

"Very hard upon the officers' wives, I dare say," said Mrs. Lindesay, who looked as if she had taken good care life had never been hard upon her.

"I remember," began the Captain, unbending so far from his military precision in preserving the perpendicular, as to get relief to the rheumatic ache in what had been his worst wounded shoulder, by supporting one arm for a moment across the back of his chair, "when we had been on active service in America so long in the nineties, and were looking forward to a little rest, we had no sooner touched British ground than we were ordered straight off to Egypt to meet the French there. That was when Abercrummie proved more than a match for Buoney, though it cost poor Sir Raaf his life."

"When the dead Douglas won the field," quoted Lizzie, half below her breath, pricking her ears and looking up at her father with sparkling steel-blue eyes, for she expected him to tell one of the stories of his campaigns, which she never heard without feeling in her throbbing heart that she was a soldier's daughter.

But Mrs. Lindesay was a soldier's daughter of another stamp, just as her apathetic China blue eyes were of a totally different shade and had altogether another expression from the quickly-kindling orbs of Lizzie and the Captain. "I did not mean public news, Mickle," his wife interrupted him

more quickly than usual; "I wondered whether there was anything happening in the town. And what did you say about the Douglases, Lizzie? Has Miss Ceecil come down from Perth?"

After Mrs. Lindesay was satisfied that the two Douglases referred to bore no relation to each other, Captain Lindesay, like the gentleman he was, quietly deferred to his wife's hint, dropping without a protest his reminiscence of the great wars, to Lizzie's covert disappointment. "I don't know that I gathered anything very new in the ongoings of the Logie folk, Anna," he said, in a tone of good-humoured banter. "You cannot expect a wedding, or a funeral, or an election, or even a roup of a dyvour's goods, ilka day."

The Christian name here was in accordance with the fashion which had transformed the simple stateliness of Anne and Elizabeth into the showy sentimentality and slip-shod finery of Anna and Eliza, and doted on the melodious grandeur of Matilda and Amelia. The Captain's tongue often stumbled at the Anna, and was tempted to merge it into the familiar kindliness of Annie. But he abstained, for he knew that his wife liked her proper name; besides, did it not belong to her individuality as "an elegant female"?

One of several good qualities belonging to Anna or Mrs. Lindesay was that she was seldom or ever cross. She was too fat and sleepy-headed for chronic ill-humour; she entered into her husband's joke. "I'm sure, sir, you might make events to please your wife, if they do not occur in the order of the day. But did you not see the Provost's leddy or Mrs. Hugh Webster? Mrs. Hugh was to ride in about the cutting out of a gown, to Jenny Stark's, the day."

"My father could not have seen Mrs. Hugh, ma'am," interrupted Lizzie. She always addressed her stepmother as ma'am. The girl was expected to do so, as a mark of fitting respect. "Mrs. Hugh has changed her mind, and is not to have her Norwich crape made up just now. Jenny's niece, Maggie, told me this morning, when I stepped in to ask when she could come here."

"I'm not sure that I'm ready for her yet, Lizzie," said Mrs. Lindesay, with a shade of dryness as at a slight liberty taken with her future arrangements. "I have not altogether fixed on the check for the boys' kirseckies" (pinafores), "and I want a new pattern for little Hill's pelisse. I'm sick

of Jenny Stark's bairns' pelisses. I could not sleep last night for thinking what I was to do to find something that would set off the lamb," complained Hill's mother, a little plaintively. "I wish you had more ingenuity, Lizzie, and were a little less brodent on books than on your needle."

"I'll be happy to do my best, ma'am," Lizzie pledged herself, not without a trifle of restraint, when she thought of the time, trouble, and expense that were lavished on the lamb's toilet, contrasted with the moderate money and care that were judged sufficient for hers—Lizzie's.

"If I were you, my love, I would not plague myself about such a trifle as the laddies' clothes," said the Captain, soothingly. "It is very natural and nice of you to wish them to appear to advantage; but think how precious their mother's health is, and that she is not over strong. It is only a good night's sleep that can preserve either strength or good looks in man or woman."

"Oh, I'm not minding so much as that comes to, Mickle," Mrs. Lindesay had the grace to admit. "I would not be such a fule. But the laddies are perfect pictures of laddies, every one, and you know you like to see them look their best."

"As I like to see their mother," said the Captain, gallantly, with a little bend of his ramrod of a back. "By the bye, I did hear a story which may divert you women. You ken what a work Dick Cunnings * has with his mother,—as much as you, Anna, with the laddies,—and that though he may vex her with late hours and idle company, he thinks there is not a match to the proud auld leddy in the town. For that matter, Dick is as proud as a peacock on his own account—a silly upsetting chield who should know better, since he's a bachelor who will never see forty again. But that is neither here nor there. He was one of a company drinking a glass in the Star Tavern, which, as you ken, commands the back of the Cunnings' house in the Barn Wynd. What should that mischievous rascal, Andrew Bonthron, do, but cry out that he saw in at the pantry window and spied auld Mrs. Cunnings with one of her silver spoons creaming a dish of milk for the tea. Sure enough when the party looked up there was Mrs. Cunnings, honest woman, properly and composedly engaged, totally unaware of the dozen of een glowering at her operations.

* Scotch corruption of Cunningham.

"'What will you wager, Dick,' asked that sorry Andrew, 'that your mother does not lick the spoon when she has finished?' Dick stormed at the bare idea. His mother was a leddy out and out, and though she condescended to housewifely cares, no servant lass's trick was to be looked for from her. 'But you'll not wager,' pressed Andrew. 'Me wager!' exclaimed Dick; 'I'll bode the whole set of you the best dinner the Crown Inn can provide, if my mother demean herself as you even her to—but you know no better. I tell you she never licked a spoon save in seasoning broth or tasting a cordial which she was brewing, in the whole course of her life.'

"There was dead silence while the party watched like gleds their unsuspecting victim. Then the silence was broken by a roar when the good auld leddy licked the spoon as innocently and naturally as if she had been her cat or a little lass escaped from her gouvernante. The next moment she drew herself up and stared round, startled and bewildered, for the shout from the Star Tavern had pierced through stone and lime and was ringing in her ears."

The Captain's bit of gossip, which was circulating merrily in the town, did not fail to divert his audience, though Mrs. Lindesay demurred at the chief point of the tale. "Never! Mickle. Mrs. Cunningham could never have been guilty of licking a spoon, or if she has, and it has been found out, she may cease to brag of being kin to Sir William Cunningham."

With the nuts and apples came the invasion of the Goths in the persons of Geordie, Mickle, and little Hill—yellow-haired, apple-faced, large-limbed laddies for their years, struggling out of their coats and hose and petticoats, tearing themselves free from an overborne maid-servant, and launching themselves on an adoring mother. Geordie and Mickle snatched at the nuts and quarrelled over them, and Hill howled because the exigencies of life forbade his putting a whole apple into his mouth at once. When the first turmoil subsided and peace was restored for a space, the Captain questioned Geordie, bribed to stand restively for a few moments between his father's knees, as to what his morning's "plays" had been, and where he had been taken to walk.

Geordie was induced to give an account, in highly-pitched treble, of his feats at "bools," and where Peggy had led her

charge's refractory steps. He was frequently flatly contradicted by Mickle, whose suit of clothes was a curious link between Hill's frock and Geordie's breeches—Mickle wore the nether garments common to man and boy, but they merged amphibiously into a girl's and child's bodice, low-necked and short-sleeved. Mickle could not speak plainly, but he enunciated with a vigour that left no room for doubt where the speaker's meaning was concerned. "Thath a lee, thath a muckle lee." In vain the Captain tried to silence the sturdy protest with a "Whisht, Mickle, that's ill-mannered—you should not interrupt and contradict your elder brother. Gentlemen do not speak of leeing." Mickle only vociferated his accusation with more resolute determination.

There was a third monotonous accompaniment of "Da-da, ba-ba, da-da," kept up continuously by Hill as the text in an unknown tongue to the musical performance of a spoon drummed on the mahogany table. His mother hailed the double achievement with rapture. "Go on, pet. Is he singing his dear little song to mamma and papa? Do it again, lovie. Will you listen to him, Mickle? He says 'Da-da' as plain as if he were his own grandfather. Bless my Hill."

At last, when the children had worn themselves out, and the Captain's head was aching slightly, he remembered his daughter. "And what have you been about, Lizzie, my lass? Something useful, I hope? Helping your mother, eh? Surely not content with holding a novel" (the Captain pronounced the word "nouvelle") "in your hand or a lap-dug on your knee?" These signs of woeful degeneracy were the Captain's two bug-bears, where young women were concerned. He was willing to let his wife read novels if she liked, but they were not for Lizzie. As for the "lap-dug," he might have withheld the allusion, since there was not room for a fourfooted favourite in the house. Lizzie's chief acquaintance with dogs was through Adam Lauder's hounds, and M. Raoul de Saye, the French emigrant fencing and dancing-master's all-accomplished poodle.

Lizzie's step-mother volunteered her careless, patronizing testimony to Lizzie's freedom from the deadly offences referred to. "Oh, no, Lizzie would not think of such nonsense; she is never behind when I wish her assistance, but I can manage very well by myself with the help of the servants. A young

lady has her own engagements and resources. She should be keeping up her accomplishments and improving her mind, if she has nothing else to take up her time. I mind when I was drawing the globes and making my fruit piece I did not know where to turn, I was so busy; and once when some English officers would have us girls learn archery, I had to be at the butts from morning to night, besides helping with my brother Willie's outfit and preparing for the archery ball."

"You should thank your mother for sparing you, Lizzie, to make the best of your fine opportunities," said the Captain, in perfect good faith.

Lizzie signified that she was grateful, and modestly mentioned some of her recent occupations in order to vindicate her character. She did not stop to remind her listeners that there was neither archery practice nor an archery ball at Logie to cause the hours to speed swiftly; in short, that whatever its claims to liveliness, and nobody found it dull in that generation, it was not a garrison town. On the other hand, when Lizzie had been anxious for French lessons, which M. de Saye, though he did not usually teach languages, was willing to impart at a low figure, the Captain had instantly negatived the proposal as a needless waste of her time and his half-pay.

Neither Captain nor Mrs. Lindesay sympathized to any extent with a girl's pursuits. They were foreign to the Captain, and Mrs. Lindesay had renounced them when she became a matron, and had a house to keep, servants to order, and children to hang all over her. The couple listened languidly and with wandering attention, only brightening a little when Lizzie asked if she might go in next door, see what Mrs. Mally Corstorphine was about, and take tea with her, if Mrs. Mally was agreeable.

"Ay, do," said the Captain. "I'm afraid we neglect the auld leddy."

"That would be a pity," said Mrs. Lindesay, with rather more animation than she was accustomed to display on any subject, save herself and the children. "Make my compliments to Mrs. Mally, Lizzie. Say I'm coming to pay her a long visit the very first day the Captain and children can do without me."

Lizzie's soft red cheeks grew redder as she left the room. The increase of colour was not induced by any fault she had

to find with her step-mother's last speech, but arose from a different source of provocation. "Mrs. Mally has always been very kind to me," the girl said to herself as she mounted the stair to her room. "But I don't want to count on her favours either for me or anybody belonging to me. It sounds mean, and it *is* mean, even though it be only the privilege of borrowing some of her old lace for patterns."

CHAPTER V.

MRS. MALLY CORSTORPHINE, WITH THE AFFAIRS AND CUSTOMS OF THE CROWN INN.

OLD-FASHIONED inns have only a comparative relation to the present places of entertainment for man and beast. At the time when Lizzie Lindesay lived, inns had changed, and they were to change still further. But as yet taverns had not degenerated into mere ale-houses. The former were still freely frequented—if not by great scholars like Dr. Johnson, by respectable members of the upper middle-classes. Many bargains were transacted, and clubs held in taverns, which, retaining much of their earlier footing, freed the inns from numerous clients that had nothing to do with *bonâ fide* travellers and their wants. Thus inns were reserved mainly for travellers and for visitors to the town, flocking in on the occasion of any unusual festivity. Temporary residents found comfortable board and lodging in such hospitable old-fashioned quarters, which really fulfilled the often halting promise of modern "family hotels," long before the continental terms *table d'hôte* and *pension* had been used in this country.

It is said that so recently as the reigns of the First and the Second Charles there were English inn-keepers who wrote "gentleman" after their name with greater warrant than nine-tenths of modern esquires can furnish for their assumption of the title of honour. In some cases, particularly in remote districts, the calling was in a degree hereditary, and descended from father to son, or it might be from mother to daughter. It had been so with the Corstorphines of the Crown Inn, the principal inn in Logie, which was now in the hands of a woman, the last of her line. If in the interval

the family had ever abated a jot of their gentility, it had been vindicated by Mrs. Mally, a high-spirited old lady, who, like Miss Katie Ochiltree, was an acknowledged, if somewhat eccentric, gentlewoman.

Mrs. Mally, with her staff of servants and couple of vicegerents in the shape of an elderly chamber and barmaid, and an elderly hostler, managed the establishment with success and credit, while its mistress visited the best of the townspeople. Nay, the Melvilles of Balmayne not only admitted Mrs Mally to some degree of social equality—the sole terms on which she would have consented to know the family as a private individual—they owned a remote tie of consanguinity between the laird and the inn-keeper. No doubt Mrs. Mally's claims received a certain help from several accidents of fortune. She was a woman of substance, who had no near relatives. Her only brother "Lowrie," who had early relinquished the inn in her favour in order to indulge a taste for roving and an ambition that rose higher than the proprietorship of so many pairs of horses, so many post-chaises, an unusual number of furnished rooms, and a well-filled larder, had gone abroad and thriven till he died Governor of one of the smaller of the West Indian islands. Having remained a bachelor, he had bequeathed his fortune to swell that of Mrs. Mally.

There were many reminiscences of "Governor Lowrie" lingering about the Crown Inn, in the shape of Dutch work in stamped and gilt leather, native work in bits of wrought silver and ivory, and such spices as the Queen of Sheba brought to King Solomon. These tokens lent an amount of verisimilitude to the marvellous tales of the late governor's power and grandeur, devoutly believed in Logie.

Lizzie Lindesay did not go through the ceremony of putting on a hat and gloves in order to step across the pavement from one door to the other. She passed the quiet, orderly bar, the quiet of which was not often disturbed, save on stated occasions, such as the arrival of the coaches and the advent of strangers come to stay at the Crown. She tarried a moment to receive the kindly, respectful greetings of some of the elder servants, who had known her since she was a child. "Is this you, Miss Lindesay? The mistress will be glad to see you." "How is the auld Captain, and how are Mrs. Lindesay and the bits o' bairns?"

These men and women were very much fixtures at the inn, since Mrs. Mally, though a strict, was a liberal mistress to a good servant, and the place implied perquisites in proportion to its work.

"How are you the day, Christie, and how is your lame horse?" she inquired in return of one old acquaintance. "I'm glad your toothache is better, Merrin," she said to another.

Lizzie did not need to be shown the way to Mrs. Mally's sitting-room. She knew every twist and turn, every step up and step down of the old house, including the short passage leading to the two small rooms which M. de Saye had first used for several weeks at a time, and then come to occupy permanently, so that they were set apart for him. His fencing rapiers and violins in their sheaths and cases hung in imposing array on the wall just outside the door of the first of his rooms.

There was an ante-room to Mrs. Mally's parlour, surrounded by cupboards with glass doors filled with old china and glass. The cupboards themselves presented a fine contrast of dark mahogany and bright brass; keeping them company was a great oaken chest black with age. Both panels of the chest were carved with armorial bearings in high relief, and the whole was entitled to be transmitted to succeeding generations as a work of solid art. Beyond, lay Mrs. Mally's sanctum. The walls and roof were painted a dead white, which not all Mrs. Mally's care could prevent from yellowing and getting a little smoked and dingy, before their re-painting every third spring. The furniture, though well-kept, was old and worn, the carpet and the scanty lemon-coloured hangings faded. But unless in the height of summer there was always a large fire in the grate in the corner, on one side of which stood Mrs. Mally's spinning-wheel, on the other her brass-mounted escritoire, with her family Bible and her cookery book on its shelf. There were, as invariably, growing plants in the window, myrtles and hydrangeas, and out-of-date, seldom-flowering geraniums. They were carefully tended, and though not particularly gay or luxuriant, they lived on from year to year and were looked on as old friends. Above the flower-stand hung a couple of cages with green and yellow birds, the descendants of the paroquets and Java sparrows sent home by Governor Lowrie. There were more

birds stuffed, in cases, like cases of jewels, where the treasures were humming-birds no bigger than butterflies. The china in the room consisted of several large Oriental bowls, which, when they were not used as beau-pots for cut flowers, were tilted over, on their faces, and stood in a row beneath the sideboard during three seasons of the year, and on the hearthrug during the fourth.

Altogether, Mrs. Mally's room was as pleasant and cheery as the heart of a solitary elderly woman could desire. Mrs. Mally was not always cheery in it. She had to bear the burden of the inn, which she could not consent to resign before her time into other hands than those of a Corstorphine —perhaps into needy, dishonest, or vicious hands, that would conduct the business in a very different way from that in which it had hitherto been maintained. Mrs. Mally had also endured terrible trials of her own. She kept a heart above them all, so far as the world was concerned, and never showed a dejected face, or what was called in her old Scotch "a doon mouth," in public. But when she was caught sitting alone, as Lizzie Lindesay now found her, the mistress of the Crown Inn sometimes presented a bent head and a cloudy brow. Mrs. Mally rose up as Lizzie entered, a tall, sallow, gaunt, elderly woman in a gown of the sombre hue named bottle-green, a black *mode* tippet, black mittens, and in place of a lace cap a high "hair cap," or helmet-like head-dress composed of piled-up curls of coal-black hair, which added a yet sallower and more lantern-jawed cast of countenance to the wearer.

Yet Mrs. Mally might once have been a handsome woman on a grand scale—tall, broad-shouldered, with a Roman nose, a massive chin, and well-opened dark grey eyes, even though, like Oliver Cromwell, her face was distinguished by a conspicuous wart. Mrs. Mally's wart was where her cheek merged into her chin, and as she grew older the wart bore a distinct tuft of black hair. It always seemed to Lizzie Lindesay that this tuft bristled when Mrs. Mally was angry. There was a tradition of Mrs. Mally as a perfect young amazon, when on a journey of life and death, on a dark stormy night, just as there had chanced to be a great pull on the resources of the inn, a lagging postilion was not to be found, and she mounted into his vacant seat, mastered his refractory horses, and drove them a dozen miles to save an heir from being unjustly disinherited,

and a miserable deluded old man from dying with a curse instead of a blessing upon his lips. Tradition further reported that the reinstated heir laid his recovered lands at Mrs. Mally's feet, but she would have none of them. In those days she had not hesitated to enter the dining-room of her inn, put a stop to orgies of which she did not approve, and turn the amazed and incredulous revellers out of doors.

"Come awa', lassie, I'm very glad to see you," said Mrs. Mally, with a sincerity of deep-toned welcome which could not be doubted, "but as I've been fule enough to yield to idleset and dreams this afternoon, ye maun gang to the window and try what ye can see to amuse you, or ye maun divert yoursel' with the birds for a space, till I've done what I should have attended to an hour syne."

The truth was Mrs. Mally had some important duties on her conscience which she could not remit to a more convenient season even to enjoy the pleasure of Lizzie Lindesay's company.

While Lizzie amused herself with her usual resource, the window, which would have offered so little to a stranger, but to a townswoman supplied a vista of never-failing alluring incidents and significant details, the landlady of the Crown Inn sat down to her desk and studied a ledger previous to making out an account, and this with characteristic steadiness and despatch. Then she rang the bell at her elbow, giving a sharp, imperative pull to summon first one and then another of her functionaries to her presence.

"Merrin," said Mrs. Mally, addressing the well-intentioned but rather thick-headed elderly chambermaid, who wore an amply frilled "mutch" and an apron reaching to her feet, "what's this I hear of the papers in Moshie's room being disturbed, and his dogue affronted?"

"Weel, mem," said Merrin, with a shade of sulkiness, "Moshie maks a perfect writer's office of his rooms at times, and if a woman is to red up after him, it canna be thocht that she's to gather ilka scrap that has fallen from his pen and lay it doon again just where she took it up. What for suld he hae sic a trade wi' papers, a French dancing-maister, wi' a wheen accounts that he can send in when they're due and be overpaid by the gentry that have a troke with the like o' him, when mony an honest Scotch working-man has to lie weeks out o' his hard-earned wages? As for Moshie's beast

o' a dug, it's a clean shame to hae a brute made a fule o', set up to haud a fiddle-stick and wear a cap like its maister, even if ane was assured the vermin was a-thegither canny."

It was clear that Merrin was a staunch patriot with a dash of superstition under her rank prejudices. But Mrs. Mally permitted no questioning of her will. "I would have you to ken, Merrin Montgaw," she said, still more severely, "that Moshie de Saye is a gentleman and is to be treated as such, at least as long as he's beneath my roof. He may have his freits about papers and dogues like other gentlemen, gude and weel. They are no business of yours, or of mine either for that matter, and it is for you and me to defer to them. Moshie's papers are not to be touched when he says they are to lie still, and his dogue is to be let alane. What garred ye be sae cruel as to tie a dustpan to the dumb thing's tail?"

"Just to mak' her keep to her ain quarters, and no push her muckle nose into my closet," said Merrin, with a show of defiance; "and if Moshie's room is to be dusted without lifting his papers, I wish you would try your hand at it yoursel', Mistress Mally."

"Maybe I will," said Mrs. Mally coolly, "or I can find another who will do my bidding; though I would not like to part wi' an auld friend and gude servant for a cantrip."

"Then the pairting sall not be on my head, mem," said Merrin, quickly restored to her right mind. "No, though I suld hae to pike among Moshie's papers as gin they were egg-shells. I didna mean to complain o' Moshie, though he is a landlouper. It's no a'thegither his faut, I suppose, that he suld be wyted for't. I will say this for him, he keeps himsel' to himsel', and gies no trouble that he can help. Nane can deny he's forwarder wi' his shillings, however lichtly they may be come by, than mony a richer billie is wi' his bawbees. That's true, though Moshie's auld blue coat is threadbare, and his pumps worn to the banes, and he would have lived mony a day on lavrocks, gin ye would have let him."

"Weel, Merrin, I'm glad to find ye ken a gentleman when ye see him, and hae come to your senses so as no to be aboon humouring his wheens," said Mrs. Mally, with dignity. "Now, send me Baldie," naming the youngest stable-boy.

If Merrin's reflections had received audible expression when she left the room, she would have been heard to say, "It beats a' for her haud by the French!"

Baldie, naturally shame-faced, and still further depressed by a sense of guilt, looked overgrown and hulking in his corduroys, as he was forced to face his mistress. "Baldie Gillespie, I hae it on gude authority," began that awful woman, "that you have been found pappin' wi' that gun again. I'll pap you! Ye'll never rest till you have blown somebody's brains out and been ta'en up for murder."

"It was only at the sprogues," replied Baldie, feebly, "and there was na even shot in the gun, jist some bits o' stanes, and the sound to fleg them."

"You'll let alane that gun—it's no' yours in the first place —and I dare ye to lay hands on't till ye've come to mature years, or you'll quit the premises. I've your mother to answer to—a weedy-woman, sair bested wi' a handfu' like you—but if she doesna chuse to be quit o' you that gate, she shall not have to lay the mischance at my door."

CHAPTER VI.

A CHILD'S MINIATURE.

At last Mrs. Mally was at liberty to close her desk and come round from her seat of office to the white dimity-covered easy-chair by the hearth, where Lizzie joined her.

"The fire is still the best flower in the garden when the evening draws on, Mistress Mally," said the girl, gazing with bright eyes into the glowing embers.

"Say you sae, Lizzie," replied Mrs. Mally, with a suspicion of dreaminess stealing over the alert, capable face and bearing; "why it's the middle of March, in a fortnight it will be Aprile—Aprile, lassie, when the blackbirds are beginning to sing, and there are heaps of spinks and wall-flowers and daffondillies in the gardens. Surely the seasons are getting caulder than they were wont to be, or your blude is less easily stirred! I'm sure when I was young I would have scorned a fire long afore Aprile. To be sure I was up and doon, and oot and in twenty times in the hoor——" She changed the subject abruptly. "I saw the auld Captain pass, the day, twice; but I have not seen your stepmither

out. Is Mrs. Lindesay weel, and getting on with the new lass in the nursery?"

Mrs. Mally always called Mrs. Lindesay plainly Lizzie's stepmother. The truth was the truth, and did not, to hardy ears, suggest disparagement. Besides, Mrs. Mally had known Lizzie's mother, and had preferred Captain Lindesay's first to his second choice in matrimony.

Lizzie and Mrs. Mally had a cosy tea of buttered toast, home-made scones, choice preserves, "diet loaf," and short bread, the whole qualified by the most fragrant Bohea. If Lizzie had come in to supper the fare would have been equally unexceptionable, whether its chief *pièce de resistance* were a plate of trout, fresh caught from the Cart, a delicately-roasted chicken, or a superlatively-dressed dish of tripe. Where was good living, that is good eating and drinking, to be had, Mrs. Mally would have asked, with a shade of superciliousness, if not in an old inn? Mrs. Mally could have supped hare soup every day that the hare shooting lasted; she could have broken bun instead of ordinary bread from Christmas onward. She need not have sat in that little room on the second story, a match to the rooms occupied by the French dancing-master. She might have appropriated to herself, when it was not otherwise required, the spacious dining-room, or any one of the roomy parlours downstairs. There was no call for her to walk out like the other Logie ladies—she might have driven day after day for pleasure, as she did drive when she paid visits to her friends in the country, in the most comfortable of her yellow post-chaises. A woman of substance and influence, a woman who could command many a coveted indulgence was Mrs. Mally. It might be, however, that she had not grasped much that a woman holds dearest in the course of her life, that she had been piteously baffled and beaten in those relations which outweigh all others, and may be found safe and sure, strong and sweet to the end, in the lots of those who are in other respects the humblest and poorest of their kind.

Mrs. Mally was summoned to take the orders of a guest of consequence in the course of the evening. Lizzie, left again to divert herself, and warned by the growing dusk from the window, took to hovering over some miniatures which ornamented a side-table. She knew them all by

heart, yet they never failed to interest her, and they would serve to pass the time of Mrs. Mally's absence. There were old Mr. and Mrs. Corstorphine, Mrs. Mally's father and mother; the former blandly tapping a snuff-box, and wearing an ampler wig than was still worn; the latter in a close cap, which had an atmosphere of primness in its stiff lines that met and merged in a quilled ruff, standing up round the throat.

There was Governor Lowrie, like his sister in complexion and features, and resplendent in a red coat which might have belonged to his governor's rank or might have been a militia uniform.

But who was this? It was the likeness of a child in such a broad frill—which made the small neck look thinner and the round head too heavy for its pedestal—and such a little coat as Geordie Lindesay still wore. Lizzie had not seen the miniature before and was puzzled to name the original. It could not be Governor Lowrie in his early youth, for she had often heard Mrs. Mally say she possessed only one likeness of her brother. Besides, he had been dark-haired and dark-skinned as his sister was, and this represented a child of fair complexion with blue eyes and reddish hair, not very dissimilar to those of the small Lindesays.

"Oh, it must have been poor Lewie, when he was a boy," Lizzie suddenly came to the conclusion, though she had not known of the miniature. When she thought of it, she told herself it was stupid and careless to have forgotten in spite of the years between. This must be the month—probably the anniversary of the very day when Lewis Corstorphine had died. She remembered now that Mrs. Mally had looked dull and dazed on her entrance. Then the misfortunes of the woman old enough to be her grandmother came vividly before the girl's mind, until she sorrowed for them, as the woman herself had long ceased to sorrow, except at rare intervals.

Mrs. Mally in her loneliness had been both wife and mother in her day. She had been a young widow, in that most wretched of widowhoods, when she could not mention her late husband's name, which she had dropped, or openly shed a tear to his memory. Perhaps that was the reason why she had adopted a hair-cap, the compromise then of women who would not grow old. Yet Mrs. Mally was in

the habit of looking all the facts of life, including her age (between sixty and seventy), full in the face. But a cap of net or muslin, the remote reflection of the linen curch, had been the universal token of wifehood when she was young. She had put it on proudly and rejected it bitterly, and she never assumed a widow's cap. She had been left childless long before death had made her only son his prey. Though he had died in her arms at last, there had been such strife and alienation between them that here again Mrs. Mally's lips were sealed. Being a woman who was neither weak nor fickle, she had not the privilege of lamenting the lad who had disgraced not his father's but her father's name.

Lizzie had heard the whole melancholy story many a time from Captain Lindesay.

Mrs. Mally had married against the will, though not exactly under the ban, of her parents, and of all nationalities she had married a Frenchman. There were many refugees in the country at that date, scattered over the length and breadth of the land, and turning up in the most unexpected nooks. Mrs. Mally's fate was a young Norman, blue-eyed, and fair-skinned as if he had been Scotch or English. Whatever his rank had been at home, he was earning a precarious living as a miniature painter when Mrs. Mally first made his acquaintance, and he enjoyed free quarters at the Crown Inn, while he painted the very miniatures of the old innkeeper and his wife at which Lizzie had been looking.

The artist had done more than was bargained for. He had painted a third miniature, that of Mrs. Mally as a *jeune ingénue* in a white frock, simpering over a rose in her hand. It was a work which no painter with an eye to character or the smallest comprehension of Mrs. Mally's nature could have perpetrated, and the miniature had been put out of sight almost as soon as painted. For in triumphant vindication of the attraction of reverses, the radically unstable and vicious painter won the resolute, upright heart of the original, to the grief and mortification of his employers. She elected to quit her old home, with all its security and comfort, and go with the man of her choice—a stranger and an alien—to more or less certain poverty and hardship.

Mrs. Mally was absent for about a year, when she returned, penniless and alone, save for her baby, and with a mouth

for ever shut on her experience during these miserable twelve months, which had converted her from an eager, sanguine girl into a harsher, more austere woman than she was forty years later. She dropped her husband's surname, and brought up her little Lewis, with the consent of the father and mother, who had not refused to receive her and her child, as a Corstorphine. The prefix of the Mrs., which was beginning to be relinquished by maiden ladies, was all the vestige she retained of her matronly title. The man who had given it to her had not reappeared to molest her. In course of time the old couple died, and their daughter became mistress of the Crown Inn. Later on tidings reached Logie in an accidental round-about fashion, that Mrs. Mally's husband was certainly dead also. But she made no sign, and she so held herself in the stately comeliness of her prime, and the power of her independence and ample means, that no suitor save the grateful gentleman whose patrimony she had preserved to him, ventured to approach her. Him she dismissed civilly but decisively.

In her efforts to bring up her son to tread in the paths that a Corstorphine should follow, and to save him from the miry by-ways to which his father had been addicted, Mrs. Mally committed the capital mistake of drawing the bridle reins hard and tight on a neck which had her own refractoriness in addition to a share of the paternal folly. The result was what might have been expected. The boy grew up wild, and on the occasion of some youthful trespass, after which he would not face his mother, threw up his chances in life and enlisted as a "single" soldier in a marching regiment which had already got the rout from Logie, and was bound for the bloody fields of the Peninsula.

Stung to the quick, Mrs. Mally let her prodigal go. Thus there was a second name once familiar to her lips which passed them no more, as death stills some sounds for ever. Whether she ever scanned the newspapers when they were full of the news of battles, none—not even Merrin, who was then chambermaid at the Crown Inn—could tell.

Lewis Corstorphine did not prosper in the wars, though he really carried himself as bravely and was not much worse morally than many gentlemen who won distinction. But Lewis drew his more essential qualities on one side from a race which had never thriven either by strong self-denying

manhood or by honest industry. He had not even a sergeant's stripes on his arm when after ten years' service he got his discharge on the ground of ill-health; in point of fact, he was a dying man, and in his weakness and hopelessness he wandered back to Logie. He made no appeal in the first place to his mother. He had recourse to Captain Lindesay, who was already settled in the town, to whom every disbanded soldier went as naturally as a duck to water.

It was in the interregnum between the auld Captain's first and second marriages, when he was leading a somewhat forlorn and shiftless life with his little girl, and he acted with an impulsive rashness which either of his two wives, had they been to the front, would have interposed to qualify. He had absolutely nothing in common with Private Lewis Corstorphine; nay, the Captain having been so much older, and so long absent from Logie, had not even known the man in his better days. But Captain Lindesay was sorry for the fellow, who had fallen down in the world beyond remedy—above all for the soldier hardly past early manhood, whose campaigns were ended.

Captain Lindesay took Lewis Corstorphine into the Captain's house in spite of the awkwardness of its near neighbourhood to the Crown Inn, made no concealment of what he had done, and waited—not without trepidation, fire-eater as he had been—to see what would happen. It would have been a bold man who would have bearded Mrs. Mally on her own threshold and craved pity for her erring offspring. But in a small place like Logie Mrs. Mally was sure to learn who was so near her. Even if her eyes failed her and Lewis was so changed that she could not recognize her son, gossip would carry the truth to her ears; and surely the woman's heart would yearn when the very Bible had protested in wistful wondering doubt, "Can a mother forget her sucking child?" But Mrs. Mally remained passive.

Then what an old soldier who had never feared the enemy shrank from doing, a little child in her simplicity and trust dared to do. One of Lewis Corstorphine's redeeming traits—perhaps inherited from his little-worth father, certainly to be found in many of his countrymen—was his exquisite tenderness to children. He showed it to Lizzie, who straightway was devoted to him, next to her father. Her playmate, Lewie, was sick and sorry; and the small girl somehow

gathered it was because Mrs. Mally was angry, and would have nothing to say to him. Unprompted, saying nothing to others of what she was going to do, simply fired by zeal for her friend, Lizzie walked into the inn, asked for its mistress, and was shown by Merrin, who supposed the bairn had brought some message from her father, for the first time up to Mrs. Mally's room, which the girl was afterwards to know so well.

"What are you wanting with me, my little leddy?" inquired Mrs. Mally, interrupted at her accounts, and bending on the audacious intruder an impatient look from the piercing grey eyes under the dark brows.

All quivering with earnestness and excitement, which made her forget herself, Lizzie went straight up to the speaker's chair, took the occupant's hand, muscular for a woman's, in the soft small palm, and discharged her self-imposed mission. "Why will you not be friends with Lewie, Mrs. Mally? He is not bad now. He's sorry for what he has done—he will never do it again, and oh! he's so sick; neither my father nor the doctor can make him better, and nursey says he will be put into the big black hole before long. I would not be angry any more after I heard that, if I were you." Lizzie volunteered her sage, tender advice with grave simplicity.

Mrs. Mally sat transfixed, as pale as death. At last a thrill went over her face, her strong features began to work, and she smiled a faint, wavering smile. "Well, little Lizzie Lindesay," she slowly said, "since you have taken it upon you to interfere and mend matters, if you will bring him to me, and get him to say for himself what you've said for him, I'll see what I can do."

Lizzie was off like a shot, and by whatever spell the child worked her will, she was back again the next moment with Lewis Corstorphine staggering by her side. She brought him to his mother, and then Lizzie grew frightened at the faces of the two grown-up people, and turned and fled, never resting until she was in her own home in her father's room, with her face hidden on his knee.

The next time the small woman saw her big charge he was lying on the bed he had slept on when a boy, solaced by every care and comfort his mother could procure for him.

The recollection of that long past scene always filled Lizzie with a mixture of shame and gladness. "How could I take

it upon me?" she would ask herself. "I could not do it now. Oh, dear! was I a forward, impudent bairn? Yet I do not remember my father's checking me for meddling and speaking up to my elders, though he was far more particular with me than he is with the laddies. I had not a mother, and I was a lassie," she added by way of explanation, with a half sigh, half smile. "However, I'm pleased to this day that I got what I wanted. I've long known that though Mrs. Mally can speak sharply she has the truest of hearts, for she and I have been the best of friends since that day, though we've never spoken of what happened, and never will."

Mrs. Mally re-entered her parlour, and the waves of Lizzie's memory, which, unknown to her hostess, had rolled back and revealed a spot in the past, flowed over it again as if it had never been. No notice was taken of the miniature, and the talk was of the present and its ordinary yet engrossing concerns.

But before Lizzie left she had not only a loan of the lace she wished to borrow for a pattern, she had a gift of some *Valenciennes*, that was more precious than she guessed, forced upon her. For Lizzie was one of those girls who, while frankly exchanging friendly favours with her neighbours, always resisted their bestowal of larger bounties with genuine distress, as if these were beyond her deserts, so that her acceptance of them was to trespass on the goodness of the donors.

Mrs. Mally was of a different opinion. She called after Lizzie, when she was leaving, to remind her that not only Mrs. Mally's *Valenciennes*, "Valenceens" she called it, but a loan of her pearl "snaps" and ruby buckles, the Governor's gifts, at which Hay Melville was not above casting cat's eyes, was at Lizzie's service the next time she went into company.

"Oh! Mrs. Mally, it is very good of you, but the snaps and buckles are too grand for me wearing," protested Lizzie, in gratitude so deep that it approached discomfiture.

"I'm the best judge," said Mrs. Mally, oracularly. "It's nonsense I thocht enough o' aince on a day. They'll never be worn by me again, and if I think they set you and you set them, and like to see you wear them, wha's to say me nay?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE MELVILLES OF BALMAYNE IN GENERAL AND HAY IN PARTICULAR.—SOME OF THE WAIFS OF LOGIE TOWN.

LOGIE was never dull, as has been hinted, to any of its old inhabitants. There were country people around who thought the little provincial town the theatre of the most brilliant, unsettling gaiety. Notwithstanding this, Lizzie was confined to a great extent to the companionship of Hay Melville, of Balmayne. There was always some danger of such deficits—now at one, now at another stage of human existence. Population did not increase in proportion, one generation did not succeed another so quickly as to prevent these gaps and blanks.

There happened at this particular date to be no dearth of elderly men like Captain Lindesay, who might have had their rubber of whist quadrupled in excellent company every lawful day of the year. Elderly women, too, were not lacking; even slightly overblown or faded belles, married or single, of Mrs. Lindesay's standing, were fairly represented, so that she could have had her choice of dinners and suppers at which she might have figured, touching her glass with her lips at each toast, and becoming famous as the languishing promulgator of those flimsily eloquent "sentiments" which were the ladies' special contribution to the feasts. However, she preferred to earn the admiration and gratitude of Captain Lindesay, and establish the reputation of the most devoted of mothers, by yielding to her natural indolence and indulging in any amount of *dishabille* and nursery gossip.

But girls in their first youth in Lizzie's class were at this moment at a discount in Logie. And so, it is sad to say, were young men; with regard to whom the late wars had carried off some, and the revival of trade, still eddying in currents considerably beyond Logie, had allured away others of the enterprising sons of the place who sought to rise in the world, and secure at least a competence more speedily than they could hope to do in their native town. The flower of the masculine portion of society was, with a few exceptions, "a' wede awa'," and it looked as if the feminine portion thus forsaken had drooped and perished,

married out of their spheres, or sought by any fair means to be transported into more promising regions.

There was Mrs. Ochiltree's half-sister—young enough to be her daughter—who ought to have been another friend for Lizzie, but, as Lizzie complained a little piteously, the young lady did not stay with the minister's wife, as might have been expected, but preferred to board with an old aunt in Edinburgh.

Again, Adam Lauder would be the better of a sister living with him at Lauder Mills—all young men were the better of sisters till the brothers got wives, Lizzie reflected demurely, and with an unconscious strain of sardonicalness in the thought. But he had not one of the Miss Lauders—though there were enough and to spare, Lizzie believed, in the Berwickshire manse—above once in the year, for not more than a week at a time, on the occasion of the races, or when the yeomanry were called out; and there were visits to the course, reviews, and balls.

Miss Charlotte Pettigrew and Miss Sophia Bowers—everybody in Logie pronounced the Christian names Chawrlotte and Soph-y, with the emphasis on the *y*—the old Provost's daughter, and the sister of the banker, would not have been unwilling to bridge the chasm between them and a girl ten or twelve years their junior. But Lizzie had a craving for ardent inexperienced youth like her own, not for youth disillusionized and broken in, even when kept free from the tartness of disappointment, or the sharpness of envy.

Hay Melville was fated to be Lizzie's sole girl associate, just as they were "eildens" (of the same age). To be sure there was Jean Scott, of Burn Foot. But Jean was a poor farmer's daughter, though she had been in the same class at the parish school, and had been allowed to go to Monsieur de Saye to learn her "steps," for a knowledge of dancing was held absolutely essential to any woman aspiring to be even in the lower middle class. Yet Jean and Lizzie had to a great extent parted company. It might have been different if Jean's father had been one of the farmers who were able to keep their long rows of wheat stacks intact until war prices became famine prices, and there were bread riots all over the country. On the contrary, Jock Scott had been an impecunious man all his days, until now, when he was up in years, it was well known that his back was at the wall. His sons had to

be apprenticed to common trades. Mrs. Scott and Jean—the only daughter—had to do all the housework when the single servant was told off to be one of the workers in the farmer's fields. Jean, though she wore a riding-habit, and rode a pony into Logie, groomed the pony as often as not with her own hands, just as she fed the calves and the pigs; and carried, strung under her plaid, resting on her saddle, a basket with butter and eggs, to be sold or offered in exchange for groceries, at the shop where one of her brothers served behind the counter.

Lizzie did not like her early playfellow, Jean, one whit the less for doing her best to help her family, but the two, retaining the old goodwill, had slipped into merely casual intercourse.

If Jean Scott was several grades below, Hay Melville was a distinct step in the social ladder above Lizzie Lindesay. Hay was a laird's daughter, moreover she was an only child, and her father's estate of Balmayne was not entailed on heirs male, but would come to her in the course of nature. Hay was a prospective heiress of fair pretensions, for though Mr. Melville was not a great landed proprietor, neither was he the style of laird whose patrimony could be wittily defined as consisting of "a wee bit o' land, a lump o' debt, a doocot, and a law-suit." He was also a man of good family who commanded full entrance into a circle of country gentry outside the town of Logie, with its genteel society of professional men, half-pay officers, and widow and maiden ladies.

It was partly a matter of choice, partly of propinquity, and of a sort of social tradition, that the Balmayne family had always condescended to be on visiting terms with the town circle, while in another light the successive lairds and ladies reigned as kings and queens. The gates of Balmayne were no further off than the outskirts of Logie, so that Mr. Melville could saunter in his slippers over the "brig" and up the High-gate to look at the newspapers in the coffee-room, or ask the brief questions and make the monosyllabic replies, which stood for chatting with him, in the saddler's, tobacconist's, and bookseller's shops which he frequented. Mrs. Melville could trip in her pattens, when the road was muddy, or holding a parasol above her dress-cap when the weather was sunny, to have a consultation with Miss Stark, the dressmaker, whom the great lady honoured with her patronage;

to look in upon her remote kinswoman, Mrs. Mally Corstorphine, and inquire whether the Crown Inn had been served with fish that morning, for none had reached Balmayne, and the cook was in despair with a dinner-party impending, and not a cod or a haddie to be had for love or money; or to go as far as the manse, with a sovereign recipe for Mrs. Ochiltree's headaches.

As for Hay, she appeared at any hour of the day, in any kind of odd costume—the odder the better, as she had been hunting, or gardening, or hay-making, or in all but full dress, having gone on before on some errand of her own, careless of spoiling her kid slippers, or ruffling the short curls under her hood, before she intercepted the Balmayne carriage at the other end of the town on its way to some country dinner-party. No doubt the nearness to Logie was convenient when the weather was bad and time hung heavily on the family party. The despatch of a note by a servant was sure to procure, in less than half-an-hour, willing, gratified allies and satellites to play bowls or whist, to advise with Mrs. Melville on her carpet work, and Hay on her album, to play battledore and shuttlecock with Hay, or sit and listen to her whims and vagaries.

Mr. Melville was an exceedingly shy, gruff man, said to possess many hidden virtues which his shyness and gruffness kept well out of sight. An anecdote was told of him and Mrs. Melville, whom he must have wooed by latent affinity or proxy. When the couple were going to church in all the pomp and ceremony of the first Sunday after their marriage, as they alighted from their carriage at the entrance of the Kirk Wynd, too narrow to drive up, and proceeded to walk to the kirk-door, the observed of all observers, the bridegroom could not even then summon up confidence and courtesy sufficient to offer his arm in customary form to his newly-made wife.

"Are you not going to give me your arm, Andrew?" asked the mortified lady.

"Tak' it," was the agitated answer of the descendant of Queen Mary's major-domo.

Mrs. Melville made up in abundance of speech and graciousness for what her husband lacked, but she was no fool behind her flowing words and pleasantness. She was a clear-headed woman of the world, knowing perfectly well what she desired, and resolved to get it by any honest means.

Hay was Hay, the Logie enigma and sphinx, the fascinating combination of amiability and perversity, above all of inscrutability, which sometimes distances out of sight simple sweetness and goodness, and reasonable comprehensibility. The tantalizing enchanting puzzle extended to Hay's personal appearance, until it was the most perplexing question whether she was radiantly pretty or positively ugly, a circumstance which was rendered stranger still by the fact that her father and mother were undeniably a handsome pair. Perhaps the truth was that under certain influences Hay borrowed an intangible unapproachable beauty, and under others she fell back unsupported on her natural plainness. Her figure was perfect to those who can see perfection in miniature size. Her body was as daintily made and proportioned as one imagines the physical presence of a sylph or a fairy. She was by no means without dignity, as *le grand monarque* was dignified. She was piquant and *spirituelle*, always full of original wit, and sheer wilfulness, that ought to have exhausted the seemingly frail tabernacle, though the reverse was the case. She was wan to a blue-white, semi-transparency of skin, through which the veins shone, and thin to shadowiness, though her small bones prevented anything like boniness. All this was in spite of her healthy country life and her really elastic, wiry constitution. Her features were very irregular—the nose, as might have been expected, tilting upwards, the mouth at once thin-lipped and a little wide. Her white even teeth and bright hazel eyes redeemed her face from being literally without good points, for her hair was thin and sandy-coloured, and worn in a crop when the fashion was fast going out. With her slim shoulders, short locks, and the simple style of dress she was fond of, Hay Melville was often mistaken at a glance by strangers for a schoolgirl, a blunder out of which she had more than once made capital. She liked to go about in a schoolgirl's cloth frock and spencer, with a cottage bonnet and green veil to shade her eyes—those quick glancing eyes of hers which, oddly enough, like so many other odd things about her, were said to be weak, though they looked no more weak than a wild bird's eyes can be accused of blinking and dimness.

Hay Melville whisked into Logie the day after Lizzie Lindesay drank tea with Mrs. Mally, looked up at a particular window of Captain Lindesay's house, flourished a set of

three or four considerably thumbed little volumes in brown calf, and rather imperiously waved her handkerchief for Lizzie Lindesay to come down to her without delay.

Lizzie obeyed the summons nothing loth—not that she was not conscious of having to tread warily on dangerous ground with any one so entirely mistress of the situation, and so regardless of consequences as Miss Melville of Balmayne. But Lizzie had little to do—Hay was very amusing and likable in her way even to women—and Lizzie might ascertain when and where Adam Lauder and Hay had last "forgathered!" what had been the date and duration of his most recent visit to Balmayne. Again, let it be said it was not that Lizzie cared vitally either confessedly or unconfessedly, but she was exactly of the age, and in the circumstances, to have her maiden heart stirred by the first attractive young man who crossed her path and let her see that she was fair to him. So she told herself truly that she ought to know whether he was a universal "beau" and an inveterate flirt, by learning for herself, as far as she could, the state of matters between him and her single girl friend, when Lizzie was not by.

In general, Hay Melville was no more loth to talk of her admirers and her passages at arms with them, than of any other subject under the sun, on which her glib tongue lightly descended, touched with fine keen thrust and parry, and then flew off to some other topic, and treated it in like manner.

Whether Hay accosted Lizzie with a similar motive in the background, and was inclined to follow a parallel course, history deponeth not. Hay's first proposal was that Lizzie should accompany her to the circulating library to exchange a book. "I wish another, Lizzie, and I think you may help me to choose."

Lizzie modestly deprecated the idea that her opinion was of any consequence, while Hay broke in upon the protest to tell her companion that she had finished the work-bag she had been making. She had run out of gilt paper for her card-racks, she had written all the letters she could think of, she had quarrelled with everybody in the house twice over all round. She really did not know what to do with herself till she thought of a new book, and a skip in to Logie to get it. "And if Mrs. Boyd had nothing in I cared for,"

ended Hay, philosophically, "I might still catch you, or meet somebody, or see something to suit me."

The streets of Logie were as well known to Hay as to Lizzie. Hay also was acquainted with all the street characters. There was Mary Mettlie (Maitland), the "silly" woman who wandered about in her silliness, always taking the crown of the causeway and doggedly keeping it, standing up against the wall in her blue check gown, and compelling every passer-by who disputed precedence with her to walk round her. Peggy Peebles was less silly than Mary, for she was able to act as a water-carrier, but in her greater ability she was also more malicious and dangerous. Long Lethan was a tall, grey ne'er-do-weel, for ever hanging about the street corners, holding a horse for a dram, keeping body and soul together otherwise, nobody could very well tell how. There were two old women from the almshouses to be seen on certain days of the week with "pokes" or sacks on their backs half full of meal, "broke" or broken bread, meat and vegetables, going round to beg of their richer sisters doles and halfpence, mumbling to each other with their toothless jaws over the liberality or the penuriousness of this or that housewife among their patronesses. "Butter Eppie" and "Mushroom Bell" belonged to a better class of country women, hale and hearty in their snow-white mutches and long cloaks, who trudged in from small farms and villages, carrying clean, well-filled baskets, and offering their commodities, not only to shops, but to private families, who were regular customers and friends of many years' standing.

A very different specimen of her sex and station was a wretched, draggle-tailed creature, who carried a battered pail and "hawked" sand-stones and a kind of hearth-stone or "cawm," which kitchen-maids used for their stone floors and hearths. Rough-and-ready rustic humour dubbed her "the Coontess," both to her face and behind her back, and she accepted the title with stolid indifference. She had been nearer to wearing a coronet than ever was that aspirant to the Earldom of Crawford, whose fellow-masons called on him, in his proper style, to fetch them a hod of lime; and the "Coontess's" story had been yet more baleful and tragic than the "Yerl's." The two innocent girls whispered a scared reference to it as the haggard reprobate crossed their path, and her reckless black eyes flashed upon them for a

moment. A wild, dissolute young earl, the unworthy representative of one of Scotland's oldest and noblest houses, had many years before seen and entertained a passion for the "Coontess" when she was nothing better or worse than an utterly ignorant, vain, and crafty young beauty of the lowest type and rank in Logie. He had wooed and won her in his own evil fashion, when she had contrived to acquire such influence over him that, sunk as he was in debauchery and vice, deserted by his family and equals, with his health fast failing, he resolved to defy his aristocratic antecedents and marry the beautiful, coarse, cunning animal who knew how to rule him. The couple were actually proclaimed—that is, their banns were published—when his relations, taking alarm just in time, rallied round the victim of his passions, took him by surprise, got the better of him in his weak state of body and mind, and induced him to go with them. He fled like a rogue and vagabond from his castle in the dead of night, leaving his purpose of marriage unfulfilled. He crossed the seas to the foreign refuge prepared for him, where he died in the course of a few weeks.

The cheated, baffled woman, over whose wanton head a coronet had hung suspended for three fateful days, returned to her people among the dregs of the natives of Logie; she speedily squandered what plunder she had secured; and she drank to still her gnawing disappointment still more than her remorse. She sank lower and lower, till she became the squalid drudge and sport of the town. The "Coontess" was an awful living homily against vice in Logie.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW HAY MELVILLE AND LIZZIE LINDESAY SPENT THE AFTERNOON.

MISS MELVILLE of Balmayne was not above taking a look at the shop windows; accordingly she and Lizzie frequently loitered, and paused outright before Mr. Young's, the principal draper or "cloth merchant," with the sign of the golden lamb, and the guardian angel in the shape of the huge yellow and

white mongrel Oscar. The critics dwelt with lingering appreciation on the silk and woollen stuffs, the ribands and bonnets, which Mr. Young and his shopmen displayed in their windows. For as yet the grand gowns and pelisses, capes and pelerines, the mysteries of dressmaking and millinery, were kept in the jealously guarded recesses of Miss Stark's establishment, and were not exposed to the greedy gaze of the vulgar.

At last the pair reached Mrs. Boyd's little dark library, up two flights of stairs in a house in one of the wynds. Mrs. Boyd—a widow of advanced years and impaired faculties of motion and vision—in spite or because of her genteel calling, was guilty of taking snuff, which somehow appeared to make her still more hobbling and bleared than she would otherwise have been. She was fit for little else than gossip, which she imbibed and exuded diligently at every pore. She rose stiffly from her arm-chair to pay honour to Miss Melville, but immediately subsided into it again, doing no more of library business than consisted in receiving Hay's books in Mrs. Boyd's shaking mittened hands, depositing them with a show of care and precision on the table beside her, and sending her clients to ransack for themselves the shelves behind her. She offered neither assistance nor interruption, beyond plying her visitors with as many questions with regard to their family affairs—to be rewarded by unsolicited information with regard to the family affairs of the young ladies' neighbours—as she could contrive to squeeze into a limited space of time. What a "mangle-wife" was in a lower sphere, Mrs. Boyd was in a loftier region as a receiver and dispenser of news, domestic and social.

"Can you tell me when your uncle is expected at Balmayne, Miss Melville?" "Miss Lindesay, my dear, is it true that your mammaw has had a word with Dr. Hepburn about Mickle's buck tooth—on the doctor's having let it grow in unchallenged?" "Have either of you young ladies heard that as the military were beating the tatoo last nicht they frichted the horse of a gentleman stopping at the door of the Star? Can you give me the ins and outs of the story?"

The running fire was a commentary on the backs of 'Mungo Park's' and 'Bruce's Travels,' 'Young's Night Thoughts,' Tennant's 'Anster Fair,' 'Guy Mannering' and 'Rob Roy,' by the author of 'Waverley,' 'Pride and Prejudice,' 'Self-control,' 'The Children of the Abbey,' 'Cecilia,' &c., &c.

"I think I'll take 'Iwanowua, or the Maid of Moscow,' the name sounds interesting," said Hay.

"Oh, I'm sure it will be good after 'Thaddeus of Warsaw,'" agreed Lizzie, rashly. "I cannot get anything for myself, unless maybe this book on birds—my father does not like to see me with a story if I am not reading it out to Mrs. Lindesay. Mrs. Hugh Webster has lent her the 'Keepsake.' It is very pretty to look at, but I think it is not very nice to read." Lizzie uttered her censure with a good deal of deprecation. She had read and enjoyed Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Cowper, Burns, and the earlier of Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen's novels, but that did not seem to warrant her in setting herself up as a literary authority.

"Are you young leddies aware that there is a wild-beast show at the Saughs—come for the market next week?" Mrs. Boyd struck in afresh, as if she had not been doing her duty as a herald.

"Oh! is there? Thank you for telling us—we'll go and see if we can hear the lions' roar or get a glimpse of an ostrich's head, or an elephant's foot," cried the two girls in a breath, as they started in pursuit of the attraction.

On their way the friends saw on the opposite side of the street the cheery, portly presence of one of the Merry Andrews. He not only took off his hat and waved a salutation to them; he called in the mellow voice with which he sang many a good song, as if he were bestowing on them gallant encouragement, "Bound for conquest!"

"Then you are a runaway, Shirra," retorted Hay Melville, skipping half across the street to deliver her rejoinder. "You are feared to stay and speak with us."

"Feared out of my wits, Miss Melville. The writers would not see me the day if you were to give me a wag of your finger."

"Have you heard about Bowse and the Shirra playing hide-and-seek in his garden?" asked Lizzie, as the girls walked on. "You know Bowse, Hay?" referring to the Shirra's privileged bandy-legged man-servant thus nicknamed by the town.

"Do I know Bowse? Do I know my father and mother? Do I know the Shirra's crooked stick? What are you thinking of, Lizzie?" demanded Hay, impatiently.

"Well, never mind my stupidity. Bowse was weeding the

carrot and onion-bed when the Shirra slipped out. You know he has a light foot, and is a famous dancer, for as heavy a man as he is. He hid behind the pea-sticks and began to cry 'Bowse! Bowse!' thinking the man would suppose it was some of the scule bairns mocking his infirmity, as they are wont to do, from the other side of the wall, in the wynd. Bowse took no notice for a time. Then he lost his temper, raised himself on his hoe, glowered over his shoulder, and shouted back to his master, 'Ye auld idet, do you think I dinna ken it is you?'"

Miss Melville and Miss Lindesay made two grown-up people among nearly the whole of the bairns of Logie, to whom the great news had flown on the wings of the wind, gathering the small fry from all quarters to the green known as "The Saughs," just outside the town, to feast the eye on the sensational pictures decorating the yellow caravans, and the ear on the muttered thunder of lions' growls.

As the tidings spread the girls were kept in countenance by the arrival of more spectators of mature years eager to reconnoitre—for Logie Town dearly loved shows—till the sight-seers were supported by no less a person than the minister himself, come to see what was going on and report it to Mrs. Ochiltree over their three o'clock dinner.

Mr. Ochiltree walked back with Hay and Lizzie, and in the course of the walk he indulged, excellent and sensible man as he was, in the half-florid, half-humorous tone used at the time by men—especially married men—endowed by courtesy with fatherly rights over young ladies. To the former, the latter were uniformly the fair sex, fair friends or fair foes, to be complimented, rallied, played with, but rarely spoken sense to, as to reasonable creatures. Women had to wait for that distinction, as for the liberty of reading novels when they thought fit, till the girls were honoured and privileged matrons. The flattery and the banter, with the standing jests, had a strong matrimonial flavour. Marriage was the sole path in life then contemplated for women. To imagine they would miss it would have been the next thing to a gratuitous insult. Mr. Ochiltree congratulated himself on his good fortune, with formal pleasantry, on having two such lovely maidens to squire, wondered what had become of the swains who would have given their ears to be in his shoes, was sure his sons Aithur (Arthur) and Charlie would have walked home from

St. Andrews for the chance, wished he had been thirty or forty years younger, and innocently dreaded the jealousy of his wife when she heard how he had been favoured.

Hay interrupted him. "A terrible thing happened at Balmayne this morning; have you not heard, sir?"

"No, Miss Hay, what is it?" inquired the minister, off his guard, and relinquishing his high faluting on the instant.

"I had some thoughts, when I was in the library, of telling Miss Boyd myself, and so letting the tale go through the town, and being done with it."

"Pity me! Hay, what was it?" exclaimed Lizzie, in astonishment; "you've never breathed it to me, though we've been together the whole afternoon."

"I think I may be excused for not being very forward in retailing the incident, or accident—whatever you like to call it," explained Hay, with a twinkle in her hazel eyes. "Mr. Oliphant, of Burn Foot, had run short of provender for his beasts, so he sent over his son Steenie to get it from my father. Steenie, being a poetic, flute-playing, picture-taking young gentleman, full of his own fancies, was rather affronted, and far from in love with his prosaic errand. He sought to discharge it with as little trouble to himself, and in as few words as he could find. He took his horse, rode across the fields, and up the avenue, flung himself from his saddle, and stopped my father on his way to the kennel, saying, without drawing breath, 'Mr. Melville, I'm come to seek hay.'

"My father, taken by surprise, looked at the young gentleman, blown and disordered, and mistook his mission.

"My father drew his hands from his pockets, in emulation of Steenie. You know my father has never many words to spare himself, and he answered, with a wave in the direction of the house, 'Speer at herself, Mr. Steenie, you've my permission.' Poor Steenie, poor high-flown, sensitive youth!" cried Hay, quivering with laughter at the scene she had conjured up. "Think of his having to rectify my father's blunder, and make it plain to him that it was not his charming daughter for Steenie's self, but dried grass for Burn Foot's lean cattle, the gentleman had come after!"

The minister grinned, Lizzie tittered. Additional point was lent to the story, whether it were a fact or a hoax, by the circumstance well known in the circle that Balmayne—silent and hard to move as he showed himself—was still open to the

advantage of such a match between Steenie and Hay as Burn Foot and Mrs. Melville had laid their heads together to bring about. Only the young people, the principals in the proposed contract, hung back. Steenie cast sheep's eyes in a different quarter, and Hay was guilty of flirting, whenever she had the opportunity, with the dashing, dandy young fox-hunter and paper-maker.

"'Coming events cast their shadows before,'" quoted the minister slyly. "Doubtless young Burn Foot was only anticipated in his meaning."

"Deed no, Mr. Ochiltree," answered Hay, saucily, "if Steenie is such a tame slave as to go a wooing at his father's bidding, there are two at a bargain-making."

"What would you say, Lizzie, to our looking in on Moshie's class?" was Hay's next idle suggestion, after the girls had parted from the minister. "This is the day Moshie receives visitors, and he must be far advanced in his preparations for the ball."

Both Hay and Lizzie had been M. de Saye's pupils; naturally they retained the liveliest interest in the artistic performances over which he presided, which after many months of sedulous practice took the public by storm on the night of the dancing-school ball.

It may be mentioned that though Hay Melville gave the ordinary colloquial corruption of M. de Saye's title of respect, she was a fair French scholar, the acquisition of French, though the auld Captain had regarded it as unnecessary, being even more strenuously insisted upon then as a test of polite education in her class, than it is now.

But "Moshie" was one of the innumerable nicknames of Logie, like "The Emperor," applied to Adam Lauder's grasping, overbearing Uncle Simon, the true owner of the Lauder Mills. As a rule, these names were borrowed from contemporary history, from striking Biblical characters such as Noah and Moses, or from some personal peculiarity in the recipient, as in the case of "Bowse." Often the analogy was far fetched beyond recognition, still it tickled rustic ears and wits. Thus the imposing terms "The Emperor," "Tallyrand," —familiarly abbreviated into "Tally,"—"Solomon" were familiar sounds in Logie conversation. Of course Moshie had derived his sobriquet from his nationality.

CHAPTER IX.

M. RAOUL DE SAYE.

WHEN Hay Melville and Lizzie Lindesay walked into the old Town-hall, its mildewed walls garnished in the room of pictures with a few rusty swords and pistols, and tattered flags, beneath which the French dancing-master was suffered for a fee to the town's officer to introduce a large portion of the youth of the district into the mysteries of Moshie's art, the new-comers found the pupils engaged in marching in a variety of intricate figures. The dance was in reality a version of the *polonaise*, though in Logie it was simply called "marching." The performers forming a sliding scale of age and size—the girls in homely stuff frocks and tippets, the boys not unfrequently in much-enduring corduroys—glanced demurely out of the corners of their eyes at "the leddies," who were not any of their mothers, and yet thought Moshie's dancing-school worth looking in to see. No further demonstration than these sidelong glances was possible under Moshie, who certainly ruled his subjects absolutely, though it was the rule of natural authority and subtle influence rather than of a rod of iron, or even of his own fiddle-bow. Had it been otherwise, had Moshie been deficient in the genius of governing in a sense of the responsibility of power, and in a reverence for helplessness which rendered him at once the most autocratic, the fairest, and the most patient of teachers, the reverse would not have been borne at Logie. The long wars ending in Waterloo were too recent to make it safe for "paiks" to be administered to a Scotch bairn by a French dancing-master, even on the grossest provocation. It did not alter matters that Moshie had happened to be one of the crowd of refugee emigrants driven from their country by the earlier outbreaks of the revolution, and that he had no more thought of owning allegiance to England's arch-enemy Napoleon, now happily a prisoner at St. Helena, than any native of Logie dreamt of paying homage to the Sultan of Turkey or the Pope of Rome. But M. de Saye did not tax the forbearance of the hospitable country which had entertained him so long, though behind his back it made game of him.

Moshie was dignified enough to prevent his looking ridiculous even when he offered specimens of *chassés* and *entre chats*, dignified enough to hold in check the riotous temper and overflowing spirits of youth, kind and clever enough with his ready sympathy and his endlessly ingenious mechanical contrivances, mimic engines of war or of peace, miniature forts or farmyards, to win the unbounded confidence and admiration of the more promising of his juvenile satellites, the leaders of the rest. "Moshie could do anything" was implicitly believed of him by many of his scholars, and a lad or a lass had only to please him, which was not very difficult after all, just to mind what he or she had been told, and to be mannerly among the scholars' selves both behind backs and before folks, for the great man to be willing to reward the aspirants to his favour in the most generous manner with the fruit of his inventions and discoveries.

Moshie, a man a little over fifty, was not tall, but he was so spare that he looked taller than he really was, in his old-fashioned, scrupulously neat but threadbare French regimental coat, the copy of that he had worn on quitting France a grown man in the Eighties. He always wore a tight stock and knee-breeches. He was in the habit of covering his stockings, when he was out of doors, by the long riding-boots of a cavalry officer. Indeed, he had nearly as martial an air as that which distinguished the auld Captain. Moshie had also fought for his ungrateful country before she had rejected his services and those of his entire class, and he had accepted his rejection. He would never cease to repent that acceptance, for he and men like him had left France to her terrible fate, abandoned her to the blood of her own shedding, and the fire of her own kindling. He was five and twenty when he valued his life and freedom before the good of his country, as he put it bitterly, though he might only have helped her to the last gasp by suffering death at her hands, while he sought that his maddened murderers might have their eyes opened in the act of committing the crime. He was fifty now, separated from the irrevocable past by a long interval of time. If it had not alienated him in affection, absence had severed nearly every kindred and local tie. It had raised barriers which rendered it nearly impossible that he should ever recover the dropped links and resume his original history at the point where it had been broken off, and superseded by

a protracted experience of exile and adversity, in which social and political ambition had become a blank.

M. de Saye had supported himself for well-nigh thirty years honestly and indefatigably by such talents and acquirements as he possessed, for which he could find a field, like the larger proportion of his fellow-refugees. Of these, however, many had been able to return to France and reclaim what remained to them of property and rank on the restoration of Louis XVIII. But M. de Saye had not done so. He had continued to live in Scotland, and teach fencing and dancing for his livelihood, scorning nothing except to become a burden on any of his richer compatriots, or on some of the more benevolent and friendly inhabitants of the country of his adoption.

In the first days of that French exodus, the poor refugees of all ranks, but principally of the upper classes, had turned their hands to whatever they could do—the men for the most part teaching languages, fencing, or drawing; the women having recourse to embroidery and the manufacture of artificial flowers or flimsy drawing-room ornaments and toys, when the manufacturers could not compass mantua-making and millinery.

When M. de Saye drifted to Scotland on some vague historical recollection of ancient alliances between the French and the Scotch, and to Logie on some casual recommendation of the little town for its cheapness, he found the department of languages in the hands of a countryman, who, having children to support at an *emigré* school, was in still more crying need of pupils and fees. M. de Saye was an excellent fencer, and at first he confined his energies to that branch of education, but when he discovered that his fencing lessons did not bring him in sufficient money to supply his frugal wants, though he had reduced them to the lowest calculation, he was fain to remember that he was also an accomplished dancer. There could be no degradation in a gentleman dancing for his bread, when all else that was left for him to do was either to beg for it or to die, like an incapable coward, of starvation. Degradation! Dancing was a fine art, it was the poetry of motion. To do his best—even though he was compelled to take payment for the benefit—to diffuse the elementary laws of harmony and grace, of a high-toned bearing and a gentle deportment among a younger generation of

the people who had sheltered so many of his nation in their extremity, was not an altogether unworthy or unacceptable return for substantial favours.

M. de Saye, instead of wearing a wig, had his unpowdered hair—still black—combed straight back till it lay in waves on the nape of his neck. The beardless, olive face thus exposed was a fine one, of a clear, delicate, southern cut, with vestiges of the old Greek type in the straight nose and the curve of the chin. He must have been a handsome man of a refined cast in his youth. He was now, though a hale, active man, worn till his bones had a slightly skull and skeleton-like appearance.

Moshie, who had his kit in his hand, turned round on the opening of the door, and when he saw the girls, made one of the bows that had been in vogue at Versailles, when a country gentleman and officer, such as he was, could claim the privilege of hunting with his king and afterwards of bending low before the dazzling spectacle of Marie Antoinette coming down the Grand Staircase on her way to the chapel. "You do us honour, my young ladies," he said courteously, "but I am afraid you have mistaken the hour, we shall only have the marching now till we retire." He spoke very good English, better than that of most of the natives of Logie, though he retained a slight foreign accent, and a lingering French idiom. He did not offer to change his arrangements to suit dilatory visitors, and the impression he made even on Hay Melville, who was apt to remain undaunted in the most imposing presence, was to cause her to apologize for coming in at the end of the performance. As for Lizzie, she eagerly explained that they had not expected to see any of the beautiful "high dances or graceful figure dances," which were like scenes from fairy-land or an opera. She and Miss Melville would be more than satisfied to look on at the marching. Indeed, those skilfully-contrived and carefully-executed windings and meanderings, twistings and turnings, circles and mazes, half-moons and figure eights, of the soberly-attired little figures, who moved so lightly and quickly, without a breakdown, under Moshie's delicate spiriting, were in themselves pleasant to behold.

The Master of the Ceremonies made a second grand, grave bow, more general in its application and slighter in its generality than the first, as a sign that the lesson was over,

and that he dismissed both actors and spectators. The effect of his manner was that there was less of a noisy scuffle for bonnets, hats, boots, and walking shoes in the side-room, than might have been expected, and that neither Hay Melville nor any other member of the company, consisting at that hour entirely of ladies, took it upon her to detain Moshie with comments, flattering or depreciatory, on the dancing. This most self-important matron, primed with remarks, took her dismissal meekly, along with that of the children, as a proceeding which was not to be disputed, and reserved for a better opportunity all the hints and warnings and good advice which she had intended to give Moshie. If the fit occasion ever did present itself, he would listen with marked respect and an imperturbable countenance, and then beg her, with an earnestness and sincerity which took away her breath, that if she was not satisfied with the progress which Mees Maggie or Master Sandy was making, to remove the child without ceremony.

Hay Melville wore a thick round gold watch hung at her waist outside her spencer. That watch was thought in Logie a most elegant as well as useful ornament, becoming the young heiress of Balmayne. Lizzie scarcely hoped to acquire such an ornament—not even Mrs. Lindesay had a watch. The auld Captain with his silver turnip and the eight-days clock in the kitchen kept time for the whole family, and did it to purpose. Hay looked at the watch as the couple left the Town Hall, and cried "Gude sake" (which is Scotch for "Good gracious"), "if you will believe me it is a quarter to five. Your tea and my dinner will be waiting before we both get back. I must put off till to-morrow buying a new riband for my hair. I like coclico, but Adam Lauder has a fancy for blue—not that I care what Adam Lauder fancies," she added saucily. "I'll leave you to study his taste, Lizzie, if you like."

"Thank you, Hay," answered Lizzie, quickly, "but I do not like, so I beg to decline your obliging offer."

That was all the satisfaction which Lizzie Lindesay got that afternoon with respect to the degree of intimacy and regard existing between Adam Lauder and Hay Melville.

CHAPTER X.

THE "EMPEROR" AT THE CROWN INN, LOOKING AFTER HIS NEPHEW AND HIS MILLS.

THE Lauder Paper-mills lay in a crook made by the river Cart opposite the farmhouse of Burn Foot. The mills, which were well stocked with good machinery and material, were a source of employment to a considerable number of work-people resident in Logie, and were therefore a decided boon to the neighbourhood. They were also, as the only mills within a considerable circuit, the sole representative of manufacturing industry, apart from the hand-looms which employed in what might be regarded as a private domestic way a good many weavers. But the mills were several steps in advance of the looms, and formed a source of special interest and pride to the towns-folk. They were in the habit of speaking of the group of new blue-slated buildings near an old meal and flour-mill, which they had superseded, as "Our Mills," with all the complacence of proprietorship.

It was well known that the mills really belonged to "the Emperor," Simon Lauder, a partner in a firm of Edinburgh lawyers, a man of respectable Logie extraction, who had made a fairly flourishing professional connection a stepping-stone for speculation in more than one field. He was a childless widower, but he had a nephew whom most people believed to be his heir, the only son of a parish minister in Berwickshire, heavily weighted with a small living and a large family of daughters. The Emperor had caused his nephew to be trained in the mysteries of paper-making, and had made him the tacksman or lessee, and the nominal owner of the mills. Adam's heart was more in fox-hunting, coursing, shooting, and fishing, fun and frolic, including love-making, than in business, still it was confidently and charitably hoped that with the help of sharper eyes and a shrewder head really at the head of the concern, though in the background, the young paper-maker would grow steady, become a diligent man of business, and eventually do well.

It was difficult to think otherwise, or to prophesy hard things of one who had so many of the elements of popularity

as those possessed by the handsome, "strapping," gay, good-humoured fellow.

The Emperor was in the habit of making periodical visits to Logie to look after his nephew Adam and the mills in particular, and when those were done with, a tangle of other interests. The great man, for he was looked up to if he was not beloved, held a monopoly of offices belonging to the town which ought to have been enjoyed separately and by resident townsmen. He was the owner of houses and fields, and the possessor of shares in this brewery and that tile-work and local journal office. The most diverse enterprises were undertaken, their gains appropriated, and their losses risked, by the enterprising son of Logie. It was this maw for swallowing up any amount and variety of sources of supposed advantages to himself and his family, and for taking upon himself the dictatorship of the whole, which had earned for Simon Lauder, in provincial parlance, the sobriquet of "the Emperor." One of the Merry Andrews had declared that if there were messuages or tenements to be let in the moon Simon Lauder would rent them, without fail, agree to hold them on a nine-hundred-and-ninety-nine years' lease, and come bound to pay the surface damages when the lease was ended.

The elder Mr. Lauder's bearing was not out of keeping with the proud title which had been bestowed upon him. He was his fine-looking nephew Adam grown portly, and robbed of all his *bonhomie.* But in spite of the Emperor's personal advantages, he was rightly considered "forbidding" or repulsive in aspect. He could be bland when it suited his purpose, but as a rule he was haughty and imperious. He was viewed with the degree of credulous respect which waits on success, but he could not be called a favourite in his native town. He had been ready to bestow on it the showy benefits which cost nothing, but he had never been known to exert himself for any of the inhabitants where the exertion meant the smallest self-sacrifice.

The dwelling-house at Lauder Mills was new, but it was long enough built to form a comfortable and pleasant bachelor establishment. It had been got up with that lordly disregard of expense which distinguished Simon Lauder's proceedings, and was a peculiarity transmitted by him to Adam. There was no lesson of the uncle's imparting which his nephew

acquired more easily. This large-minded extravagance, which the elder and the younger man shared, was a source of admiring awe to some of the careful, thrifty lookers on, and of doubtful bewilderment to other persons less imaginative and more disposed to ask themselves questions. Instead of becoming his nephew's guest, however, in the house which was enthusiastically styled a little paradise, the Emperor, who had no other relations left at Logie, chose to take up his quarters, as he had always done, at the Crown Inn. The corner of the High-gate was the more convenient locality in reference to the numerous calls on his attention during his stay in the town. He added, with pointed condescension, for the Emperor could be condescending when his plans required it, the Crown Inn was a more perfect guarantee for his personal well-being. How could it be expected that Adam's housekeeper, though he kept good servants and a good table, would be able to minister in all respects to his (Mr. Simon Lauder's) wants as he could depend on his old friend Mrs. Mally Corstorphine doing?

If the Emperor was honest in his professions of friendship, Mrs. Mally did not reciprocate them. To her Simon Lauder was nothing better than a grasping schemer, while he was also pompous and domineering. She was not without a vague suspicion that these crafty, far-reaching speculations of which the world had thought so much because they had prospered hitherto, might "gang agee" ere all was ended, and great would be the devastation and consternation.

Mrs. Mally disliked the uncle, though she had a sneaking kindness for the nephew, who was a braw lad, such as few women can entirely resist, and he might be Lizzie Lindesay's fate if he were not wiled away out of pure mischief by that clever "hempie" Hay Melville. Mrs. Mally took a considerable interest in both these girls' fortunes, but in spite of the old adage that blood is thicker than water, her interest in Lizzie transcended that which the old lady took in Hay as far as a mother's love surpasses mere cousinly regard.

CHAPTER XI.

"RANK TYRANNY."

THE Emperor had arrived as usual for his spring week's sojourn at Logie, and had established himself in the best rooms at the Crown, Mrs. Mally, of course, in the light of business and her duty as an innkeeper, receiving and doing her best to satisfy her customer. But the very day of his arrival there was a passage at arms between the landlady and her guest, in which, in spite of Mr. Simon Lauder's strength of will, Mrs. Mally came off the conqueror. In the first place the intolerant arbiter of many destinies, acting as if he was the head authority in Mrs. Mally's domain, as he was in other quarters, into which he had first intruded his bold foot, and then thrust his whole enterprising person, sent an overbearing, intolerable message by the simple lad Baldie to say that he (Mr. Lauder) would be obliged to Mrs. Corstorphine to stop the French fiddling fellow's noise in the attics, so long as a gentleman was busy in the dining-room.

Mrs. Mally frowned and fretted at that authoritative order in her own house; but she preserved her composure and had her answer ready in a second. "Tell the gentleman in the dining-room, from me, Baldie, mind my words, that the gentleman in the second flat—which is not an attic, as I should ken, having my private rooms there—has to attend to his business, which is no less pressing to him than the other's trade. Moreover it is not my part to interfere between gentlemen, or to meddle with a customer who is honourably pursuing his lawful calling under my roof, as he has pursued it for many a year."

"It's rank tyranny," Mrs. Mally protested to herself indignantly, "clean high-handed impidence, for as polite and fair-faced as he can pretend to be. The sound of Moshie's fiddle—I am sure it's as sweet as a lintie's sang—cannot disturb any gentleman at that distance. I had the Shirra here when the court-room was repairing, and he made the door be left open, and vowed he was as bad as the gipsy vagabond. If the Shirra could draw a fiddle-bow like that, he said, he too would be fain to

> '*Play a spring and dance a round*
> *Aneath the gallows tree.*'"

The Emperor hated to be baulked even in trifles. The next time he encountered Mrs. Mally on the first landing-place, while he raised his hat punctiliously, he said with a shade of sharpness in his suave tones, as if to remind her who was speaking—"I grieved to find fault with aught under your charge this morning, mem. It must be the goodness of your heart and the ease with which a woman is imposed upon that causes you to harbour landloupers and to countenance their conduct, in keeping with their idle trade, in an inn which otherwise should command, and does command, the best of company."

Mrs. Mally's sallow cheek and dark eyes lit up simultaneously, but she had too much respect for herself to fail in outward respect towards the Emperor, even while she dealt him a cutting retort. "I beg your pardon, sir," she began with a ceremonious apology, "but it surely behoves a great man and a lawyer like you to be careful of the words you use. There is no landlouper here that I know of. If you refer to Moshie because of his playing his fiddle, whether in practising his dancing tunes or merely as a divert to himself, I could not have the face to interfere—not though he took to trying his steps and shook the house with his performance, which is not likely, seeing that he's a spare gentleman for his years, and is as licht of foot as when he came to the inn a score of years syne. He came here before you did me the honour of giving me your countenance, Mr. Lauther. In all that time I've never heard him speak a misbehadden word or known him commit a misbehadden action. That is saying a great deal, and if that is not like a gentleman in his misfortunes, I do not know what is."

"He has been somewhat tardy in retrieving his misfortunes," said the Emperor with a sneer. "Plenty like him have freed the country from the burden imposed upon it, beginning with Louis 18th, and ending with a dancing-master. I'm told His Majesty, our gracious sovereign, made the Count d'Anjou a yearly allowance of twelve thousand pounds. But now the chief of the crew has returned to the grand fortunes in France we have heard so much of in the interval."

"That is not a matter I can speak of," said the lady dryly. "I would not take it upon me to have an opinion on what I can ken nothing about, except to say that to the best of my

knowledge Moshie has not had a penny of a pension from gentle or simple. Anyway, I hope I'll not forget myself so far as to trouble a respected customer in the discharge of his proper calling."

Then the Emperor, with all his well-bred assumption, had the coarseness and cruelty to allude to a consideration which Merrin, the chambermaid, had only suffered to cross her mind. "I did not know, Mistress Corstorphine, you had such reason to think well of Frenchmen that you should go out of your way to defend any of the breed," he remarked with lofty superciliousness.

Mrs. Mally grew very pale, drew in her lips, and put her hand with a sudden gesture to her side before she answered. But she had still the best of the argument. "Then you did not know me, Mr. Lauther, if you thought I could not distinguish between good and bad, and would punish the innocent for the guilty, banning a whole country because all its sons were not what they should have been. If you object to living under the same roof with Moshie and his fiddle, I'm sorry; but I cannot turn them out. I would rather give up the Croon at once. I can speak a gude word for you to Mistress Mawcom (Malcolm), of the Thistle, though her rooms are not just what you would call spaucious, or I'll do all I can to look out for ludgins to you."

"Not so fast, mem," said the Emperor, hastily, for his own part sensible that he had gone too far, and compelled to come down a few pegs in his claims. He resumed his earlier graciousness. "Canny, Mistress Mally, canny. Why, it is me you are proposing to turn out, and not the Frenchman! Where are your patriotic feelings? Do you not see that I was partly joking? What do I care for the man's—gentleman's if you will have it so—presence, a story overhead? Only I have a quick ear, and I confess I'm fashous about being disturbed, when I'm deeply engaged, with frivolous din that would better become a theatre than an inn—no offence, Mistress Corstorphine."

"No offence, sir," echoed Mrs. Mally stiffly; "I will cause the green baize door that I had put up in the upper lobby the winter I was plagued with a hoast to be steeket pointedly." With this compromise the dispute dropped.

But Mrs. Mally had her own thoughts on the subject. "It was no joke—neither do I suppose he has any spite at

Moshie. It is just the ugly soor pride of the man's heart. I would insist that he should not darken the doors of the Croon again, let the toon mak ever sic a hulabaloo, were it not for the credit of the Croon. Forby it might take away the character of the man—Emporer as they ca' him, near hand as auld as mysel'. For we've never turned a man out for a word o' flytin' or for aught but wicked vice or riotous debauchery. Then there's his nephew, Adam, whom Lizzie Lindesay may be taking up wi'."

CHAPTER XII.

FURTHER PARLEYING BETWEEN THE EMPEROR AND MRS. MALLY.

IT looked and sounded as if Simon Lauder had risen off his wrong side or had come over to Logie with a bee in his bonnet, for it was not only with Mrs. Mally that he was on the eve of a quarrel. He had evidently an unpleasant settlement of accounts with his nephew, who came to dine with his uncle at the Crown Inn. After dinner high words were distinguished passing between the two, before the interview suddenly terminated, and the young man strode past the bar, in which Mrs. Mally happened to be standing, without word or look, with his face a fiery red and his eyes so full of some mental vision that they could not see what was actually before them.

True, Adam Lauder came back next morning with an air half-swaggering, half-crestfallen, and had a much quieter meeting with his uncle and landlord, soldering up doubtless the rift which had sprung up between them the previous day. The young fellow had most probably been in the wrong, or it might be that the slight atmosphere of wrong-doing and defiance which hung about him, proceeded from nothing worse than what was accounted a pardonable trifle in those hard-drinking days. For after quitting the Emperor's dinner-table the previous afternoon, Adam had repaired to the Star Tavern to drown care, and done it so effectually, that he had drowned his wits as well, caroused into the small hours, and taken part afterwards, along with some other choice spirits,

in a raid against the lamps and the knockers throughout the town, making night hideous and disturbing the peaceful inhabitants. "That birkie is on a slippy path, all the slippier that he is one of those who cannot say no," thought Mrs. Mally, with a sigh of remembrance; "but allowance must be made for the madness and blindness of youth, else woe betide the youth that is not allowed for, and the mature years that are so wise and so clear-sighted, ay, and so hard that they cannot yield an inch, where they would fain shed their heart's blude. But bools are not rowing ower smooth between the auld man and the young, for as gude as they say the paper trade is and so fine as the mills are doing, and for as handsomely as ilka fule body is ready to swear Mr. Simon Lauther has dealt with his nephew."

Then the Emperor appeared under other colours, or rather, he thought fit to don again the manner which he had been wont to wear to his hostess. On the last day of his stay at the Crown Inn he sent up his compliments to Mrs. Corstorphine, and would she do him the favour of joining him in the drawing-room and brewing his cup of green tea for him? Though he was a childless widower of long standing, and had only his housekeeper to make his tea in his house in St. Andrew's Square, she was really a far-away kinswoman and a very capable woman. She knew her business in the matter of the strength of the beverage, and the thorough proportions of sugar and cream. He did not presume to find fault with the excellent tea masking in the Crown kitchen any more than with the other good things from that bountiful region, which had given him entire satisfaction. Still he fancied Mrs. Mally could do still better where her tea was concerned. He was old, and liked to see it made and poured out by a female hand he could trust. Would she grace him to that extent?

Mrs. Mally was not in the least propitiated, but she could not well refuse the honour thus thrust upon her. Looking taller and more Amazon-like than ever in her hair cap, silk gown, and tippet, she "sallied forth," as she would have said, carrying her private satin wood tea-caddy in her hand, and graced the Emperor by making and pouring out his tea for him.

In return, he exerted all his power of rendering himself agreeable, which, to tell the truth, was not much. His

conversational talents did not equal some of his other gifts, and were the merest tithe of those enjoyed by any one of the Merry Andrews. But the Emperor did his best, ostensibly, to entertain Mrs. Mally, in all likelihood, as she readily divined, to draw from her such information as might be useful to him in his projects.

He sounded her on what was the degree of relationship between her and the Melvilles of Balmayne.

"I have always heard you are sib, as folk say; now how is it, Mistress Mally, by the Melvilles of Dinwoodie, or the Leeches of Barr?"

"By the Leeches, I believe," said Mrs. Mally, indifferently, "but the connection is so far back that it is not worth heeding, though Balmayne is gude enough to uphold it."

"Small thanks to him," professed the Emperor; "not so many even among the county gentry can reckon the Governor of an island, one of our colonial possessions, among their cousins."

"No, nor an innkeeper," chimed in the listener.

"Well, the one must be taken with the other," admitted the lawyer, rather clumsily. "The Crown has always been a most creditable establishment, and with you at the head of it, no man need be ashamed of it."

"No man will be asked whether he is ashamed or prood," said the mistress of the Crown, composedly.

"Of course not," agreed the Emperor, tapping his silver snuff-box. "But are not the Melvilles your nearest surviving kin, Mistress Corstorphine?"

She bent her brows. The question, which was none of his business, just touched and glanced off sore losses she had experienced in her day.

"Weel, besides kin in the innkeeping line like mysel', I think I've some more cousins fallen down to the grade of ploughmen," she said, with a smile lurking about the corners of her mouth. "But I'm not over curious either about my ain or other folk's cousins."

"Quite right," Mr. Simon Lauder applauded her. "You would only bring around you, and you a lone woman, a rapacious tribe whom you would never satisfy, and who would not thank you for anything you might do for them."

"I dinna ken," said Mrs. Mally, with an impartial air. "Eppie Corstorphine's bairns have never fashed me,—I'm

bound to say that for them,—and as for being a lone woman, I've so long stood alone that I feel perfectly competent for the performance."

"Undoubtedly; and you've so conducted yourself, mem, as to win general respect. You've been long acquainted with Captain Lindesay," he added so abruptly that it sounded as if the Captain's acquaintance was the reward won by Mrs. Mally's good behaviour.

"Aye, long acquent," assented Mrs. Mally, with a certain frown of acquiescence of which she was scarcely conscious.

"I hear he has a fine girl. It was a pity for her sake he should marry again up in years, and have a second family. He could never have had much besides his pension; but as it is, I fear the lassie will be ill provided for."

"You may spare your peety," said Mrs. Mally, succinctly.

"Eh! What?" exclaimed the lawyer, pricking his long ears, in spite of their being an Emperor's. "Are you aware of any provision made for her, any source from which she may derive substantial benefit? I do not ask out of mere curiosity, Mrs. Corstorphine. I have that young lady's interest at heart."

"Her virtues, as well as her face, are her fortune," declared Lizzie's old friend demurely; "she is independent of any other."

"Ah!" ejaculated Mr. Simon Lauder—a long-drawn "ah" of baulked expectation; "that sentiment is excellent in theory —in practice, I should say it was of doubtful application."

He turned the conversation to funds and stocks, and to profitable investments. He spoke here with studied and careful vagueness. Yet Mrs. Mally was convinced he only wanted a little encouragement to propose—great and benevolent man as he was—to lay out any money she had to dispose of for her advantage.

In lieu of the encouragement the speaker waited for, the listener hastened to assure him that she was glad to hear that there were so many promising openings for doubling a body's bawbees. But as for her, every spare penny she could put her hands upon was bespoken for the improvement of the farm at St. Kennet's. He might have heard that her man of business—a decent man in whom she put every confidence, though he did not belong to the town, and Mr. Lauther would not ken him—had bought St. Kennet's for her. It

F

was not a bad bargain, though nothing so grand as those he had been giving her a notion of—women at the best had a limited acquaintance with investments, and the drains of St. Kennet's were all out of order, with the byre and stable falling about the cows' and horses' lugs, so that, as she said, every farthing she could coin would be wanted to repair and build and make the place as it should be.

At last the Emperor fairly startled Mrs. Mally by beginning to question her a little less cautiously as to what she knew of Lady Sprott, and what was her income from the late baronet? Whether she lost it if she married again? Did the provision for her include a sum of lying money, with an allowance made for each of her children? Living quietly as Lady Sprott did at Logie, and little used as she had been to anything more than the barest necessaries of life, was she beginning to save from her jointure, or was she wasting it on her former low cronies?

Mrs. Mally said as little as she could in reply, but she thought the more on this and the other topics of conversation after it was ended. "It is my humble opinion," she arrived at the conclusion, "that overbearing felly's resources which he has flourished in simple folks' faces are beginning to fail him. For aught that I ken his credit out of Logie may be getting rotten likewise. He would have no objection to finger some of my siller—though he's the Emperor, and I keep the Croon Inn—all for my benefit. He cannot be having an ee to ony lowse cash of Leddy Sprott's, poor simple thing! There's great danger of his dragging down the callant Awdam—whether or no he's been made a tool of. Then somebody else, whether it be Lizzie Lindesay or Hay Melville, had need to be on her guard. Na, but women are weel quit o' men if the women would only think it."

CHAPTER XIII.

PREPARING FOR LOGIE MARKET.

THE great spring market was the festival of Logie. It was not entirely a holiday, like the King's Birthday, neither did it last for several days like the Races, but on the other hand the market was as yet equally shared by all

classes. It was beginning to be shorn of its glory, but it was only beginning. For still crowds of country people, of various grades and both sexes, intent on pleasure no less than business, flocked into the little town. Still women-servants as well as ploughmen stood in bands to be hired—the latter carrying the peeled sticks, which indicated that the bearers were yet disengaged and open to enter on fresh service. It was the townspeople themselves who commenced to look a little shyly on the market as a merry-making in which they could take part. These censors complained of roughness and a tendency to riot, that their withdrawal would only confirm, which the increase of education and refinement forbade the higher orders joining in with any satisfaction. They refused to be linked much longer with their servants and the working-people generally, to whom, of course, Logie Market was the most important event of the year, indeed, in the case of farm-servants they could claim attendance at the market as a right and not as a favour.

Young ladies belonging to the town, like Miss Chawrlotte Bowers and Miss Soph-y Pettigrew, perhaps influenced by their own deficient or waning popularity, decreed that "market fare" was vulgar and ought not to be mentioned in polite society. To appear in the streets in the middle of the hubbub, to push one's way through the crowd for the purpose of seeing and being seen, and indulging in hasty greetings with friends and acquaintances similarly engaged, to visit the "stands" or stalls, in order to gloat over the contents as if one had never seen a third-rate shop before, and to countenance the foolish, objectionable custom of "treating" and being "treated," were proceedings no longer to be thought of for a moment.

However, the creed was only very partially diffused even in the town. Far more than the children, tradespeople, and servants looked eagerly forward to the local holiday, felt their hearts give a bound, and were ready to echo little Geordie and Mickle Lindesay's shout of delight when the first homely group of stall-holders began to knock up their wooden booths on the afternoon of the previous day. There was an anxious counting over the hoarded pocket-money. There was a hazarding of delightful guesses, with a flush of pride and exultation as to somebody else who might be going through the same process in view of the tribute that

was to be paid with right good will. Young hearts like Lizzie's could not resist a thrill of unreasonable expectation that something particular would happen to them on the market-day, which was not like other days, but was twelve hours quite out of the common.

The dawn of day—happily on this special occasion it was a fine sunshiny day—saw Logie a changed town as if by magic. The familiar fronts of the houses and shops were eclipsed by an almost unbroken series of wooden sheds, tents, sometimes simple tables from which the protection and garnishing of green boughs were not wanting, since fir-woods abounded in the neighbourhood, and the stiff spikes of the spruce and the long tassels of the larch supplied the place of the leaves, which were yet absent from the trees. Beneath the symbols of rejoicing were heaped up the most heterogeneous-looking stores—glittering tin-work, brown, yellow, and blue earthenware, wooden tubs and "caps," or bowls, heavily-made boots and shoes, specially adapted for the deep ruts and miry clay of country by-ways, and for a miraculous capacity where endurance was concerned; toys of every description, wooden dolls and tin soldiers. Above all there were high piles of ginger-bread, some of it painted in all the colours of the rainbow, and hills of sweeties, toothsome in rosy red and snow white. As a lingering relic of the popinjays, established and enjoined by the Government in former generations, there was a private speculation in the shape of a shooting tent, where embryo sportsmen, like Baldie of the Crown Inn, could "pap" at a mark for a small fee to their hearts' content, in spite of all the Mrs. Mally Corstorphines in the world. The shows, including the wild beasts in the yellow caravans, were not in the town, but stood ranged in gorgeous file just beyond it at the Saughs. The general company were expected to promenade in closely wedged lines between the stalls—before which buyers chaffered, and gazers, chiefly the youth of the district, feasted their ravished eyes.

All wheeled carriages of whatever degree were prohibited as a matter of necessity, and had to deposit their loads on the outskirts of the town. A sight to be seen was the emptying of some of these vehicles, especially of the corn-carts, in which were sacks well stuffed with oaten straw, on which had sat, in their Sabbath-day's clothes,

"*The gudewife, Tam, Katie, Jock, and Jean,*"
or it might be the whole servant population of a farm-town. The arrangement of the cavalcades, the polishing for nights before of the horses' harness, the plaiting of the horses' manes with ribands, the choosing of the ploughman who was to be the Jehu, the selecting of the woman who was to sit next him, the seating, the starting, the joking, the laughter of the rustic company, were all so many lively episodes in the humble drama.

The play opened with the first fresh breath of the morning, or at least what was the first breath of the morning to Lizzie Lindesay. But she always got up betimes, not only to greet the opening day from healthy-minded inclination and a sense of duty, but to satisfy the auld Captain's requirements of what ought to be the habits of a well-brought-up young woman, and to enable Mrs. Lindesay to breakfast in bed. During the night drowsy ears might have caught the faint echoes of amateur carpentering, most musical in the circumstances. The morning beheld the fact accomplished, the bustling stalls in apple-pie order, the motley stall-keepers, some of them old women in cloaks and extensive mutches, looking out cheerfully for custom, the people forming a continuous stream. There was no end of plaid shawls, calico and calimanco gowns, corduroy breeches, rustic straw bonnets, broad blue bonnets with red cherries in the crowns. There was also a goodly sprinkling of Paisley shawls, silk gowns and pelisses, scarlet riding-habits, broadcloth coats, and beaver hats to leaven the mass.

It was going to be a good market, largely attended. Logie, in spite of its dawning reserve, learnt the fact with interest and brushed itself up in response to it. Long Letham standing at the corner of the High-gate wore a clean shirt in expectation of many a horse to be held. Mary Mettlie had put on a fresh check gown in which she was ready to cling more doggedly than ever to the wall, in opposition to the multitude which disputed it with her. Peggy Peebles had actually mended the worst tatters of her duffle cloak, in which she was to act her part as half a randy, half a crazed sybil. Only the miserable Coontess did not deign to change her usual draggled skirts and man's soiled jacket as she gloomed sullenly on the gaiety of her neighbours.

The Crown, and every other inn and tavern in the town,

would be chokeful of guests. Most private families were entertaining friends come in on business, if they were too genteel to own pleasure as their errand.

The Lindesays were in the minority, and formed an exception to the rule in not having a share in the brisk stir and bustle. It was not because the Captain was unsocial or inhospitable, far from it, but that Mrs. Lindesay, poor woman, had her hands full—what with her small family that took up her whole attention, and what with her indifferent health. Captain Lindesay had to take any "gentleman friend" of his who might turn up to the Crown Inn or the Star Tavern, if the refreshmeut was of a lighter order.

Lizzie would be at perfect liberty to wonder lightly whether Adam Lauder would be early in the town, to look out of her window and try if she could catch a glimpse of his tall figure turning the corner, to be tempted and to resist the temptation to mount to a garret window which looked to the back and commanded the road over the Brig to spy if he were crossing it, or if he were detained on the Balmayne side of the water.

Lizzie asked herself whether Adam would join her when she went out, and escort her through the market, making his gallant offerings from the stalls on the way. She asked herself still more searchingly whether she would care to be associated with the young man so conspicuously. But she might not have the chance of declining his company, though he had never failed to offer it to her on every market-day since he came to Lauder Mills, three years past in February. Yet she might be delivered from any scruple on the subject and have all her doubts set at rest by seeing him a willing captive in the train of Hay Melville. For the Melvilles were among the few county families whe still continued to grace Logie Market by their presence. Hay always protested she would not miss the market for the world.

Well, Lizzie would not dream of complaining if she found herself deserted for Hay. Mr. Adam Lauder was free to choose. Mr. Adam Lauder was not the only man in the world. There was as good fish in the sea as had ever come out of it. Lizzie did not even know that she preferred this fish to other fish, or that she could not do without fish at all, and climb nimbly and with more or less equanimity to the garret, which was always a single woman's destination.

It would not be so bad to be a single woman like Mrs. Mally. Ah, no! Mrs. Mally had not been single; she had been called upon to thole and overcome that heaviest trial of all, "an ill man," with poor Lewie taking after his father. Then if not like Mrs. Mally, like Miss Katie Ochiltree. Lizzie might manage to keep a small shop as Miss Katie had done, without counting on Sandy or Mickle or little Hill coming back from foreign parts, and proving another Mr. Mungy. She might try and acquire mantua-making after the example of Miss Stark, to earn an honest living. It would be dreich work since Lizzie had no sister to keep her company. Her bright soft complexion paled a little, and something gathered in her clear blue eyes, but she reared her round white throat and twinkled away the moisture in a second. A man had a right to please himself, only he ought to know his own mind, an obligation which there can be no denying.

Lizzie was going out to see the market, not entirely on her own account. The small boys were wild to visit the stalls and the shows, and Mrs. Lindesay, who would not expose herself to the fatigue of the expedition, even for her children's gratification, preferred intrusting them to the combined care of their father and sister rather than sending the bairns out alone with the Captain, who was apt to be a little absent-minded, and to let the laddies stray, or to confiding such a precious charge to a tawpie of a servant, whose head would be turned by the multitude of her own acquaintances at large, and making sport for the occasion.

As the weather was fine and warm for the time of the year, Lizzie wore her first nankin gown that season, with a blue sash and neckerchief, and another little blue neckerchief tying down her gipsy hat, and knotting it beneath her chin in the most *dégagée* and irresistible manner. But she had not known till the other day that Adam Lauder set special store on the colour of the sky and the sea, a colour which certainly would not become Hay Melville's white cheeks. Still Lizzie would have left the azure tint to her friend if the girl could have helped herself. She paused before her mirror, and looked at her colours, which she had been accustomed to prize, with a vexed air, and a half wish that she could leave them off. But a half-pay captain's daughter has not often fresh trimmings for a dress at her command such as a laird's daughter may afford. Lizzie had to be content

to resign herself to what was most becoming to her and grateful to the eye of another. For that matter, she was not unwilling to gratify that eye, if only it could be satisfied with resting on her, and forego roving lightly to another. As a finish to her costume Lizzie drew on one of those pairs of long buff chamois leather gloves which her granddaughter may be wearing at the present moment.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE "HUMOURS" OF LOGIE MARKET.

To set out with due decorum for the market was a serious affair. Lizzie put her arm within the auld Captain's, just touching the sleeve of his best red coat with the tips of her fingers, and not leaning her whole weight on the battered soldier, after the fashion of Mrs. Lindesay; while with the other hand the girl led Mickle the Second, with his yellow hair and peony cheeks, before which Lizzie's roses paled to a dainty blush colour. The Captain, with his disengaged hand, dragged along his blooming eldest son, Geordie, who was always struggling to be free. Not even Mrs. Lindesay could propose to add the two-year-old Hill, screaming at the top of his voice in his adoring mother's arms, to the little family party.

One or two "stands" or "stalls" were inspected, amidst the "Oh, Geordies!" and "Oh, Mickles!" of the little lads. Their extreme impatience tugged hither and thither their conductors, whenever the latter stopped to greet the acquaintances appearing at all points. Then the Captain's attention began to wander, or else he grew weary of playing the nursery-maid even to his fine boys. Gradually he relaxed his grip of Geordie's brown palm, next he suddenly dropped it, and dived after another red-coat disappearing in the *mêlée*. As the Captain disappeared he called back to Lizzie, "Mind the bairns." He added that he might pick them up by-and-by, but if not, she was to let them see what was to be seen, spend their pennies, and not keep the dinner waiting.

Lizzie, who had mounted the breach—that is, wheeled round and caught Geordie's freed hand in time—was not

unprepared for this flank movement on her father's part, and did not feel disturbed by it. There was no impropriety in her being left with the children in the crowd; the usages of the day were too simple and hardy for such a scruple. There was no danger of any unpleasantness for hours to come, till excitement, exhaustion, and excesses to which the victims were unaccustomed, following on more or less protracted terms of fasting, with copious libations of the fatal barley bree, had worked havoc on the manhood and the modest and honourable self-restraint of the assembly. The climax was to be feared for the lairds and farmers and the professional men in the town entertaining guests, and bound not to be "behind" in pressing them to drink, both by precept and example. It was still more to be apprehended for the ploughmen, shop-boys, and mechanics. But even at the worst, Lizzie was so well known among the revellers, and knew so many of them, that her innocent maidenhood was under sure protection. Now she was perfectly at ease—except for the strain on her arms of the two rampageous children—to stroll about hailing an individual here, and being hailed by a group there, enjoying the incidents of the scene.

Lizzie could enter into everything, she understood it all so well, and was so thoroughly *en rapport* with the actors.

Here was Euphie Fowler, an old servant of the Lindesays, taking round her hobble-de-hoy son, in his worsted cravat up to his shock head of hair and huge red ears, though the day was almost as warm as a summer day, to suit him with the "cap" and horn spoon and the small "kist" to hold his Sabbath-day clothes, which were to be his outfit and to constitute him a man—at least a halflin in a bothie. Allan Fowler had been promoted from the boy's post of herd, returning home to his mother's care every night; soon he would be looking forward to the height of emancipation and prosperity involved in being a foreman, with a house of his own, a kail-yard, a pig, it might be a cow, not to say a wife and family like his father.

Yonder was an old schoolfellow of Lizzie's at the parish school who had left her form to take a place, and had got farther precedence of the young lady. Big bouncing Bell Sim looked wonderfully sheepish as she, too, was conducted round the stalls, and advised in making various judicious

purchases from her last year's wages by her important mother, and if possible still more important maiden aunt. Lizzie had to go up and congratulate Bell—a bride on the eve of entering on her kingdom as the mistress of a wheelwright's thriving house place. Bell recovered her countenance and spirits before Lizzie was out of hearing. An acquaintance, a smart young ploughman who had been a fellow-servant with Bell in a former situation, by some chance had not heard of her happy prospects. He came up just then and commenced a little gallant chaffing on whether or not she had forgotten him, and what chance there was of the two renewing their friendship, with sundry broad hints of what might come of it in the shape of wooing and wedding.

"But, man, I'm gaun to be married next week. I'm no gaun to wait till Martinmas," cried Bell, unable to resist making the announcement of her coming exaltation.

The lad, whom no deeper feeling had helped to enlighten, stared at her in blank incredulity and half provocation at what he considered her sauciness.

"Siccan a lee! You were aye a hizzie for standin' up for yoursel', but I'm no sae easily ta'en in as that comes to."

"But it's a fac', I'm to be cried next Sawbath, Jamie: ye can come down and hear me, gin ye like, you'll surely believe your ain lugs," cried Bell, with another ringing laugh of triumphant superiority.

On the other side of the stall stood another schoolfellow as strapping as Bell, but looking heavy-hearted and careladen.

"What ails you, Chirsty? Is anything wrong at home?" Lizzie stopped her to inquire.

"Nothing at hame, Miss Lizzie," answered Chirsty, with a gloom which belied her words. "But when I came in from Sandy-knowe this morning, the first body I met was my eldest brother Geordie, in drink, and it no' ten o'clock o' the day, and braid daylicht! Gin it had been dark, or even drawin' to nicht, it would have been nae great thing, but as it was, and hiz sae respectable, I thocht I would hae drappet. He was that brodent on this market and what he was to do in't, he had started afore the lave without his breakfast, and taen a gill on his empty stamach, and the whiskey had been bad and gane to his head, and he was as

fou as a fiddler. I tried to bring him to his senses, but he wad gang and tak' mair drink, and noo he's lying no able to stir hand or fit, on a bed in Archie Dall's. Geordie and me and my sister Tibbie got leave to stay the nicht at my faither's, and we were to travel four miles across Crawberry muir. But how we're to get ower the road with a man that is like a dead dug I'm feared to think."

"Then what will you do, Chirsty?" inquired Lizzie, full of commiseration for the erring young ploughman and his suffering womankind, all of whom she had known in her parish schooldays. "Had you not better give up your visit home? It would be a lesson to Geordie."

"Na, Miss Lizzie, my mither has been ailin', and is no in the toon the day. She wad be sair disappinted. Forby the laddie would be put to shame by his ain flesh and blude. We'll just bide as long as we can till he has come roond a bit, and the nicht has fa'n so that naebody may see, and then Tibbie and me will gie him an airm each and oxter him on. The weather's dry, and there's a mune; we'll surely get ower the muir afore mornin'."

Poor Chirsty, she dreaded far more the exposure of the lapse from the family's proudly-held standard of respectability than the dark night, the lone moor, the two young women worse than unprotected, as they dragged along the dead weight of the luckless Geordie. Lizzie heard afterwards from some fellow-travellers, whose road had lain in the same direction, that the brave, faithful women were seen accomplishing their act of domestic heroism, and disappearing in the gathering darkness into the dim wilderness,

"Whaur whamps cry dreary."

The month was May, when the moorland night air is simply "snell," rather than chilling to the bone, yet men, not to say women, might stray from the narrow pathway, wander among the dusky whins and heather, faintly lit by struggling moonbeams, get confused, and walk in a circle till the wayfarer sank down at last, worn out with cold, weariness, and vexation, and slept the sleep that knows no waking. There was always the chance that this might be the end of the desperate struggle to drag and elbow along an incapable lout beyond the reach of temptation and disgrace.

As little Geordie Lindesay was driving a bargain for a

trumpet, Lizzie took the opportunity of hailing bonnie Jean Scott, who was passing by. Jean was in a riding-habit. It was not scarlet, for the dark habits were coming into fashion, but the lapels were open, and showed a white vest, and she had a red riband at her throat, while her beaver hat was also fastened up at one side with a red knot. Bonnie Jean did not require elaborate busking. Hers was one of those matchless faces of pure beauty in features—as perfect in their straight lines and soft curves as those of the Sistine Madonna—in a clear pale skin slightly embrowned, and a profusion of dark hair harmonizing with the grey eyes, forming a whole which nature refuses to produce more than once in a generation. Nobody could look on Jean Scott's beauty without admitting it, while there might be two opinions with regard to Lizzie Lindesay's freckled rosiness, and Hay Melville's white-faced, will-o'-the-wisp piquancy. One marked characteristic of Jean's personal attractions was their intrinsic refinement. She was the daughter of a homely hard-up farmer. She had to get through a heavy amount of household work. She had often to make beds, sweep floors, and cook dinners without assistance. A pampered upper servant might have scoffed at the bare suggestion of undertaking what Jean had to do. Nay, she could milk cows, feed calves, pigs, and poultry, and groom her own pony when the stable lad was out of the way. Her hands were necessarily much harder and rougher than Lizzie Lindesay's. Jean's father went without his coat when he was thrashing in the barn, or forking corn in the stack-yard, and he did not always put it on again, far less change it, when he sat down to dinner. Jean's mother would sit the whole day in her thick morning cap. Jean's brothers were serving in grocers' and drapers' shops in Logie. Yet there was no essential vulgarity in the girl's sweet looks.

Jean's mind did not quite correspond with her person—not that there was anything radically mean or coarse in it. On the contrary, she was as wholesome and lovable as the milk from her own dairy or the daisies in her father's fields. But her spirit had certainly nothing transcendental about it, and mentally, apart from her goodness, she was not out of the common, more than the milk and the daisies. She had only received the most limited parish schooling, and her greatest accomplishment was the steps she had learned from

Moshie. Intellectually there was little in Jean's conversation, though that little was innocent and kindly. Her prattle flowed on like the course of a clear shallow brook. It was possible for a higher intelligence after a season of rapt admiration of the outward woman, to yawn a little in that fairest of faces. But none would have forgiven the yawn sooner than Jean would have forgiven it. Possibly she would have yawned back again and sunk into a light slumber, for what with her hard work, what with her good conscience, she was almost as much given to snatches of sleep, when she could get them, as Mrs. Lindesay was. In these impromptu naps Jean would look positively ravishing, for then the single slight lack in her beautiful face, that of intellectual expression, was not missed.

"What a fine market, Miss Lizzie," cried Jean gladly. Already she was laden with sundry bulged-out paper bags, a Tunbridge-ware workbox, and several strings of beads, which looked suspiciously like market fare.

"Yes, indeed, Jean. I hope you will enjoy it," called Lizzie back again, since the two could not get near each other for the intervening throng.

"Thank you, Miss Lizzie, I'm sure I will," answered Jean with cheerful alacrity, and not the slightest assumption of indifference or affectation of feeling otherwise than she did feel. "A day's idleness is a ploy in itself to me though there was nothing more. But there is a great deal more. There is no end of pleasures which I trust you too will like, though they are no dentice to you."

Lizzie nodded and looked with earnest admiration after the beauty, as she was swept away by a suddenly rising wave of bystanders.

When Lizzie withdrew her eyes from Jean's retreating figure, they were caught and held by another pair of eyes which had been dwelling on the same object. These were almond-shaped, heavy-lidded eyes which belonged to a tall, fair-haired, high-bred young man. His somewhat hectic complexion, sloping shoulders, and lily-white hands, together with a tendency to coxcombry of dress in gilt buttons, a watch-chain of watered silk riband, and an eye-glass instead of spectacles, gave him an effeminate air in eyes like Lizzie's, accustomed to rest with satisfaction on Adam Lauder's stalwart proportions and green hunting-coat. But there were

other women to whom the very different physique might distinctly recommend itself as a welcome version of one of the "braw, braw lads" and "bonnie boys" of the women's songs and ballads.

Lizzie made no invidious comparison when she recognized Steenie Oliphant of Burn Foot, Jean's father's laird. The young laird was edging himself somewhat languidly through the crowd which Adam Lauder with his stately front and springing step would have divided right and left, and traversed in a couple of minutes.

Lizzie bethought herself—in a flash of recollection—with reference to the loadstone which had been holding the eyes of the lad with whom she was now shaking hands and exchanging a little polite small talk, that she had heard the young Laird of Burn Foot was smitten by Jean Scott. He had been often seen hanging about the farmhouse, though he made no open sign of an inclination which, according to the canons of his class, and probably of the young man himself, for he was known to be fastidious and ambitious, could come to nothing.

Had Jean been aware of Steenie Oliphant's vicinity and of his long stolen looks? Was it their subtle influence which had made her look so radiantly happy? For Jean was mostly staid and composed, a little weighed down by the depressed state of her father's affairs. Anyhow Jean's beads and workbox and paper bags—"pokes" she would have called them—were not market fare of Steenie Oliphant's choosing. But old men and married men would vie with the young in treating "Bonnie Jean," who was a kind of universal flame and favourite. The whole country-side was proud of its belle, and was wont to vaunt her charms and virtues. It might rank as some compensation for the stranded fortunes of the family. Anyhow, public favour did not render Jean proud or saucy.

CHAPTER XV.

LADY SPROTT, OF KINGSCROFT.

LIZZIE LINDESAY had her share of popularity. In evidence of it, a couple of elderly lairds, bachelor brothers, who made one house serve for two estates, and were renowned for their constant association and their habitual taciturnity, broke their rule in her case, addressing her by word of mouth, instead of silently "booin'."

"Hoo are ye? Hoo's the auld Captain and Mrs. Lindesay?" hoarsely murmured Laverocklaw.

In his drab small-clothes and gaiters, brown coat, spotted cambric neckerchief, and short cloak of hard, stiff tartan, he was so like his brother Stenhouse, dressed in the same materials, that the two middle-aged men, with the hanging cheeks, the double chins, and the small round eyes, might have been easily taken for twins, as well as brothers.

Stenhouse did not give Lizzie time to reply, but broke in as if he had been the most garrulous person in the world, "Hae ye a basket?"

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Gilbert, you are too good," said Lizzie, divining his intention instantly, and modestly displaying a reticule, which was immediately crammed with sugar-balls

"Hae ye pooches, loons?" one of the donors demanded with succinct emphasis of Geordie and Mickle, who stood quivering with open-mouthed expectation. In a trice the little coats stuck out on either side in the most approved style, while the brother lairds strode on without another word in answer to Lizzie's urgent entreaties to the children to thank their father's friends properly.

There was a rumour current in Logie that Laverocklaw and Stenhouse spent the most enjoyably tranquil evenings together over the men's rummers of toddy, the only words exchanged between them as the one raised and the other deposited his glass, being the cordial greeting and acknowledgment—

"Here's to ye, Laverocklaw."

"Thanks to ye, Stenhouse," with the small variation of "Here's to ye, Stenhouse."

"Thanks to ye, Laverocklaw."

The dialogue partook a little of the highly-prized monotony of the once famous songs,

> "*At the siege of Belleisle,*
> *I was there all the while*
> *At the siege of Belleisle!*"

and

> "*John Tamson's wallet from end to end,*
> *Some say it's leather, some say it's bend.*
> *John Tamson's wallet from end to end,*"

on which rustic wits were wont to dwell in Paganini-like strumming on the tickled ears of their audiences, a century before.

> "*Old Obadiah said to young Obadiah,*"

brought down roars of protest at mess dinners and undergraduates' suppers.

If the two sentences in the brotherly conversation conveyed all that was needed, what call was there for more? There are instances of learned pundits at hoary universities who have been content with such brief interchange of sympathy. In the latter case it has been called the golden silence which is the result of deep thought and profound knowledge. No one gave Laverocklaw and Stenhouse credit for deep thought and profound knowledge, but if they were happy all the same, it would have been something amounting to indiscretion to have introduced the noise of tongues—say the gabble of female tongues—into the placid stillness of these male seances.

"What do ye think o' my goon, Lizzie Lindesay?" inquired one of those shrill-voiced women's tongues. "I'm sure it's real settin, though Mistress Pollock there ca's it ower fine. But it is the market, and what would ye have? And I was blythe to throw off my murnins, for the very sheddy of crape is dowie when ane is young."

"You may please yoursel', my Leddy. Of course, I only said—in answer to your question, mind—that in the places where I had been, leddies had kept their gauzes and laces for balls and suppers, and had not thrown them awa' on markets. But please yoursel', my Leddy, please yoursel'; ye've the richt, and no harm done."

The speakers were, on the one hand, Lady Sprott, not

above half-a-dozen years older than Lizzie Lindesay and Hay Melville, though her ladyship was already a widow and the mother of several children ; on the other, small Sir Dauvit's nurse and my Lady's maid in one. The last-mentioned individual was a sedate and experienced, if somewhat opinionative elderly servant of the upper class of servants, whom her mistress's best friends had judiciously placed about her person, as an additional safeguard against the late baronet's widow slipping ignorantly into the height of folly and indiscretion.

Poor Lady Sprott presented nearly as great, though a much more innocent anomaly than the miserable Coontess offered. Lady Sprott was in decidedly awkward circumstances. She had been an unkempt, uncared-for country lass—more neglected than most Scotch children of her day, for she could barely read and write when she entered very young into the service of Sir Dauvit Sprott, of Kingscroft, as a scullery-maid —and the baronet, a blackguard of the lowest description, committed one honest act in marrying her. Lady Sprott's ascent to a giddy height in the social scale profited her little during her husband's lifetime. Nobody worth mentioning took any notice of her, or of him for that matter. She was an ill-used drudge, well-nigh in danger of her life sometimes from his brutal drunken fury. He had been induced to make a settlement on her and her children, which he afterwards wished to destroy, but the mother's instinct gave the poor creature both wit and courage. She got possession of the deed, and hid it in a hole in the garden wall, and faced the threat of murder rather than give up the assurance of a maintenance for herself and her children. Sir Dauvit was dead, and if the new Sir Dauvit did not reign in his stead, a great change had come over Kingscroft. The present baronet was a minor, about the age of Hill Lindesay. During his minority it was hoped that something might be done to free his heavily-encumbered estate, and restore him to the position his father had forfeited.

In the mean time the child was to remain with his sisters in their mother's keeping, and something must be tried for Lady Sprott. If she was nothing else, she was the mother of a baronet and of that baronet's nearest kindred. She was a harmless creature enough, and it was now remembered that she had been far more sinned against than sinning. She was

so young still that it might be trusted she could be moulded into at least the likeness of a lady.

Friends more or less trustworthy gathered round Lady Sprott. She was brought in from Kingscroft, which was half dismantled and ruinous, and installed in the old town-house of the Sprotts in Logie, with the avowed purpose of procuring education more easily for the children, and the semi-avowed, more difficult undertaking of training Lady Sprott for the duties of her rank. A small but genteel establishment was arranged, including a prudently chosen day-tutor, if the expression may be permitted, who was to lay the foundation of learning in Sir Dauvit and the other children, and if possible improve the handwriting and spelling of her ladyship—nay, if he saw his way to it, impart to her a little general information in geography, history, and English literature. For anything further, there was the confidential, trustworthy upper servant, Mrs. Pollock, a tower of strength in herself, who was to rear the baronet like a gentleman from his cradle, and to supply his mother with hints on housekeeping, the management of servants, dress, deportment, and general pretty behaviour.

The scheme would have worked fairly if only somebody had given Lady Sprott the good advice bestowed on the butler whom his mistress married, and if her ladyship had been as capable of following the advice as that sensible man showed himself:—" Wear a good coat and hold your tongue" was the judicious recommendation. If Lady Sprott could but have worn a good gown and held her tongue, she would have saved her supporters much trouble and a good deal of nervous apprehension, while Logie would have been decidedly duller for her accomplishment of the feat. As it was, she moved freely in the society of the town and neighbourhood, and she seldom opened her mouth without dropping pearls and diamonds of a kind. Lady Sprott's sayings and doings furnished as great a source of public amusement as the *bon-mots* of the Merry Andrews themselves. Her ladyship, when left to herself, remained totally unconscious of the food for laughter she afforded. If people were ill-natured enough to enlighten her partially, she was too thick-skinned and self-satisfied to be much hurt by the laughter.

Lady Sprott was a flaxen-haired, slightly over-blown, but tolerably comely young woman, and she was the very best

customer, so far as lavish expenditure went, that Miss Stark could claim.

Lizzie looked as she was requested, at the grass-green gauze and satin gown, and green satin hat, and quite agreed with Mrs. Pollock as to their unfitness for Lady Sprott to figure in at Logie Market. But the critic could not say it plainly—above all when she caught the almost childish eagerness in Lady Sprott's upturned round face and baby eyes. "It is a very pretty gown, Lady Sprott, and it certainly suits your complexion," answered the girl evasively.

"Hear till her, Mistress Pollock!" cried her ladyship triumphantly, "and Lizzie Lindesay is a young leddy—an offisher's dochter—who should ken. What's the gude of being Sir Dauvit's weedy, and having braws gin I'm not to sport them in Logie Market?"

The interview was brought to a summary conclusion by a battle royal between Geordie Lindesay and his contemporary Rachie (Rachel) Sprott, over a painted gingerbread monster which each believed he or she had secured, and which the children crumbled into fragments in their rival grasp. Call the Lindesay boys wild! One should have seen the young Sprotts, male and female. They were small barbarians, a long way yet from civilization. They had been accustomed to ride roughshod over their mother, defying her and storming at her in rustic Billingsgate, which had drawn down roars of laughter and noisy applause from the late Sir Dauvit. Mrs. Pollock was horrified at such improper behaviour, which threatened to culminate in the person of her charge, for was he not "wee Sir Dauvit"—to whom everybody in the house except his nurse deferred—as well as an embryo pickle of the first water? As for Lady Sprott, she took all the insubordination, childish insolence, and barn-yard roughness with great equanimity. Bairns would be bairns. They would learn manners soon enough. Perhaps she had a faint consciousness that the manners when acquired would separate her from her children even more than the gentle birth on their father's side. When the question was of Sir Dauvit, her own little Sir Dauvit, whom she had borne to reign at Kingscroft—to which she had come in her scullion estate—he was the pride and glory of her heart—nothing, not even unbounded naughtiness, was to be denied him. If it rested with her he should never

be "contred"—she was prepared to lie down in her conqueror's path, and let him walk over his silly, vain, fond mother's heart, if he felt so inclined. Poor Lady Sprott! She was in native parlance raising a stick to break her own head. The efforts of Mrs. Pollock and the boy's guardians had need to be herculean to hinder the inevitable consequences.

At present, Sir Dauvit, almost as sumptuously arrayed as his mother, though in rather better taste, thanks to Mrs. Pollock, in his embroidered white pelisse and white beaver, sat enthroned in his nurse's arms, a bonnie boy enough, save for a certain flickering unsteadiness in his glance, inherited from his mother, and too great a breadth of jaw, derived from his father.

His sister, Rachie, a big child for her age, was screaming, "He's ta'en my gingebread horsey, and I'll gie him his paiks," in the intervals of putting her threat into execution.

Geordie was pommelling her back again, and shouting, "The horsey is nane of hers. I bocht it with ane o' my ain bawbees, and she bocht a pair o' gingebread sheers—fitter for a lassie."

Lady Sprott did not so much as hold up her gloved hands. She contented herself with a totally ineffectual "Wheesht! Rachie, be freends with the little gentleman. Here's another saxpence for you to buy mair horseys."

To which Rachie replied scornfully, "I dinna want another saxpence. I have saxpences of my ain that my faither, Sir Dauvit, left me. I winna be freends with Geordie Lindesay."

Lizzie dragged off Geordie and sought to affront him by asking him how he could be guilty of fighting with a girl, even if he, the son of an officer and gentleman, could so far forget himself as to use his fists to anybody.

At last to Lizzie's aid, when aid was very welcome, stepped forward Adam Lauder. He restored Geordie to good-humour in no time by the simple resource of such a sixpence as Rachie Sprott had disdained, and by confirming Lizzie's assertion that it was a shame to fight with a lassie. Adam, tall and strong, comely and good-natured, with his dogs and horses in the background, was a hero in a little boy's eyes, no less than in a young maiden's. The hero did not come late after all, for the market had begun betimes, and the

town's-folk naturally had the advantage of the first of it. Adam was looking his manly best in his green coat and boots and tops, with such a daintily-spotted cambric neckerchief above the plaited cambric frill of his shirt, as country gentlemen particularly affected, but which only become a young, fresh-coloured man. Lizzie had no need to be ashamed of her squire—which the young paper-maker constituted himself forthwith—whatever qualms she might feel as to the perfect propriety of their prolonged associations. The two formed a pretty pair—well-matched, as many an eye and tongue in the market remarked with cordial approval. The company of the little yellow-haired laddies did not detract from the effect of the group.

Supported by Adam Lauder, Lizzie took the children through the wild-beast show, the dancing-dogs' performance, the waxwork exhibition—the whole of them with their glory enhanced by braying instrumental bands playing tunes of the most hilarious description. Lizzie was not herself so enlightened and cultured as to be above deriving considerable satisfaction from those sights and sounds. But though she had to resist temptation in the case of a promised mermaid, of whose reality she was nevertheless decidedly sceptical, she had no inclination to contemplate the charms of the lion-faced lady enriching the display of the giant and the dwarf, in spite of the fact that Adam Lauder showed a disposition in that direction. Geordie and Mickle could only be bought off from the spectacle by fresh instalments of the sweeties, Gibralter rock, and nuts, which Adam was showering on the fortunate boys as an apology for pressing more crimson paper bags or "red pokes" of choice sweetmeats upon the boys' sister, long after Lizzie's reticule and pocket were full to overflowing.

The party were arrested for a moment by some impediment in the crowd before a stall of gaudy earthenware. Lizzie's eye was caught by a little teapot. "That will do for me when I retire to my garret," she said, demurely. "I wonder if Miss Katie Ochiltree has one like it," and she made the purchase.

"If you are going to be so hard-hearted," said Adam, in a tone of jolly unbelief, "you had better take a puss bawdrons to sing 'grey-thrums' and bear you company," and he extended his big hand towards an earthenware cat of the

most pronounced tortoise-shell, relieved by the fiercest of whiskers, which adorned the stall.

"Oh! I would rather have a dog," said Lizzie, laughing and pointing to a black and white fac-simile of the same. "Now, if it were not for its tail, which is curling the wrong way, it would be the picture of your Lark." The moment she had said the words she blushed violently, though she could hardly have told why.

"Better come out to Lauder Mills and have the live Lark, even though he be coupled with a scamp of a master," said Adam audaciously. Somehow audacity suited him, he looked so light-hearted and daring, fain to tease, yet incapable of willingly inflicting pain.

"No, I thank you, sir," said Lizzie, with overdone decision. Even as she spoke there rose up before her a vision of Lauder Mills House, sheltered and at the same time sunny, with monthly roses blossoming about it for six months out of the twelve, even in Scotland. There was wealth of wood and water beyond, that enabled the occupants to command the sweetest, most delightful walks at all seasons, whether the primroses or the hyacinths or the honeysuckle were in blossom, or the icicles were hanging from the mill-wheel, and the sheep "tremblin' in the heugh" in a snowy world. It was a pleasant picture—in fancy. Lauder Mills House, with its master Adam standing surrounded by his dogs on the gravel sweep before the door, and on the steps, come out to call him to breakfast or dinner, a young mistress, a happy, independent yet responsible matron, whose husband's house was her own to order and guide, in which she did not dwell like a stranger, as she had learned to abide in her father's house.

CHAPTER XVI.

LIZZIE'S THOUGHTS: HAY AS PERDITA.

IN the constraint of her position, Lizzie Lindesay had been sometimes tempted to anticipate the time when a young "Kenneth Mackenzie" or "Lord Ronald Macdonald" might come to her as to her ballad namesake, and put the leading question,

> "*Will ye gang to the Hielants, Leezzie Lindesay?*
> *Will ye gang to the Hielants wi' me?*"

Was Adam that "chieftain of high degree," and the Hielants to which he invited her, no remote and inaccessible region, but just bonnie Lauder Mills on the familiar Cart Water?

There was a long way between such a conclusion and a popular bachelor after the pattern of light-tempered, mercurial Adam Lauder, who among other good things which he enjoyed keenly, did not fail to appreciate his liberty, though he was capable of resigning it on an impulse, any day. Lizzie had an inkling of the state of matters, indeed she had some sympathy with it. She knew Adam Lauder was a fine fellow, and Lauder Mills House in one light an attractive home. But she knew also that Adam was quite capable of offending her. She was not so much as certain that even in his most agreeable moods she would care for spending her life with him. Life was not all a joke, and Adam was at his best when he was joking. Now there was her father, and there was the minister, and there might be many more like them, who could joke with the best when they were in the humour, and could yet be serious, with their seriousness becoming them even more than their gaiety.

All the same, Lizzie accepted the "pig" dog which resembled Lark, making the excuse to herself that the two little boys had got word of the toy and were set upon it. They would give her no peace if she declined it. Still, if it entered the house she would take care it was not nursery property for them to break; they must be content with looking at it from a respectful distance among her belongings.

In another moment Hay Melville came upon the scene and altered its entire complexion. While the Melvilles of Balmayne were among the gentry who had not forsaken Logie Market, in attending it they claimed certain privileges which distinguished their company from other market goers. There was usually a house full of people at Balmayne for the occasion. They walked down the centre of the main street, looking round them, and with the exception of Mr. Melville commenting freely, if in a kindly spirit on the whole, on what they encountered, and making conspicuous detours to such stalls as attracted the visitors—visitors not *habitués*. Everywhere the ladies and gentlemen were made way for, though not with humble politeness, but with clumsy awkwardness, and a shade of gruffness, for the Lowland Scotch peasant is the reverse of a deferential, obsequious creature.

This year there were fewer friends with the Melvilles than usual, but they had combined with the minister's party, which had a large clerical element and a smaller infusion of what was called the "half-pace gentry" of the neighbourhood, thus keeping up their numerical strength.

Hay was the ruling spirit and most prominent figure. Like Jean Scott, Hay wore a riding-habit, but Jean had ridden into the market, while Hay merely chose to retain a style of walking-dress not quite exploded. There are riding-habits and riding-habits. This might be said emphatically of the riding-habits of Bonnie Jean and the young heiress of Balmayne. Hay's habit of dark claret cloth had been made by the Edinburgh Poole of his day; it fitted and showed off her dainty proportions to perfection, while her piquant face never looked more original or held a greater attraction than under a man's tall hat. She was in high glee, darting here and there and treating all around instead of being treated with market fare. After the example of Perdita she made appropriate offerings, but with more pungency than poetry in the spirit of the deed.

Hay presented Mr. Ochiltree with a sermon bag, in the wicked consciousness that the occasional use of a "paper" in preaching was one of the few sore points which existed between him and his congregation. She handed a riding-switch to Lizzie, who had no horse. "But never mind, my dear, it will do for Geordie and Mickle," said the donor, mocking the indignant eyes of the much-indulged boys, and, further

recommending their sister not to spare the rod and spoil the children.

Hay pounced upon a "pirly-pig," a small brown earthenware bowl, round and close, with a slit, into which wise youth was supposed to deposit its pennies. Once dropped in they could not get out till the bowl could hold no more, when the solemn ceremony and sacrifice of breaking it was resorted to in order to reach the uncounted treasure. To the pirly-pig she added an hour-glass.

"These are for you, Mr. Adam Lauder," said Hay, graciously. "They are trifles, but you will find them useful. Everybody knows you are a careful man, both of your money and your time."

Adam grinned and looked foolish, but accepted the tokens, while he glanced eagerly round for some means of reprisal, forgetting all else in the search.

She picked out for her father, from a pile of sweetmeats, a collection of sugared coriander seeds, popularly known as "curly Andrews," the fact being that Mr. Melville never ate sweetmeats of any kind, and that though his Christian name was Andrew, his hair had been as straight as a Red Indian's from his childhood upwards.

She gave her mother a little red-framed looking-glass, such as was wont to hang on the walls of kitchens for the accommodation of kitchen-maids—telling her it might almost be slid into her hand-bag. Then she would always be able to see the state of her comb-curls and to correct the set of her bonnets and caps. The speech might or might not have reference to the generally received impression that Mrs. Melville valued greatly her naturally good looks, and took far more pains to preserve and embellish them than her daughter bestowed on her girlish graces.

When young Burn Foot strolled up with a languid compliment, Hay innocently proposed as a fitting tribute to his elegant scholarship a sheaf of broad-sheet ballads, at which he gazed with horror.

CHAPTER XVII.

MRS. MALLY'S SUPPER-PARTY.

THE rush of custom which Logie Market brought to the Crown Inn did not hinder its mistress from having private company—special guests whom she chose to entertain on the occasion. There was a usage which had existed since Hay Melville was a little girl, that she should see the best of the merry-making from Mrs. Mally's windows, and that her father and mother should sup with their cousin many times removed. In later years Lizzie Lindesay, as Hay's young friend, had been added to the party. This meant the further addition of young men to match the girls. The obligation to provide these necessary adjuncts where young women were concerned, was still more generally felt and openly expressed in arranging the private parties in Logie that night, than it would have been seventy or eighty years afterwards. The public would have called it a positive lack of forethought and friendly regard for girls to do less than furnish them on all social opportunities with likely swains and problematical husbands. Mrs. Mally was rather eccentric in her notions, and did not always comply with popular requirements, but she did not depart from them in this instance. She showed herself desirous of supplying beaux for her belles. She asked Adam Lauder and young Oliphant of Burn Foot to join the party. Neither of the young men declined the invitation, though there might be a difference in the degree of alacrity with which each accepted it.

Another guest who had supped with Mrs. Mally on Logie Market night, even more uniformly than the Melvilles had accomplished that ceremony, was M. de Saye. The Melvilles had not demurred at meeting the dancing-master. The lines which marked social distinctions were at once curiously fixed and curiously elastic, when the laird of Balmayne and his lady made no bones of owning the hostess of the Crown Inn as their kinswoman, accepting her hospitality, and mingling with whatever society was to be found around her, without the most distant idea of compromising the laird's dignity and the lady's gentility. Besides, M. de Saye was a gentleman in

misfortune, admitted to be such by all other gentlemen, and it was probably his own fault that he had never dined with the Melvilles at Balmayne, as well as supped with them at Mrs. Mally Corstorphine's table, both during the time when he had taught Hay her steps, and after it.

Withal there was something pathetic in the tenacity with which his hostess stood by the French dancing-master—the poorest, least profitable of her customers—and rose like a lion in his defence when she fancied him slighted. Did she find in him the realization of the youthful, heroic ideal which her wretched husband had failed to fulfil? Or was it in the light of a vague unacknowledged atonement to the son, who, if he had lived, would by this time have been within ten years of Moshie's age. For she had sternly ignored the lad's nationality on the father's side. She had deprived him of his very name and lineage. She had fiercely denounced and punished hereditary tendencies of race and blood that in themselves had no guilt attached to them, which she had lived to see co-existent in M. de Saye with a life of scrupulous honour, patient self-denial, and diligent discharge of the humble duty of earning a livelihood.

Moshie, in his punctilious full-dress, his antiquated uniform, high coat-collar, and pumps with huge bows of black riband, —a bag of bones, as Hay Melville described him, with the very bag threadbare—his hair combed back, foreign fashion, exposing the skull under the brown parchment skin, certainly looked a thorough gentleman. This was evident not only beside the plain elderly laird, but beside the two younger men—buckish Adam Lauder and Steenie Oliphant with a dash of a *petit-maître* in his delicacy, his dandyism, his poetasting, flute-playing, and daubing in water-colours.

It was young Burn Foot, to whom the pursuit of *belles lettres* ought to have imparted liberality, who, in point of fact, secretly hankered in his own person after Bonnie Jean Scott of pure yeoman extraction, that elevated his eyebrows ever so little at the first sight of Moshie as a fellow-guest in Mrs. Mally's parlour. But Steenie had tact among his other refinements, and he was incapable, unless under extreme provocation, of being rude and uncivil. His politeness was still of the Lord Chesterfield order, which enjoined blandness and forbade bearishness, under any circumstances. When he came to think of it, he did not object, in the absence of

any other prospect of excitement which the evening offered, to air and exhibit his acquirements in the French language and literature, together with what he had learnt of the Gallic nation when he had visited Paris after the Great Peace.

Mr. Melville had also been in France when, as some thought, it was better worth seeing. He had made the grand tour as a young man, not long before Arthur Young made it, at the time that the old ally of Scotland was all aflame at its heart and ready to break forth in the volcanic fires of the French Revolution.

Adam Lauder bore a civil tongue to everybody, and was only too ready to be hail-fellow-well-met with gentle and simple. Nevertheless, familiar as Lizzie was with nicknames, it grated upon her sense of what was generous when Adam styled the Frenchman under his breath, for fear of Mrs. Mally hearing him, "Count Fiddlestick." Lizzie did not know if Hay heard the words—at least she did not accept or apply them. On the contrary, while displaying a shade of haughtiness, which Hay, in the middle of her frankness and freedom was quite capable of exhibiting to the bestower of the ridiculous title, she went up to her former teacher, whom she recognized as the best-bred man of her acquaintance, and reproached him with flattering *empressement* for not giving her and Lizzie their market fare. "It was not like you and your countrymen, Monsieur," said Hay, with an absolute charm of courtesy in her tone, "for we always go to France for gallantry."

"Miss Melville does me too much honour," answered Moshie, with a smile that showed the delicate lines of his clear-cut mouth, and his teeth still white and even, gleaming back in answer to the sparkle of his dark eyes. "I did go into the market, but could not see anything worth the acceptance of two young ladies so charming." Moshie's old-fashioned compliments testified to the truth of Hay's remark, and betrayed the origin of the high-flown sentimentality, just tinged with facetiousness, that lingered in the tone of the elder men of the day towards women, especially young women.

"But if Miss Melville and Miss Lindesay will not accuse me of presumption," resumed Moshie, with one of his magnificent bows, "I shall venture to propose for their

acceptance two trifles, which I have had the felicity of carving for them," and hé produced two cleverly-fashioned *bonbonnières,* which, with the skill of the *emigrés* and prisoners of war, he had constructed from the beef and mutton bones of his dinner-table, after he had polished and carved the bones into a good imitation of ivory.

The girls were delighted with the novelty and prettiness of the gift.

"I declare they would make fine snuff-boxes. Moshie, I am willing to give you an order," said Adam Lauder, in whom delicacy of discrimination was not a strong point, and who seemed fated to blunder this evening.

Moshie did not draw himself up or scowl at the unconscious offender who meant no harm. The Frenchman smiled slightly, bowed a little bend of his supple back, and even thanked Adam in quick response to his good intentions. "I am much obliged, Mr. Adam" (Moshie pronounced the name Ad-am), "but I do not receive orders for goods in bone, or for that matter in ivory, of which I wish with all my heart these were composed for the young ladies' sakes. The poor little affairs are respectful and devoted *gages d'amitié,* pledges of friendship like the card-racks with which I have the supreme satisfaction of supplying my good friend Madame Mally here. I do not deal with anything professionally, save the arts of fencing and dancing. You are not a soldier, Mr. Ad-am; and though I should be very glad to have you for a pupil, I am afraid you consider yourself too big, and possibly too good a dancer already, to come to me for the dancing."

Adam laughed loudly and good-humouredly.

"I am too long-legged a boy to go back to the dancing-school. Fancy me coming down at the wrong place and time, and trampling on your toes, Moshie!" with a sly glance at the Frenchman's slender feet. "I doubt you would think little of my performance, yet I could get through shantruse when I was a laddie, and I can still manage a reel or a country dance," ended Adam, speaking modestly for the most renowned reel-dancer in the neighbourhood.

There was no thought of dancing then, even although Balmayne had consented to "lift" his cousin Mrs. Mally; three couples would have made a sorry country dance. The amusement was cards, the universal resource of such gather-

ings. At loo, though the young people, like their seniors, were partners, Lizzie and Adam against Hay and Steenie, as Mrs. Melville and M. de Saye encountered Mrs. Mally and Balmayne, there was little opportunity for a farther display of personal feeling than was involved in scrambling for the fish which represented the counters. This was done somewhat languidly by the lads and lasses, for reasons best known to themselves. They laid themselves open to the reproach of lack of spirit in the round game.

When the usual number of shillings and sixpences had been lost and won, Mrs. Melville and Moshie, Mrs. Mally and Balmayne withdrew from the contest and formed a sober coterie, in which the chief speakers were naturally the two ladies. The events of the market were discussed. The prospects of the season, especially with regard to the vegetables and fruit in the respective gardens at Balmayne and Logie were inquired into. The present position of the laird's mansion and the Crown Inn in the matter of servants was lightly touched upon. Finally, Mrs. Melville diverged into reminiscences of the late Governor—a favourite topic with her whenever she was with Mrs. Mally. It answered many purposes. It might be supposed to gratify posthumous sisterly pride and affection. It justified Mrs. Melville in her own eyes for her presence as a visitor at the Crown Inn. Lastly, the allusions were so many probes to ascertain privately the extent of the property that the late Governor had left behind him, all of which had come to Mrs. Mally with perfect freedom to dispose of every sixpence as she thought fit.

Mr. Melville took snuff, and Moshie occasionally uttered an abstracted "Truly," or "Is it possible, Mesdames?" as their contribution to the conversation.

The withdrawal of the seniors was intended to afford greater liberty to the young people to play at what games they liked and "divert themselves" according to their years. Hay Melville immediately proposed that the party should play at "The old Maid," a trial of matrimonial chances which was not likely to retain much interest for those whose fates were long ago settled. But the contest certainly awoke sufficient liveliness in the four who dealt, shuffled, drew from each other, and passed round the dreaded solitary queen, the incarnation of spinsterhood or bachelorhood, changing the

card from hand to hand with crafty secrecy, or eager exclamations and vehement protests.

Even young Burn Foot was roused to animation. The game was silly and childish, as well as very common and vulgar in the eyes of a young man of his culture, though he had once engaged in it at Burn Foot farmhouse when Bonnie Jean was of the company, and had felt as if it were leaves from the Sybilline Books he was handling. This game fell flat after that, but he did not wish to be beaten, or to become the laughing-stock of his neighbours.

In the end it was Adam Lauder who was twice left with that obnoxious queen undisposed of. The young fellow was evidently hot and nettled at the result. He looked inclined to pitch the harmless bit of pasteboard, with the representation of the simpering impassive face and the antiquated royal robes, at the back of the grate, or still better as a challenge into Steenie Oliphant's pink and white face of calmly smiling superiority. The effect was supremely ludicrous. No doubt it constituted the cynical motive which lay at the root of the foolish game.

Lizzie could not help laughing, though she was secretly sorry that Adam should be put out. As for Hay Melville, she was in a state of ecstacy at the catastrophe. Hay was looking her unapproachable best. She was in white—in a muslin gown she had worn under her riding-habit. It might have been thought that she was too colourless for white, but it would have been an error. Besides, she was not colourless this evening. The faintest shade of coral red warmed her paleness. To call it the reflection of sunset clouds on the winter snow would have been to use far too grandiloquent language; but it was like that most delicate tint which lurks in the heart of a rose or a shell when one can hardly say whether it is white or pink. As it was, the colour would have been too ethereal for a creature like Hay, who was much more of a worldly fairy—one part beneficient, three parts mischievous—than "a wood nymph wild," had it not been for another kind of wildness which belonged to her. This had nothing to do with shyness, but was part of a certain piquancy and perversity that expressed itself in the faint, fugitive wave of red. Contrasted with it, Lizzie's rosy cheeks suffered an eclipse, and were in danger of being called blowsy for the moment.

"I am going to tell your fortune, Lizzie," cried Hay, taking up the cards again, and shuffling them dexterously in her small, quick hands.

"No, no," cried Lizzie, in the utmost alarm, knowing what was to follow. "I do not wish my fortune told. I forbid you, Hay."

"But you cannot object," persisted Hay, with laughter in her eyes, "if I tell mine first;" and Lizzie had to give way.

Hay began to seek out rapidly the four kings among the honours in the pack, and to marshal them in a row with the recently decried queen at their head. "This is me," she observed, with an old-fashioned disregard of a grammatical rule. "Now who shall my four lads be? What a pity and shame that there are only four! But when it comes to that, we poor girls have not so many to pick and choose from in this forsaken neighbourhood, that we can dispense even with the present company," the fortune-teller went on in innocent, defiant glee. "Only be pleased to remember, you two gentlemen, that we are in jest and not in earnest, and that Lizzie and I would no more dream of having a gift of you, though you wished it with all your hearts and went down on your 'benden' knees to beg us, any more than if you were General Buonaparte at St. Helena, or the Grand Turk in Constantinople."

"Certainly not, Miss Melville," said Steenie, quietly.

"No, to be sure, we are not such cuddies," said Adam Lauder, in a more constrained, half-blustering tone.

Oh! the delicious matter-of-factness and plain speaking of those days. The venerable rites of Hallowe'en were fast going out of fashion, except for ploughmen like Burns, and country lasses like Jean Armour, or as a play for children. But the game of the Old Maid, and such fortune-telling as Hay was practising, still remained for young men and women of a higher class, and were indulged in largely in not a few drawing-rooms in Logie that night; though no doubt Miss Chawrlotte Bowers and Miss Soph-y Pettigrew would turn their shoulders and refuse to have anything to do with what was so stupid and unrefined.

"This is me," resumed Hay, pushing her short curls back from her eyes. "May I ask which of you gentlemen is the elder? Mr. Steenie Oliphant? Then, here you are next me," taking up a king and putting it by the queen, "and this is

Mr. Adam," with an arch glance, as she placed a second king next the other.

That glance, and the fact that the king chosen for him was king of hearts, consoled Adam for young Burn Foot's priority as well as seniority.

"Now, who are the others?" speculated Hay meditatively. "Help me, Lizzie, say somebody."

Lizzie, thus adjured, after a moment's reflection, suggested a brother of one of the Merry Andrews, the Shirra's brother, who had been married, but was a widower, not very far up in years.

"The Shirra's brother be it," assented Hay, cheerfully; "still it is mean of you to even me to a carle like him, with daughters as old as myself, but I'll punish you, madam, when your turn comes."

Then it was decided that the fourth king should represent a young country gentleman of Steenie Oliphant's standing, who lived farther away from Logie, but was occasionally to be seen within its bounds, and was an acquaintance of the Melvilles.

Hay began her incantations. They were not very deep or difficult, or hard to fathom. They consisted in her shuffling and shaking out in a heap before her over and over again the remainder of the cards, while she persistently counted and recounted, the number five always stopping the process, when she turned up a particular ace. Thus, when the ace presented itself at the number four, she scanned the row of queen and kings, and pounced upon the fourth king, which she had termed the Shirra's brother, turning it a quarter round, and gravely announcing that the Shirra's brother had taken a fancy to her. When the ace corresponded to the number one, she shifted the queen to the same extent, explaining, "No, I'm not for the Shirra's brother at present. Mind, every time I turn, five years pass, so that this first turn has made me already four-and-twenty. The Shirra's brother cannot afford to wait so long. But Shirra's brother or no Shirra's brother, I have not much time to lose myself, if I would not go through the wood, and take a crooked stick at e'en."

Hay shuffled and dealt and moved the cards, and the gazers watched her—not one of them, not even enlightened young Burn Foot, with indifference. As for Lizzie, her heart was

in her mouth, while Adam Lauder hung spellbound on the performance, and the witch who wove the spell was, in the middle of her gay nonchalance, thrilling with the destiny she held under her fingers.

"There, it is Mr. Charlie Maitland who has taken a fancy to me next. I'm sure I'm highly honoured," turning the last card as she spoke, "but it will be very inconvenient and tiresome if you are all after me, and I hang off and on for other ten years. Mrs. Mally's supper will be ready, and I shall not have time to do Lizzie justice. Hold your tongues, every one of you, lest I lose my count. One, two, three, four. Why, I declare, the Shirra's brother is dead-set on me—I'm afraid I'll not escape him," giving a second turn to the particular card. "One, two—Mr. Steenie Oliphant, if I were not so busy I should thank you with a low curtsey, it may be the only thanks you'll get for your favour. One, two, three—Mr. Adam, it is your turn *at last*," with a little involuntary emphasis on the "at last," and another killing glance at Adam, who gripped the table with his hands and leaned forward to catch the first glimpse of the fateful ace.

"One, two—you again, Mr. Steenie. What are you thinking of, sir?"

"You, apparently," said Steenie, smartly enough.

"One, two—there's sorrow in the cards," with an accent of real alarm and chagrin; "you've come the length of wooing me, sir." Then there was a desperate shuffle and a revival of hope, for in a multitude of suitors there is safety, and it was Mr. Charlie Maitland who, in all unconsciousness of his desperate state, was dead-set this time.

The card which represented Adam had not moved beyond the first, or what may be called the introductory stage.

"One, two—eh! Mr. Steenie, I've got you!" exclaimed Hay, with a surprised cry of comical consternation.

"I ought to be highly flattered, and the happiest of men," remarked Steenie Oliphant, with faultless politeness and a shade of irony.

Hay had recovered herself in an instant. "But as there are two at a bargain-making—more than that, as neither of us wants the other, I don't suppose the cards can settle our lot against our will. Cheer up, Mr. Steenie, you see I have not lost heart."

CHAPTER XVIII.

LIZZIE'S EYES OPENED.

"Now, Lizzie, we'll try your fortune, and let us hope the cards will be true for you."

Hay marshalled the queen and the kings afresh, the only difference being that she said as she ranged her puppets, "This is you, Lizzie, and this is you, Mr. Adam, *of course*," with a mischievous point given to the two last words that dyed Lizzie's cheeks scarlet and caused Adam to bite his lips. "And, not to be partial, this is you again, Mr. Steenie, but instead of the Shirra's brother we'll have M. de Saye over there," indicating the person mentioned by an expressive nod of the head.

"Oh! what a shame," exclaimed Lizzie, hastily.

"Why, Lizzie," protested Hay, in a tone of injured innocence, "you gave me the Shirra's brother, and he is older than Moshie—at least he looks it—is a widower, and not a bachelor."

"But he is not a poor gentleman, reduced to being a dancing-master, in addition to being up in years, and a foreigner, who if he heard you would not understand such a bad joke," insisted Lizzie.

"Let him alone for that, and he a Frenchman, though it would not be exactly a *marriage de convenance;* but you are a favourite with Mrs. Mally, and I dare say she would receive you both."

"She would be very angry if she caught the sense of your words."

"Nonsense, she understands a joke, as you call it, better than you do. What was the name of that cousin of yours, the lieutenant in the line, who visited you before he went on active service?"

"Fordyce," answered Lizzie, still a good deal out of sorts. "And he did not visit me, he visited my father. I was not away from school then; it is years and years ago, and he has not been heard of for a long time. His mother is afraid he got leave of absence and perished in that transport which was lost in the Mediterranean."

"I hope not," answered the incorrigible Hay, composedly. "Depend upon it he will turn up, especially if he be to marry you. If not, I mean if he is not forthcoming at the proper time, you will be as good as a widow, Lizzie. It will be quite romantic."

There was more shuffling, dealing, and shifting of cards, then amidst general laughter, half suppressed, M. de Saye was allotted to the affronted Lizzie.

"What will you do with him, Lizzie?" demanded Hay. "You were his best pupil. Will you succeed to his pumps? He has pretty feet for a man, and if you wore cork soles you might grow to fill his shoes. I am afraid his fiddlestick is beyond you. But oh! what will the auld Captain say? He fought the French for the greater part of his life, and can never forget Waterloo, though that was after his day of active service. He imagines Moshie bears him a grudge for the glorious victory, not considering that the French whom your father beat were no more the French to whom Moshie belonged than we are the Black Nebs who would have had their version of the revolution here if the law had not stopped them."

The next instant a blow was dealt to Lizzie Lindesay. Something happened which, though it was a trifle as light as air in itself, like a straw showed in what direction the wind blew, and she never forgot it. The young people were still lingering over the cards. Steenie Oliphant was building houses or castles, crumbling and crashing down every moment. Hay Melville was undertaking to play elaborate "tricks"—an accomplishment still in vogue, which like other small pieces of legerdemain has been since handed over to professionals, or has descended many degrees in the social scale.

"You have been very cruel to me to-night, Miss Melville," muttered Adam Lauder, in a complaint which was only intended to reach her ear.

"Cruel to you, Mr. Adam?" she repeated quickly, in an equally low tone. "No, I do not think I could be cruel to you," with a still greater fall in her voice, and an involuntary, tremulous vibration in its tones, which he caught, and pricked his ears as he did so.

Lizzie had also caught it, as well as what had gone before it, and she saw the expression on Adam's bluff, handsome face. She received a shock, she was wounded, and it seemed to her that a dream she had indulged in—the first of its kind, with

all its glamour to her youthful mind—was scattered to the winds. It was only a fancy, she had not gone farther, she had not been "dead-set," as Hay had aptly expressed another and a more desperate state of feeling. Lizzie had even been dubious both as to the worth of the object of her fancy and her undisputed right to indulge in the fancy.

But as Lizzie recalled the good ground for the dream and the encouragement which it had received that very day, she felt more than hurt—indignant on her own account alike with Adam and with Hay. Neither had been altogether loyal either to her or to themselves, in failing to know their own minds, and in consenting to make a tool and a screen of her. Thus not only did Lizzie's heart fall, her spirit rose, and perhaps that was the best thing which could have happened to her, apart from the proof it supplied that she was not badly injured. It enabled her to behave with dignity and independence, as if nothing had been said or done that could concern her, though beneath her womanly armour there was a flesh-cut bleeding a little and smarting still more in her tender bosom.

CHAPTER XIX.

A DOG'S ANTICS.

Mrs. Mally had arranged a distraction while her supper-table was laid. The company were to repair to Moshie's sitting-room, which he had put at her and their service. It was a small room which the hostess of the Crown had taken care should be comfortable. It was furnished in dark mahogany and spotless dimity, and abounded in those clever contrivances of hanging shelves, artificial recesses, book-rests, lamp-stand and shade, which a solitary man, compelled to economize space, and skilful in resource, is apt to originate in the course of a prolonged occupation of one domicile. The litter of papers with which Merrin, the elderly chambermaid, had taken liberties, were stowed away in their bureau. An old French engraving of a chateau, with pepper-box turrets and a walled terrace, hung above the carved wood chimney-piece.

But it was not so much to satisfy idle curiosity by inspecting Moshie's belongings that the supper-party were brought there, as to witness the feats of his dog "Mignonne," which could be best displayed on their own ground.

Mignonne was a white poodle cut like a lion, when such grotesque copies of the king of beasts were much rarer than in the days of the illustrious Bingo. Mignonne's whiteness exaggerated the blackness of her eyes and the pinkness of the tip of her nose. She was Moshie's constant companion except when in class—a position which he regarded too seriously to permit of a disturbing element, introduced by his means, on the scene. Moshie washed, combed, and clipped Mignonne with his own hands, and made her the accomplished creature she was, the pride of the Crown Inn. She was boldly borrowed or surreptitiously beguiled from the retirement of her master's room in his absence, in order to exhibit in a shorn and disjointed manner her unexampled performances to admiring audiences in private sitting-rooms, in the bar, or in the kitchen. Even Mrs. Mally was dazzled by the greatness of Mignonne's attainments, and credulous as to the extent of her knowledge, and would confidently assert of the dog, "she knows every word Moshie says, and is wiser than mony a Christian."

Mignonne could walk round on her hind legs, and shake hands affably with all human beings so disposed. She could read the newspapers, or pretend to read them, and shake her wise head over the contents, better than Mother Hubbard's dog. She could take snuff literally, and sneeze a *bonâ fide* sneeze after the tiny pinch. She could hunt for Moshie's gloves or slippers, and find them though they were hidden ever so cunningly; nay, she could hide in her turn, if Moshie would go out of the room and give her the opportunity, and wait in perfect stillness till she was found out beneath the folded-down leaf of the table, or behind the easy-chair, or stretched flat out on her stomach within the shadow of the window curtain, when she would utter a rapturous bark of applause at the mother wit of the seeker in discovering her retreat. She could support Moshie's smallest violin against her chest and under her jaw, and draw one paw across the strings with a ludicrous mimicry of her master as he discoursed sweet sounds; and when Moshie took the violin and

flourished his bow to a lively measure, Mignonne would caper up and down, aping the dancing of his pupils, beyond the power of risible muscles to stand the sight unmoved.

"Did you bring that dog from France with you, Moshie?" asked Adam Lauder, recovering with difficulty from the shouts of laughter with which he had greeted the entertainment. "Is the article ready-made there? Eh! but I would like to see how my tykes, Lark and Heather, would look at such a fellow-dog's antics."

"They may see them on any day you like to name, sir," said Moshie, softly stroking the white bush of a head resting confidingly against his knee. "I may tell you Mignonne is not what you would call a ready-made article. Perhaps there are few as she in France now. I would add that her antics are the least of her merits. No, I did not bring her with me. She was less happy so far. She was born in exile, though kind friends have done much to make that exile home," ended Moshie, with an inborn grace and graciousness. Steenie Oliphant's display of like qualities was but a faint, superficial, and superfine version of the same.

Steenie felt that it was now time for him to come to the front. He rose, looked at the engraving above the chimney-piece, and made some observation in French to its owner on the nature of French buildings in general and French chateaux in particular.

Moshie answered rather reluctantly in his native language, which sounded with a marvellous difference on his lips from the laboured gutturals and clipped syllables that fell stiffly from the other's tongue. The rest of the company appeared to listen in respectful silence, unless indeed that Adam openly chafed at an exhibition in the two girls' presence in which he could take no part. Mr. Melville thought young Burn Foot was a fool to make such an idle exhibition, and waited a little cynically for his breaking down; while Hay, behind the hand on which her cheek was resting, fairly laughed at the mess Steenie was making of his idioms and reflected verbs. But not a muscle of Moshie's face moved to indicate any jar to his sensitive ear. He managed to make out his interrogator's meaning, though it became every moment more involved.

Suddenly Balmayne broke in with a few words in English,

which showed that he had been following the conversation, and had not quite forgotten his French, though he had never been in the habit of sporting it.

Steenie Oliphant had been making some remarks in the cool tone of superior information. His boyish satisfaction in his acquaintance with conversational French, and power of expressing himself in it, hindered his good breeding and natural good feeling from intimating to him that he was touching on debatable ground, and handling topics, the awkwardness of which the merest tyro in manners might have guessed. He had asserted coolly that the Revolution and the long wars had caused such chateaux as the one in the print before him to be either pulled down or forsaken.

"I believe that chateau is neither in ruins nor abandoned," said Moshie briefly.

It was then that Mr. Melville interposed. "It is a fair specimen of such houses as I have seen in Gascony—I don't think I noticed quite the same terrace elsewhere."

Moshie looked up with a flash of eager interest in the eyes, which were not unlike Mignonne's—as keen and as wistful. In another moment he restrained himself, and said carelessly, in English, as if he were glad to resume the language of his adopted country, which all present understood: "Probably, but such terraces were not very rare in the provinces in my day."

"Of course, mon-si-eur," said Mrs. Melville, who took the precaution of dividing the word into syllables and sounding every letter. "You must have known many chateaux like that;" and she nodded her handsome, matronly head towards the engraving, and spoke in sympathetic, sentimental tones. They were too artificial in their very good nature to please the person to whom the allusion came forcibly home.

"Without doubt, madame, I have seen such, frequently, a long time ago," he owned, formally, but with no encouragement to further questioning. What did his hearers, even the most genial and friendly, care for the old chateau which he would never see again, but of which he could not deny himself the poor little engraving above his mantel-piece?

At supper Balmayne sat at the foot of the table, and Steenie Oliphant, as next in rank, at Mrs. Mally's right hand. He carved the fowls very neatly, she felt bound to admit,

though she was not otherwise taken with him. She was more attracted by Adam Lauder, simply and manly, frank and free. He was doing his best to recommend himself to Mrs. Melville, who received his attentions with a shade of reserve. Was he not a paper-maker instead of a laird? He was not even the son of a laird, merely of a parish minister, who might be a worthy and learned man in his way, but the way was not exactly that of the Melvilles of Balmayne. And might not this audacious and ambitious Mr. Adam Lauder lead that precious mischief Hay into folly, and turn her still more decidedly against young Burn Foot, who was a proper match for the young heiress, as well as all that a girl's heart need desire?

Hay was opposite to them, devoting herself to Moshie, who, happy man, sat between her and Lizzie.

After supper the claret—as excellent Bordeaux as any the gentlemen could have drunk in France—and the toddy, brewed scientifically by Balmayne in the late Governor's punch-bowl, were passed round. Then, when everybody was refreshed, at ease, and inclined for enjoyment, came the time for toasts, sentiments, and vocal music, unfettered by a piano accompaniment or by a constrained, ostentatiously silent drawing-room circle. Here Lizzie and Adam Lauder were the mainstays of the party. Steenie Oliphant could play the flute and write sonnets, but he could not sing a song, good, bad, or indifferent. Hay was already under the modern thraldom, she could do nothing without an instrumental accompaniment. But Adam gave "The Garb of Old Gaul," and "The Bold Dragoon," in a very respectable tenor with hearty fervour, while Lizzie, without spoiling the air much by the quaint shakes and trills which she had been carefully taught at the Miss Murdies' boarding-school, piped "Burns' Rosebud," and looked nearly as sweet as the flower thus commemorated:

> "A rosebud by my early walk,
> Adown a corn-enclosed bauk,
> Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
> All on a dewy morning.
>
> 'Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
> In a' its crimson glory spread,
> And drooping rich the dewy head,
> It scents the early morning."

Moshie was the one accomplished musician in the company, but it was not till after some pressure that he consented to have his violin fetched, and played a tuneful gavotte. As he did so he stood up, advanced one shapely though lean foot, let his head fall back a little, while he closed his eyes and gave himself up to the melody. He looked a quaint, comical figure, a mixture of Don Quixote and Dr. Syntax.

It was too much for Hay Melville, in spite of her former objection to Adam's mockery. She drew her chair back so as to be in the same line with Mrs. Mally and behind Balmayne. Thus secure, and daringly depending on Moshie's eyes remaining shut, Hay proceeded to give an inimitable version of his attitude, down to the flourish of the arm wielding the fiddle-bow.

It was just such a performance as that with which Hester Thrale enlivened a large assemblage of the wit and fashion of her day, when, the first time she met the opera-singer Piozzi, she stood up on tip-toe behind him where he sat at the piano, and gave his airs and graces in drollest dumb show at his back.

Mrs. Melville and Lizzie could not venture to shake their heads, and they had to compress their lips to preserve their gravity. Steenie Oliphant was betrayed into a broad grin. Luckily for the hindrance of a perfect guffaw, Adam missed the farce, which stopped on the instant that Moshie's eyelids flickered. Adam Lauder wondered what the deil that fine gentleman, young Burn Foot, was nickering at.

The Balmayne carriage arrived, for it would not have been pleasant for ladies, even doubly and trebly escorted, to walk through the town on a market night.

The Melvilles went, but the others still lingered a little longer. It would not have been polite to show themselves in a hurry to go. Steenie Oliphant continued to make talk for Mrs. Mally and Moshie. Adam Lauder hung about Lizzie, and looked at her a little ruefully.

Presently Adam began to speak to Lizzie, and that not fairly, of Hay. Miss Melville had such a glib tongue. It was impossible to keep beyond its reach—one had not a chance of getting away from her. All was grist that came to her mill.

Lizzie cut him short with sufficient sharpness. "My

friend, Miss Melville, has a very agreeable wit—I think you enjoyed it very much, Mr. Adam—all the more so that it came from Balmayne's daughter. But she is too much of a lady to be proud."

One clause of this sentence had its special sting, and Lizzie was sorry for it the moment she had inflicted it. For well she knew, and Adam knew also, that while he was strongly attracted by Hay's fun, as what man whose heart was not dull as ditch-water could fail to be attracted, the chief spice of the fun to Adam lay in the circumstance that the fun-maker was Miss Melville of Balmayne.

Adam was not always particular about the company he kept. He was reckoned as reckless in his conduct as a young man could well be—but for that very reason, perhaps, he had at the bottom of his heart a Scotchman's lively appreciation of a long pedigree. Neither was he by any means without regard to the advantages of a tocher in a woman.

Lizzie Lindesay, reasonable by nature and discipline, was willing to own that there was nothing absolutely wrong in Adam Lauder's worldliness, though it might belong to the lower side of the man's nature. But for Adam to pretend in addition that Hay Melville made advances to him or to any man, and that he was over-mastered and disgusted by them, was too bad.

Adam hung his high head for a moment before Lizzie's clear sight, and her fidelity to the claims of her sex and of friendship—even of such an arbitrary friendship as existed between her and Hay. But it was not in him to remain out in the cold where any woman was concerned, or to suffer himself to sink in her good graces without a vigorous effort to recover his footing.

He would have liked to be preferred by both the girls and to be happy with both. Even if that were not possible, Hay was gone, and it was the most natural thing in the world in her absence for him to turn again to Lizzie Lindesay and devote himself to her. Lizzie was in her own way as lovely and amiable a girl as he knew. Why, he was quite fond of Lizzie. He did not deserve that she should turn round upon him for what he was persuaded that somehow he could not help. He took a second time that night the tone of an injured man. He "fleeched" and prayed in an undertone which

only she could hear, that she would give him his market fare, though it was so late in the day. Miss Melville had not been so stingy, she had presented him with a sand-glass and a pirlie-pig, though she took him off in the act. He was sensible that he was not so careful as he should be, either of his time or his money; but he could not go counting every minute and penny he spent, like some saving chields he knew, whom no doubt she admired. But that was not the question: would Lizzie be less generous than Miss Melville?

Lizzie thawed so far as to laugh, but she stood firm. She did not know in her own mind what market fare Adam Lauder expected, but he should have nothing from her, neither riband nor lock of hair, nor kiss stolen for the first time, for which he sought to keep her back for a moment when the others left the room, in memory of the market-day. Such tangible treasures or pleasant memories were too common with Adam to make any of them of the least value. She would never contribute to the worthless heap. Nevertheless, when Lizzie came to carry off her property, acquired in the market, which she had brought to show to Mrs. Mally, and left on a side-table, she found her old maid's tea-pot for the garret gone—abstracted to form a fitting pendant to Hay Melville's sand glass and pirlie-pig. The pig dog, which in its stony ferocity resembled Lark, was there all right, but no little teapot. Lizzie did not like to make an outcry over her loss. Silly fellow! what could he do with his gain? His housekeeper would only laugh at it and break it presently as a "cockering" toy, not fit for a man's tea, particularly when he had a fine Britannia metal pot calculated to hold, not merely tea-leaves to serve himself when he wanted them, which was not often, but sufficient for the reversion of three or four cups of tea to his excellent servant. It was over that theft Lizzie had heard the thief whistling so gaily when he picked up his hat and riding-whip. Who could whistle so blithely, with such fearless joyousness of sound as if he had not a care on his mind, and the whole world were a field which he was sallying forth to conquer? For sheer ringing gladness, any tripping gavotte Moshie could play was nothing to the whistling which Adam practised so frequently for his own benefit. It was true there might be an undercurrent in the gaiety of the Frenchman's music which the other's lacked.

But for mirth, pure and simple, none could compare with Adam's. All the same, Lizzie was of opinion that she ought to think no more of Adam Lauder and his whistling. They were not for her, whether or not they would lure Hay Melville into the not inadmissable descent from Balmayne to Lauder Mills. Let Adam make his choice and stick to it. Lizzie for one had no desire seriously to enter the lists with Hay, and no liking for the unmagnanimous proverb, "It is the cleverest lass who puts out her neighbour."

CHAPTER XX.

MOSHIE'S DANCING-SCHOOL BALL, THE SPECTACLE OF THE SEASON.

LOGIE was not quite so well provided with social gaiety in the shape of assemblies as some English towns of its size and date. It had not a ball every month, with all the simple etiquette and careful provision for respectability supplied by an array of stewards. These good-natured country gentlemen or town magnates undertook the double responsibility of vouching that no detected cheat should sit down at a card table, and no unreformed rake, nay, or pronounced *roturier* of a presuming tradesman, whose trade was not on a large enough scale to command the proper amount of profit, should stand up in a country dance, or in one of the more recently introduced quadrilles, with a young lady for his partner. But at least Logie had three assemblies in the course of the winter. They were attended duly by every creature, young and old, who had the smallest claims to gentility. They were always countenanced by the Rev. John Ochiltree, and though his wife was unable to accompany him, his presence showed that the shepherd was in sympathy with the blameless pastimes of his flock.

The long interval between the last winter's assembly in February and the next in the following November, was agreeably broken in the course of the spring by M. de Saye's

dancing-school ball. It was as numerously attended as the Assemblies, while it was more open and unshackled, and admitted of a greater mixture of classes in the company.

As a check to this license, Moshie was a host in himself in the character of Master of the Ceremonies. No *bêtise* or scandal need be feared when it was known that the inexorable Frenchman would, without an instant's hesitation, turn out the offender, be he a noisy, broken-down farmer, like Jean Scott's father, a thick-skinned, forward young shopkeeper, or a dissipated, regardless sprig of the quality. Moshie would be one man against a nation, but he would be upheld in the act by all the good feeling in the room.

Moshie's arrangements were on the most liberal as well as dignified scale, so that though the guests paid for their tickets, the privileges secured in return were so great as to leave an impression that the host must be left out of pocket by so stylish and sumptuous an entertainment. It was not to be thought that the modest charge of seven-and-sixpence for each lady, and half-a-sovereign for every gentleman, could cover the expense of a regular supper, with all the delicacies of the season, not to speak of negus and sandwiches to be had at any time throughout the evening. For the commissariat was under the able superintendence of Mrs. Mally Corstorphine, who also graced Moshie's ball by her presence.

The services of a famous instrumental band—the same which was engaged for the race and hunt balls, the cream of the Logie balls—were procured from Edinburgh, not for the benefit of the children, but to enable the grown-up people to dance in their turn, far into the small hours. This was after the first part of the programme had been fulfilled, and the little heroes and heroines of the occasion dismissed to their pillows. Moshie's ball, though it was unrivalled as a dancing-school ball, was by no means confined to that category. Grown-up people far and near, who were not the parents of pupils, looked forward to the event for weeks as to a welcome boon; the fact being, it was the dancing-master's acknowledgment—all the return he could make for the confidence the Logie public had reposed in him during a score of years as an "*artiste*," when the term was unknown in Logie. Moshie made his acknowledgment handsomely, without any outcry, like the gentleman he was, in his greatest

poverty, when, had it not been for the *ruses* of his landlady of the Crown Inn, he would have gone without so much as an egg to breakfast, and would have dined from vegetables alone, for a period of days, to balance the lavish expenses overlapping the profits of his ball.

Without doubt Lizzie Lindesay and Hay Melville were among the company at Moshie's ball. They were bound to countenance it and him, apart from their own very favourable inclinations. Indeed, one of them had been so distinguished in the proficiency she had attained under his instructions, that she had been several times selected, not without a good deal of heart-burning on the part of other young ladies and their relations, to play an important part in one of the ceremonies of the evening.

Lizzie had her stepmother for her chaperon. Geordie and Mickle, though they were not reckoned of sufficient age to attend the parish school, had already been put under Moshie to be licked into shape betimes as well-bred gentlemen. And to see Geordie and Mickle dance in a row of small boys, had lent such additional attractions to Mrs. Lindesay's silver gauze turban with the bird of paradise plume, and her salmon-coloured silk gown, that she had preferred them to her sofa and her novel. But not even the gratification of witnessing his sons' performance could tempt the bold Captain to grace Moshie's ball. He bore no grudge against the Frenchman, but he could not get it out of his head that the Frenchman must bear a grudge against him. Captain Lindesay could not forget Waterloo, which had happened only the other day. It seemed to the punctilious soldier more considerate to a gallant foe that his victor should abstain from witnessing what the vanquished man was reduced to. Not that the Captain despised dancing in itself. He had the highest respect for it as an elegant accomplishment which was at its height in the beginning of the century; but dancing as a substitute for fighting was a tremendous descent in a true fighter's eyes.

The auld Captain was solitary in his absence. The whole town and country that could pay for tickets flocked to the exhibition. The Rev. John Ochiltree was there, as he was at the assemblies, in his clerical black, conspicuous among the blue and green and claret-coloured coats of his neighbours.

It made no difference to the minister's attendance that Moshie was a Roman Catholic, since he was so liberal in his creed as to worship in the parish kirk in the absence of a Roman Catholic church. This conformity disarmed what otherwise would have been the ultra-Protestant hostility in Logie to a Papist. The minister was there not only to support a parishioner and friend, he felt bound to clap his hands at the surpassing feats of each small man or little maid. He was called on to take an interest in the bairns, though his sons were old enough to be at "the college," and he had suffered the misfortune of the death of his only daughter a dozen years before, Mrs. Ochiltree having pined from that day. But these were his children in another sense. He had christened and catechized nearly all of them. He would receive many into church membership; he would marry some, and, alas! he would visit some ministerially, to instruct and comfort them on their sick and dying beds, and would follow them—passing away untimely before him, who was of an older generation. It might be that he discharged his solemn duties with greater tenderness and acceptance because of the lighter associations. There was thus a peculiarly intimate connection between him and the young of his flock.

But there existed no such bond between the bairns and the Merry Andrews. For example, one Merry Andrew was a married man with a grown-up family. Another was married, but childless. The third and poorest was a somewhat Bohemian bachelor. None of them had a greater tie to the youth of the place than what was implied by various degrees of acquaintance with the parents, and the general familiarity which pervades the community of a town of the size of Logie. Yet there the three legal functionaries were to be seen sitting in a row in the semi-circle of benches, as the three great statesmen, Fox, Burke, and Wyndham, sat to weep over the tragic acting of Sarah Siddons. In this instance, notable forensic brains unbent without scruple over the ballet.

The person who really felt, and found it necessary to show she felt, that she was stooping to join in an act of frivolity in being present at the dancing-school ball, was Miss Murdie, the head of the ladies' boarding-school in Logie. She was

a Highland lady of birth and breeding, steeped in such erudition as was fit for a polite female, and induced by narrow means, in addition to her duty to the human race, to consent to preside for three decades over the education of the upper class of girls in the town and neighbourhood. Miss Murdie was a power in the town, in some senses not far beneath the minister. It was a great thing for the reputation of the ball that she should be there. She did not fail to grant the favour, for she had known Moshie ever since he came to Logie, and taught for the most of the time the pupils belonging to her school, or, as she preferred to call it, "seminary" (she pronounced the word "siminary"). But she did what she could to qualify the bad effect of her abdication of a moral and intellectual throne—more autocratic than that of the Rev. John—in order to appear among the multitude in so trifling a scene. She redeemed the waste of precious time in sitting for three hours looking at children dancing. She enfolded her large person in an ample red Indian shawl, and crowned her majestic brows with the coils of a white turban. In short, she contrived, without knowing it, to look as like as possible to the Grand Turk, with spectacles on his nose, a false front of stiff black curls showing just below his turban, and his fingers laden with rings veiled by mittens, sitting, not cross-legged on a divan, but in the place of honour, in the centre of the most elevated row of benches. But instead of smoking a long pipe or inspecting a roll of parchment inscribed with Arabic characters, she intermitted her contemplation of the dancers in order to refresh her mind by reading, she would have said "perusing," an ordinary book. Here it must be confessed Miss Murdie fell a little from her high standard. To have been consistent, she ought to have been occupied with no lighter literature than adorned her schoolroom, in the shape of Hume's 'History of England,' or at the most a volume of the 'Mirror'; but human nature is weak, and even Miss Murdie had yielded to the spell of the wonderful magician who was swaying the intellectual world. She was dealing in no more solid diet than the last Waverley novel. Yet in this, too, there was fine mental equilibrium, there was superiority to giving one's self up to the feelings of the moment! Well-balanced Miss Murdie, to be able to look with critical

acumen on the skipping and sliding of Moshie's pupils in the intervals of receiving the dying confession of Elspeth Mucklebackit, and following Lucy Ashton into her bridal chamber.

The person who enjoyed the ball most, not excepting the children, was Lady Sprott. Her gauze and lace were no longer out of keeping, and her round soft face was all agape with delight. She had never witnessed anything half so splendid before. At the same time, her simple self-complacency kept her from feeling out of place or nervous, though Mrs. Pollock was not at her elbow to tell her what to do.

"I'll no attempt to stand up, my lane, for a high dance," she was heard to say, referring to some of the elaborate and artistic performances of Moshie's pupils, which she expected to see emulated by the grown-up people present when their time for dancing arrived, "but what's to hinder me taking pairt in a reel? Its aichteen months since puir Sir Dauvit deed, and I've paid every respeck to his memory, as it behoves the mither of young Sir Dauvit to do, though I'm sure my man wouldna hae murned sae long for me."

Lady Sprott's respect had been shown in an eccentric fashion in one instance. The late Sir Dauvit's agent, when apprised of the death, had striven to have all the melancholy arrangements made decently, and in a style suitable to the station in life of the deceased baronet. The widow was in a sense—apart from her grief—incapable of giving orders, and an old crony who had come to help her was as ignorant as herself. Among other materials ordered and sent out to Kingscroft by the lawyer, was a quantity of black cloth, meant to be used in hanging the family pew in the kirk. The cloth arrived in the absence of the lawyer and occasioned considerable speculation. Her ladyship's weeds, the children's frocks, and the servants' gowns had been already seen to, so that the mysterious cloth could not be destined for family mourning. Some rash person leapt to an ingenious conclusion. A baronet was not as other men. He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. It might be that when he died, etiquette demanded that his body should be wound in black cloth instead of white linen. No sooner thought and said than done. Lady Sprott, in her zeal to pay due honour to

her husband—all the more so that he was past harming her—consigned him to his coffin swathed in sable broad-cloth, much as patients suffering from small-pox a few hundred years before had been wrapped round and round with many yards of scarlet cloth, under the idea that it was a sovereign remedy for the disease. The man of business arrived too late to correct the mistake. After all, what did it matter? The intention was good, and the breathless torture inflicted on the small-pox patients was spared here. The sleeper would not sleep the less soundly on account of the grotesque blunder.

The exhibition in the Town Hall began as early as six o'clock, with the *polonaise* or marching. The hall itself had been very tastefully decorated with evergreens, under Moshie's special directions. Holly and box and ivy mingled with the rusty old weapons, faded and tattered flags, and fiddle-brown pictures, which formed the ordinary adornment of the room. Young hearts beat high as their owners ascended the stairs and caught the first glimpse of the transformation, including the very floor chalked in bold floral designs, as it was chalked for the hunt and race balls, but not for the assemblies.

Pupils and company were alike punctual. The instrumental band was in its place already, pealing forth its challenges to the floor. The music might be somewhat sonorous for the space it filled, yet the opportunity of listening to airs fully performed was in itself a treat to those who heard no German bands, few pianos, very rarely even a street organ. The pleasure thus largely received was liberally expressed by the company's beating time. So long as this self-imposed contribution to the swing of the tunes was confined to the nodding of heads and even the clapping of hands, Moshie bore it heroically. But when the tramping of many feet followed, he first frowned tremendously, and then raised one finger with an imperative sign for the music to stop till he addressed the over-demonstrative company:—

"Ladies and gentlemen,—You are very good, but if you will make the floor one big drum and your feet the drumsticks, tell me what can the rest of the instruments do?" With that Moshie gave the national shrug of the shoulders, and spread out his hands with the palms turned slightly outwards,

in the most effective and prohibitory gestures, which nobody ventured to defy.

Moshie stood, tall, lean, and stately, receiving his company *en grand seigneur*. The last edition of his old French uniform was scrupulously correct in every detail. He wore a bow of white riband at his button-hole. He had sported the same instead of a tri-colour cockade, when he was a hot-headed lad. That was on the fatal night at Versailles while the *garde de corps* entertained the *Regiment de Flandres*, when "*O Richard, O mon Roi*" was sung with acclamation, as the most well-meaning and hapless of kings and the most regal and charming of queens received their final disastrous ovation.

Few people understood Moshie's white riband, indeed it had ceased to have much meaning to himself, save as a proudly sad assertion of the colours of a lost cause—a cause which he had long since seen had provoked failure. But there was one light in which there had been no failure. Moshie could put his hand on his heart and say that though he had been a dancing-master for a quarter of a century, he had never disgraced his colours. He was quite another man from the profligate renegade, liar, and slanderer, whose confession at the guillotine was, "I have been false to my order, my king, and my God."

The marching was followed by the younger children going through their rudiments of the four fundamental positions, and further illustrating the a, b, c, and syllables of harmonious motion, by small slides and modulated skips. Among the juveniles were Geordie and Mickle Lindesay, their rosy faces shining from a liberal application of brown soap, their yellow curls kept in perfumed order in consequence of a loan of their mother's bear's-grease for that afternoon to the nursery.

The scale of dancing rose by degrees through the grades of *pas de bas* natural, and *pas de bas* with florid embroidery, *entrechats* single and double, till it reached the finished perfection of the "Figure" or "High Dances" which were Moshie's specialty, to which Lady Sprott had alluded.

She might well decline to venture on the enterprise—a heifer or a colt could have done it better, for young animals still retain their natural ease and grace before the burden of labour has stiffened their limbs, or the effects of education have hampered them. Mignonne would have done it infinitely

better, for long association with her master had inspired her with something, however slight, of his individuality.

Moshie's figure dances were positively creations of genius, which not only all Logie, but many spectators beyond the bounds of the town, flocked to see and could never forget. The dances were adaptations from old French operas, moulded by a kindred spirit. In working them out, Moshie brought to bear upon them his conception of the distinctions of race, still more of the idiosyncrasies of families and individuals. Each dance was suited to the group of dancers, or to the single dancer who executed it. Little domestic dramas, in which brothers and sisters figured, were framed in accordance with the general physique and attributes of the actors. If these were heavy and matter-of-fact young people, probably the inheritors of severe traditions, slow and serious measures fell to their lot; even rapid and agile dancing assumed in such hands an earnest character, as of dancing with a grave and passionate purpose, like that of the Scandinavians in their sword dance.

When the performers were slighter and lither, lighter of limb and of temper, belonging for the most part to the social cream of Logie and its neighbourhood, accustomed to an easy life in which pleasure was more than a name, and had even become a necessity like daily bread, the dancing grew gay and *debonnaire*. It was dancing for dancing's sake, full of spontaneous gladness and graceful frolic.

Occasionally Moshie had asked parents and guardians to furnish accessories of dress to help the illusions. The dancers in a Highland dance wore plaids and broad blue bonnets, "Highland bonnets" as they were called, though the Lowlands had as great a claim to the headgear. The boys, who footed it merrily to the tune of "Ho! the merry Masons," had each a Masonic apron. Girls, who interpreted a Spanish Gueracha, were provided with long soft scarfs, floating and fluttering like mantillas, to the slow motion of the music, while from the dancers' wrists hung castenets, deftly caught up and cracked at intervals. A damsel twirling a tambourine as she bounded and whirled, had a gypsy red handkerchief over her black locks.

But the triumph of the evening was the last figure, in which all the young girls joined. It was a veritable romantic

ballet, called "Love among the Roses." It demanded a sheaf of rose-wreaths. These were distributed by the prettiest girl of the band, who might have been crowned *La Rosière* in some old French village. She came in with the wreaths slung over her dimpled white arms, and approaching in turn each of her companions standing in a double row, gave her a wreath. The dance went on, the wreath-bearers disposing of their wreaths in the prettiest manner, now holding them aloft, now to this side, now to that, now interlacing them till their extrication seemed impossible. At last the double row of dancers formed again, when a dainty mite of a little girl, the youngest of Moshie's pupils, entered, armed with a tiny bow-and-arrow to represent Cupid, and danced down beneath the flowery hoops, bending her bow and pointing her arrows with inimitable childish gravity and grace.

The Merry Andrews led the rounds of applause which threatened to bring down the house at this *chef d'œuvre*.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SECOND PART OF THE BALL.

THERE was a notable interlude before the general dancing began. Moshie had always felt it due to himself and his company to open the second part of the ball with nothing less imposing than a *minuet de la cour*, the dance of dances when Moshie, as a youth, had not been a stranger to the most magnificent court in Europe. It was one of the two dances, the one French and the other English, in which Moshie took part in the course of the évening.

But who was fit to be Moshie's partner in the superb display? It was like the search for the maiden of mortal strain to match with the Baron of Triermain. Originally the best dancer among the pupils for the year had been promoted to the honour, but some accident had interfered on one occasion with this arrangement, and for the last two or three years Moshie had selected as his partner a former pupil distinguished

in her day. The compliment was too great to be declined, though it involved sufficient responsibility and publicity to render this part of the ball a serious burden on the favoured young lady's mind.

It was not Hay Melville who was thus selected. Moshie had never concealed his opinion that her dancing, though as light as a fairy's, might be classed as flighty and inequal, because she would not mind what she was about, and was always full of some "cantrip" of her own.

It was Lizzie Lindesay who was chosen. She was at once graceful enough, endowed with a fine ear, and possessed of a sweet sedateness which gave due consideration, worth, and dignity to every act in which she engaged, and to her neighbours' feelings with regard to it, so that there was no danger of her suffering herself to be carried away by mere girlish spirits and love of fun.

A wide circle was formed, and everybody stood up in order to see better, when it was understood that Moshie was leading forth Miss Lindesay, and that they were about to dance a minuet for the edification of the company. Moshie's outward man was as has been told. Lizzie, too, has been described in her blushing rosiness with her warmly-tinted auburn hair. She wore no better frock than the nankin which she had worn at the market, for when a young woman is the daughter of a poor half-pay Captain, and that Captain has wedded a second wife not ten years older than his daughter—a second wife who, when she goes into company, sports salmon-coloured silks, and a turban with a bird of paradise plume, it is not to be thought that much of the half-pay can be spared for the toilet of the maiden. Happily, Lizzie was one of those fortunately-constituted girls who are, in popular phraseology, "easily dressed," and, indeed, never owe much to dress. She looked as well, perhaps better, in her innocent, inexpensive nankin and blue ribands, humdrum and antiquated though they may sound, as she would have looked in plush and satin, or in Lady Sprott's gauze and lace.

Lizzie danced as well and as carefully as her anxiety to do justice to Moshie's trust in her, and her agitation would allow.

Her sweeping turns and low curtseys were admirable in their way, and prevented all save the most obviously jealous and spiteful fault-finding, which, alas! is never absent from a

great achievement. Moshie's ball was not free from human wasps; one of them, the very gentleman who was honoured by the name of the great diplomatist Talleyrand, distinguished himself by the ingenuity with which he detected and apportioned hereditary defects among the unconscious children. "There go the Inneses, with their father's tally complexion—you may ken the Loudons onywhere by their mother's muckle mou'—I would swear to Raaf Swan's spur heels in his bairns out of a thousand." But, on the other hand, many admired Lizzie's part in the dance exceedingly, and Adam Lauder, who was so sensitive to the opinion of his neighbours, so as to be tempted to echo it, was heard to say enthusiastically "that she dipped and wheeled by all the world like a swan."

But as everybody must own, it was Moshie's dancing which made the glory of the minuet. It was nothing less than magical, for it transformed the dancer from an elderly man to one in the flower of youth and manly grace.

The spectators forgot everything out of date and comical in the performer, in fact they were carried away by him, and the impression left on their minds was that of one of the most elegant figures of an elegant time. Positively, the glamour extended to Lizzie, through being matched with a king of dancers. She looked, in her Cinderella nankin, like a duchess or a countess at the least. She would descend from that *haut pas* in the first country dance in which she stood up with an ordinary partner.

When general dancing was engaged in, the privilege was universally seized upon. It was not every night that the Logié public could dance to such music, or for that matter, could dance at all in the case of many of them. The card-room, which had hardly been resorted to hitherto, so great was the attraction included in the fame of Moshie's scholars, continued forsaken for another couple of hours. Old and young, great and small, stout and thin, stood up together in the country dances, which seem to have been made for a mixture of ages and degrees, else why such grave importance attached to the top of a set as is not now to be found equalled in any dance of less social, political, nay historical significance, than a quadrille in which royalty deigns to figure?

Here the rivalry for pre-eminence was tempered by the determined hilarity of mature years, which knows enough of

work and care to make the best of play when it comes. The senior Merry Andrew was seen with a laughing matron on each arm and a cocked hat on his head, prepared to go through the Country Bumpkin with the utmost spirit. The minister's brother, Mungy, whose bachelor escapades tried the decorous soul of his sister, Miss Katie, took out Mrs. Lindesay. They parted by mutual consent, and went down the backs of the rows of dancers in the Triumph. The couple met again at the bottom, were honourably reconciled, and came socially up the middle. Again they parted, this time more ominously than before, since the lady went down the middle with another gentleman, leaving her forsaken swain to follow them in solitude. But again there was a meeting and a reconciliation, when the rejected man brought back the fair fugitive in veritable triumph, dancing under an arch formed by the magnanimously-clasped hands and arms, extended above her head, of her old love and her new. As Mr. Mungy was short and his vanquished rival not much bigger, while the lady was what is better described as a long than as a tall woman, the bird of paradise plume had to bob and duck in the nimblest manner for a wearer who spent so much of her time in an easy-chair or on a sofa.

Miss Katie Ochiltree herself found a partner in Mr. Dick Cunnings, who had been so loyal to his mother's high breeding in the affair of the skimming of the milk seen through the Star tavern window. Miss Katie discharged her duties in the Dashing White Sergeant with as much proud precision as if she had never had more to do with a shop for lace and baby-linen than to make an occasional purchase in it.

There were not above three people at Moshie's ball who did not dance. The minister's cloth forbade it in his own person, though he looked on with the greatest indulgence at the gambols of his parishioners, in which his sympathetic feet, neatly encased in pumps like the rest, doubtless itched to join. Miss Murdie's office, in her eyes, formed an equal obstacle to her taking an active part in the festal throng. If the minister did not see that he could dance becomingly, neither could it be proper for her, Miss Murdie, to dance. The two made common cause together. He mounted to her rostrum, from which the pair could look down upon the company, and at the same time engage in an improving conversation. The great lady shut up her volume with flattering alacrity, and

accepted with polite satisfaction the offer of his escort to the supper-table.

The only other person who did not dance was an unlucky young woman dead lame.

Lady Sprott had her reel and a great deal more. In fact, it became the strenuous but baffled endeavour of her well-wishers to keep her from being forever on the floor. So far as her rank went she ought to have opened the second part of the ball which began after the minuet. But nobody thought of Lady Sprott's right in the matter, and she least of all. But when such a reel as she had danced in her unmarried days at "maidens," or harvest homes and penny-weddings, afforded her an opportunity, she was not slow to avail herself of it. She was quite unconscious of the objection, which struck the onlookers forcibly, that she was as nearly as possible destitute of the gifts of time and tune, so that her Dutch doll figure in its fine clothes was continually rising and falling at the wrong moment. Neither did the defect deprive her of partners—a great deal was forgiven to a young, comely, smartly-dressed woman, who had done well for herself, and bore her honours affably.

Besides, her ladyship was fair game for all the idle, irresponsible, mirth-loving members of the community. Already the story was in general circulation that she had announced she would not "attemp' a high dance."

But it was not Lady Sprott, it was Hay Melville who retailed for the amusement of one of her partners another anecdote belonging to what Hay called the "Sprott annals." "Did you hear that Mr. Lyon, her ladyship's man of business, had made up his mind that now she was received into Logie society she ought to assist her position by giving a supper to himself, the minister, the doctor, and maybe the Shirra as an 'honesty'* at the party? Well, you may be sure everybody concerned was greatly desirous the party should pass off to a wish. Nobody cared more than her ladyship's servants. Do you know it speaks something for her, who was a servant herself, that they forgive her for having become their mistress," interpolated Hay, with her usual shrewdness. "They had her interest only too much at heart on this occasion.

* An old expression signifying a disinterested creditable addition to any company.

They could not take an accident quietly. For when the guests were assembled, the kitchen lass was heard rushing to Mrs. Pollock and crying out, in a voice of despair, 'It's sticket yet, a' the minch collops are in the aese-hole!'"

There was one guest at Moshie's ball who was sensible of a difference in her circumstances and feelings since the last dancing-school ball. Then Lizzie Lindesay had been dimly sensible of an absorbing personal share in the business of the evening. She had been so selfishly engrossed that she had been hardly aware of what took place with regard to other people. It was not that she danced less to-night, she was in as much request as ever, and if she did dance less with Adam Lauder, it was from no lack of asking on Adam's part. Whether his invitations would have been so numerous if Balmayne's daughter and heiress, a belle on her own account, had been more disengaged, Lizzie believed she had reason to doubt. But certainly there were many other young and pretty girls, including the bonniest of all, Jean Scott, present at Moshie's ball, in addition to Lizzie Lindesay and Hay Melville. Adam, with his roving fancy and his personal popularity, had a whole galaxy to pick and choose from for consolation, when he could not get Hay Melville, as her mother was not disposed that he should do, more than civility demanded. Adam certainly preferred Lizzie to these other strings to his bow, and if he felt nettled by the strain of resistance and opposition which she began to show in her manner towards him, the pique in such a man was more likely to move him to a fresh siege than to cause him to lay down his arms before the fortress. It was doubtless an imagination of Lizzie's that Adam Lauder was not so pressing in his solicitations as he used to be, unless indeed the young man took guilt to himself for his double philandering. But the mere notion served to increase Lizzie's impression that while dancing gaily in the ranks of the dancers, she was more of a simple spectator than she had ever found herself before in such a scene. She was not actually unhappy or uninterested, she was too nearly heart-whole for that, but the happiness and interest were of a different description. They were all outside herself, as it were, less swayed by her feelings, and at the same time less at the mercy of her neighbours' behaviour towards her. She had leisure and coolness

to notice many things which she would have overlooked before, and to speculate on the consequences. Lizzie was alive to all Lady Sprott's skittish absurdities, and wondered if her ladyship's man of business, who was looking on in perceptible displeasure, would take it upon him to call her to account. The position was awkward, there was no denying it; and though the grown-up child was as a rule a submissive creature to constituted authority, she was inclined to break bounds this night.

The lawyer's attitude was not the least laughable feature in the situation. "She'll put her foot in it, let her friends do what they will," he was saying in the ear of the good-natured Shirra. "The late Sir Dauvit, not in the family vault a couple of years, and my leddy louping and shuffling opposite any impident scamp who will make his boo to her and dance the Hielant fling before her, at a dancing-school ball! It would provoke a saunt, after all me and Mrs. Lyon have done for her. I've a great mind to get young Sir Dauvit made a ward in Chancery, and sent to England for his edication. That woman's not fit to bring up a baronet, for all the help she gets. I think I'll gang ower to her house and get the woman Pollock to send for her mistress, on the ground that Sir Dauvit's taken a fit or fallen into the fire."

"Na, na, Lyon, you'll do nothing so barbarous," the Shirra was roused to protest. "I'll countenance no inhuman tricks, though they're to be cleared up the next minute; mind, a mother's heart is not to be parried with. Besides, what harm is my leddy doing, save enjoying herself, poor soul, like the rest of us? You'll not put an auld head on young shoulders, and she's borne a heavier burden already than wiser shoulders could have carried. She's paid for her promotion. Let her have what benefit of it there is. You may trust Moshie to preserve the proprieties and to take care that Lady Sprott's partners do not go too far."

Lizzie observed that as the night wore on, Steenie Oliphant grew less and less able to keep his eyes off Bonnie Jean, or to refrain from haunting her foosteps and looking daggers at her partners. Nay, he yielded to his inclination so far as to take advantage of his father's absence in the card-room to defy Mrs. Melville. Instead of engaging Hay for the sets of

quadrilles which were introduced into the programme, or for the lancers, in which she was supposed to excel, the young poetaster of a laird, who was in general too weary and preoccupied to go through a country dance, danced more than one with Jean.

Jean on her side appeared to have lost the power of resisting and contradicting him. Lizzie heard snatches of their conversation. At one time young Burn Foot said with concentrated reproach, in a low undertone, to the farmer's daughter:

"You have been dancing all night with farmer fellows of your acquaintance, Jean, and leaving me to stand about and look on."

To Lizzie's surprise, Jean did not "pluck up a spirit" and deny the charge, or at least take all point from it, by reminding him that she had danced with him when he had sought her, and that had been oftener than he ought to have done. For her father was a farmer, and his father a laird; besides, her father was his father's tenant—an unprosperous, unsatisfactory tenant, who was constantly wrangling with his landlord over the terms on which the farm was leased. Moreover, the attentions Steenie Oliphant paid to Jean Scott would draw down on both, but on her far more than on him, gossip and scandal. Yet Jean only hung her lovely head, while her breath came soft and fast.

Then this exacting partner began to murmur to the hardworking, healthy country girl, complaints of his bodily suffering, of the headaches to which he had been subject ever since he was a student, and of an exhausting cold he had caught which he could not shake off.

The listener, to whom his confidences were addressed, looked up at the speaker with the most tender sympathy, and whispered back, "Poor Mr. Steenie, gin you had only a mither or a sister to look after you! Men-folk are cauld comfort to ane anither when they're no strong. Would you no try a tumbler of new milk with half a glass of rum in the tumbler? My mother mixes that for my father when he's rooped" (hoarse). "The hoosekeeper could have it ready for you before you faced the morning air. You should be mindful aye to tie a grauvit round your throat when you gang out at nicht."

"Will you work a cravat for me, Jean?" begged Steenie.

"That will I," said the girl, with eager assent. The hesitating qualification came later, "if I could make anything fit for you to wear, and if my mother did not mind."

"Why should she?" demanded Steenie, with a shade of peevishness. "It is not like the hair-chain you promised to plait, and never plaited, for my birthday. That would have been an ornament to be prized, at the same time I could have done without it; but a comforter is a wrap which any humane person might wish me to be provided with."

Jean's father, her sole guardian present, pursed his large coarse mouth and shot a sidelong glance from his small bloodshot eyes at the unwitting couple. Jean took none of her beauty and little of her goodness from Jock Scott. It was clear that he viewed with veiled elation, rather than with anger, a state of matters, the result of which to the persons concerned threatened so much, and promised so little that even young Lizzie Lindesay, with her affectionate liking for her old schoolfellow, grew grave as she witnessed the imprudence.

The supper was done full justice to. The Shirra proposed the "good health" of Moshie in a speech full of geniality. Moshie replied neatly and briefly, with an evident modest sense of the respect shown to him. Dancing was resumed, and cards were played, though the card-room had never its full complement of players. When the cold light of the spring morning was shaming the candles, Moshie's guests re-assembled in the hall for the winding up of the ball, by the whole company's dancing the Haymakers, known in England as Sir Roger de Coverley. Here for the second time in the evening Moshie joined in the dance. He invariably took for his partner in the Haymakers, Mrs. Mally Corstorphine. Mrs. Mally was in her richest lutestring, with a lace tippet and a state and festival hair-cap. It said much for her naturally fine looks that she struck people as majestic rather than eccentric. She was so worthy a partner for Moshie that her brother, Governor Lowrie, might have come alive again, and she might be doing the honours of Government House in his far-away island, showing herself on the floor in order to pay a compliment to some potent foreign grandee.

CHAPTER XXII.

JOCK SCOTT AT THE WALL.

THERE was a weekly corn-market in Logie which all the farmers and country clergy who had glebes and kept them in their own hands, and all the lairds within a dozen miles, attended. This hepdomadal meeting of the agriculturists lent a periodical stir to the place—all the more so that the gathering was held in no Corn Exchange, but in the open air at the Cross, the central point of the town, where the principal streets met, the scene of the morning fish-market and of the weekly corn-market, under the nose of the grim old jail. Some of its occupants, looking out with defiant or wistful faces from the grated windows, recognized familiar friends and acquaintances in the rural forum below, in which the prisoners themselves had once taken part. For though farming was still a profitable occupation, even after the fall of war prices, evil fortune, folly, and incapacity did not fail to find their victims among farmers also, while incarceration for debt continued a common practice. A considerable portion of the Logie jail was set apart for debtors alone, and varied in the accommodation it afforded according to the influence and aid at the debtor's command. Upon the whole, a jail, melancholy and often desperate as the prospect it presented might be, was rather more respectable as a dwelling-place then than now.

On each Thursday the fish-carts, with their train of cadgers, and the fish-women with their creels removed themselves betimes, leaving a stale and fishy odour behind them which the noses of the generation were too unsophisticated and hardy to mind. The area of the Cross was filled by a throng of countrymen, clad for the better part of the year in many-tippeted great-coats or long straight "rauchens," and "grauvits" like that which Jean had recommended to the delicate, dainty young laird of Burn Foot. The wearers of these garments stood with their hands in their pockets, or paced up and down, occasionally displaying samples of bear, or oats, or wheat in broad brown palms, chaffering and

exchanging the scale of prices and the news of the day in a bass buzz of sound, broken at intervals by a tolerably loud wrangle or a stentorian burst of laughter. It was fair to suppose that a good stroke in the corn trade was done every week at the Cross in Logie; but it was also indisputable that after the work of the day had been accomplished, the whole of the affairs of the town and neighbourhood were taken through hands in that public tribunal. There were not a few local proverbs which referred to this unofficial court. "If you do not take care you'll be heard at the Cross," was many an indignant mother's appeal to her noisy children. The Cross rung with "it" was to say that an event had been proclaimed as with a flourish of trumpets in the high place of the town. It was not the ancient high place where weighty proclamations affecting the lieges of the realm had formerly been made—the site of that was in an obscure back street. But it was the modern representative of the old sanctuary. Alick Wanless, the bellman, paused to deliver a special peal and an emphatic announcement there. Furniture seized by warrant of the Shirra was there put up to public gaze and "roupet" with ignominious conspicuousness. Bonfires had been lit on the spot to commemorate the victories of the Peninsular war, and bonfires still blazed there triumphantly in defiance of the danger to the surrounding houses, including the citadel of the jail, on the night of every 4th of June, the King's birthday. When the rout came suddenly to a regiment quartered in Logie, and officer or soldier wedded in haste some bride willing to follow the drum, at a moment's notice, the proclamation of marriage could be legally made on a week-day at the Cross, as well as before the closed kirk doors.

If there was a scandal mart in Logie it was the Cross on Thursdays. The most gossiping lady's tea-table, and the circulating library under Mrs. Boyd, were nothing to it; yet the feminine element was very slenderly represented there. True, a considerable number of the wives, daughters, and sisters of the lairds, ministers, and farmers accompanied their men-folk in their high two-wheeled gigs or on horseback. If Lizzie Lindesay had become the wife of Adam Lauder, the mistress of the house at the mills, she would have come

in with him, though he had no corn to sell, for in any place where men did congregate there was found Adam. The women's convoy was partly from prudential reasons in convivial times, when it was desirable to withdraw a man early from the inn or tavern, to which he was tolerably sure to gravitate with his fellows, partly that the women might have a better opportunity for doing their week's shopping—whether by barter of dairy produce or in current coin—carrying back with them what had been bought. But, as a rule, these visitors to Logie, though they shared in the agreeable sense of variety, and the social chances which the attendance on the market, like that on the "diets of worship" at the kirk on the Sabbath day furnished, strictly abstained from intruding on the seat of custom established at the Cross.

The exception was afforded by three weather-beaten, masculine-looking, elderly spinsters in riding-habits, so out of date in shape that they might have been cloth "Josephs," and severely simple battered straw bonnets. The spinsters were sisters who had succeeded to their father's farm, which they had managed so well as to amass a fortune. They carried out their management to the extent of coming in a body to the weekly corn-market, along with the other farmers of the district, and mingling freely with them at the Cross without a breath of reproach attaching to the irregular proceeding. It was never supposed by the most imaginative person that anything save business pure and simple entered into the thoughts of those hard-headed, hard-favoured specimens of the fair sex. Indeed, the ladies, whom the nicknaming town of Logie dubbed, in allusion to their plain and sober exterior, "the Heather Linties," were so intent upon their buying and selling, that they had little interest to spare for the "clashes and lees" which helped to employ the tongues of their weaker brethren.

In justice to the country gossips of the male gender, the fact ought to be recorded that as the influx of country people stimulated the entire trade of the place, and as the chief law and banking business, no less than the purchases from the shops, were done and made on Thursdays, the professional men—the very shopkeepers, who had efficient assistants—sallied forth and joined their clients on the causeway, so that there was a town side to the assembly.

Before three o'clock the market began to "thin," the larger part of its representatives having withdrawn to take "pot luck" with their friends residing in Logie, or if they were not so conveniently supplied, to dine or else to anticipate their "fower hours" (a more substantial five-o'clock tea dispensed in farmhouses at four instead of five) by a snack or snatch of anything that came to hand, with the never-failing accompaniment of rummers of steaming toddy, at one of the inns or taverns. The most popular of the latter, when taverns were still in fair repute, was the roomy old "Star." It happened to be so well situated in the mouth of a close or wynd opening directly from the Cross, that it received the patronage of every class. The tavern was thronged each market-day, not only by farmers, but by country gentlemen of a higher rank. They might, had they chosen, have commanded the use of an upper room, where they could have feasted in exclusive gentility on the best of cocky-leeky, or beef and greens, or a cod's head and shoulders, garnished by crappet scones, with port and claret—the bush of which was beyond suspicion. But exclusiveness was not the order of the day.

It was among a large company of farmers, with a considerable sprinkling of lairds and ministers, and a few of the townspeople who had come in to clench a bargain or an argument in the big common dining-room of the Star, on the first Thursday after Moshie's ball, that Mr. Oliphant of Burn Foot, Steenie's father, was seated at a corner of the long table over a bottle of port, among the rival libations of toddy flowing with perilous freedom. The buzz of the market outside had been replaced by the clatter of plates and knives and forks, which in its turn had been succeeded by the not inharmonious hum of conversation, when men's tongues have been loosed by acceptable bodily refreshment, and have not begun to run wild and wag furiously.

Suddenly the comparatively drowsy quiet was broken by the harsh sound of a man bawling without, just beneath the corner window which looked out on the Cross. The unusual interruption roused the guests, who looked round, and even started up to ascertain the cause of the disturbance.

"Hey! there, what is't?" cried an old farmer eagerly. "Has the country gane to war again without previous intimation? Has Buonapairt broken lowse a second time?

Wow! if the news had come sooner wouldna I have keept up my auld wheat stacks? I am an unlucky carle."

"Is it some impident scoondrel shouting a low ballad at this time of day, in our very ears, to spile our digestion?" cried an irate minister, austere in all literature apart from sermons.

"Na, you're baith wrang," asserted a man nearer the window, "it's fish the man is crying. I hear 'Caller haddies' and 'Skate' and 'Partens' as plain as a text from the poopit, begging all the reverent gentlemen's pardon for the comparison. What does it mean? Were all the fish-carts not driven off this morning? Is there such a demand for fish to supper in Logie this evening, that a cadger has returned at this hoor?"

"Lovey dickie! it is poor Jock Scott from Burn Foot," proclaimed a man from the window.

"Peety on us! so it is," said another, in a voice of consternation.

"What's he doing there?" an excited chorus of tongues demanded. "Have the Shirra offishers gotten haud of the sticks of furniture at Burn Fit? We a' ken there has been mony a visit from Robbie Grainger," meaning the Logie messenger at arms, "to Burn Fit of late."

There were indignant glances directed towards the laird of Burn Foot, who sat stiff and stupefied with his glass of port before him.

"Puir Jock may not be all he should be," interposed another speaker reproachfully, "but he's been driven to the wa', and think of Mistress Scott and Bonnie Jean left without a bed to lie doon on!"

"No sae fast," objected one of the circle of excited men who had crowded to the window. "It's no forniture, I tell you it is fish. Div ye no hear 'haddies' and 'whiting' and the lave? Jock has gotten a cadger's cairt and man, I tell you; he's holding up a haddie in the tae hand and a parten in the t'ither, offering them for sale at this very minute."

"It's no possible," protested the most of the hearers. "A farmer wi' as gude as half-a-dozen ploos, a foreman, and twa or three bothy men, forby a hagman and a halflin. It is true he had a millstane o' debt round his neck afore he came to Burn Fit ten years syne, and he's never been at the best

what ane would ca' square with the world; yet he could never so demean himself before his very servants."

"Weel, seein' is believin'," insisted one of the spectators, doggedly.

"And so is hearin', for that matter," chimed in another, as a pair of lungs of remarkable volume exerted themselves in a new and prolonged shout. "Fresh herrin'! Na, I crave your pardon, gude folk, it is no the herrin' season yet. But I'm no accustomed to this kind o' public speakin', so I'm a thocht distraught as you may guess. I meant to cry 'Caller haddies, had—dies,'" with additional vigour that made the welkin ring and tempted sensitive people to put their hands upon their ears—"whit—ens, pod—lies, par—tens."

If Hugo Arnot, the asthmatic lawyer, had been present, he might have uttered his famous protest, "Man, you've wasted as muckle breath in an hour as would have served me for a month."

"Puir chield, sic' a down-com'."

"Na, it's a black burnin' shame to have Scott brocht to this pass. It reflecks discredit on baith classes—farmers and lairds," was muttered in different tones of sympathy and wrath.

Still Mr. Oliphant, ordinarily a brisk man of the world, with a trifle of the martinet in him, sat mazed and dumbfounded, confronted both by the farmers and those of his brother lairds who were present. The latter hardly regarded him more favourably than the farmers looked at him from under their bent brows, for was he not bringing a most unwarrantable, undesirable accusation of cruel harshness against the whole class of landowners? Burn Foot felt as if he could never show face again either in the Star tavern or at the Thursday corn-market.

Then there was an additional impulse given to the excitement in the room by the sudden entrance of young Burn Foot, who was rarely to be seen in such regions. He was a few shades paler than usual, and was evidently labouring under considerable agitation, though he struggled to control it. He went straight to his father and appealed to him openly: "Father, what is this? Are you aware of what Scott is about in the street out there? Have you given any occasion for this—this very singular action on his part?"

"I know nothing about it, Stephen," said Mr. Oliphant, while every ear in the room was pricked to listen. "The man must have lost his senses. This is the first I have heard of such a wretched resource, you may well believe me, though he has always cried poverty. Of course, if a word of the kind had been said to me, I should have put my foot on the mad step at once. Will you have the goodness to send up Scott to me instantly? Yes, here where I sit," in answer to a quick question of Steenie's eyes, while the speaker at the same time glanced sharply round on the audience. The affront had been public, so must be the explanation and reparation.

Jock Scott came in with a swagger. He had not even wiped the fish scales from his hands, nay, his left still ostentatiously gripped his slippery prey. "What is your will with me, Mr. Oliphant?" asked Jock, mildly, but with a twinkle in his red rheumy eyes. To his other demerits the stranded man—the last remnant of whose self-respect was fast leaving him—had added lately a propensity to tarry wherever drink was to be had to drown care.

"You need not ask," cried the laird, losing his prudence in his rising passion. "What do you mean by this tomfoolery, disgracing yourself and me in the public market, before the whole town?"

"And what div you meen, sir, by calling me to account for tamfoolery?" cross-questioned the farmer, in a tone half of injured innocence, half of audacious challenge. "You insult me by the word. I've been guilty of nae tamfoolery as you're pleased to ca't. I'm in earnest, sad and sober enough, as you could very weel tell if you liked."

"How could I tell? What good do you propose to yourself by this unworthy farce?"

"Weel, ye ken, Burn Fit," declared the offender, assuming an accent of confidential remonstrance, "I hae been ahint wi' my rent for a gude wheen terms, and you refused to let it down a single saxpence just the other day. You vowed you would tak' diligence upon me and roup me to the door, gin I had nothing forthcoming at Martinmas. I ask yoursel' what could I do? Selling fish is an honest gin it be a humble and a drouthy trade; I declare I'm as hairse after half-an-hour o't as though I had hailed a homeward-bound ship, through a speaking-trumpet, in the teeth of a nor'-easter. But bawbees

are aye bawbees, however hardly earned, and though a gentleman like you may despise them, at least they'll mak a canny nest-egg for the gudewife and my bonnie Jean, when you do turn us adrift."

Already there were knowing glances exchanged, and a subdued chuckle pervaded the company, at the cunning and successful stratagem on which Jock Scott had hit, to impress old Oliphant by an open and extreme example of his tenant's strait. It was a ruse to catch the laird and compromise him, pinning him down by a public pledge to withdraw his threat of ejection, and to forbear a little longer with the delinquent. Certainly Jock Scott had lost all shame, and the only farther excuse that suggested itself for him, was that he must be, as happened frequently now-a-days, "half-seas over" with drink before he sought redress by such means.

CHAPTER XXIII.

STEENIE OLIPHANT AT HIS WITS' END.

BURN FOOT hastened to put an end to the incriminating scene and to stop the unequal altercation, in which he knew by sure intuition he would have the worst of the argument, and be the laughing-stock, as he had been made to feel the bogie, of the company. Justice was on his side, but popular sympathy, which does not inquire too nicely into the facts of a case, and the use of unscrupulous weapons, gave a huge advantage to the ruined Jock Scott—huge enough even to overcome the *esprit de corps* of the landlord element in the room.

"You must give over this nonsense, which cannot serve you to any appreciable extent, Scott," said Mr. Oliphant hurriedly, "and we'll see what can be done. You are as old a man as myself—you are not able for such unwonted exertions—not to say such unsuitable work. Get your horse and ride home. Come over to me to-morrow—or, stay, meet

me at Innes's," naming his agent, "and we may come to an agreement."

"Weel-a-weel, laird, ye ken your mind," replied Scott, with awkward submission, but with a leer of triumph to those he judged his supporters. "I'll do your biddin'. I'll ride hame—after I've handed over my cairt and its contents. You'll no' be wontin' ony fine fresh fish at cost price sent ower to Burn Fit? No," in answer to an impatient shrug of Mr. Oliphant's shoulders. "Then, as I was saying, I'll hand ower the cairt to Dowie the cadger, from whom I had it, and ride hame. But you'll never sae I hae na done my best to pay my debt, though it were but in dribblings of bawbees at a time."

"Faugh!" muttered Burn Foot, after his tormentor had left him, showing that Steenie took some part of his fastidiousness from his father, "a man would be at a loss, indeed, before he consented to finger that tricky drunken scoundrel's bawbees."

The Thursday market talked and guffawed more than once or twice over Jock Scott's well-timed essay at cadgering. But Steenie Oliphant gnashed his teeth and groaned in spirit over this last notorious proof of the impropriety and impossibility of his ever entering on an alliance with his bonnie Jean.

Jean was infinitely too good for such a father, and too good for her unhappy lover. Steenie, on his part, with all his faults of affectation, self-consciousness, and moral and social cowardice, was nevertheless too manly and honourable at the core not to bow before Jean's superior goodness, and to be as incapable of insulting her innocence as of sullying the purity of an angel from heaven. Yet, he could not give her up. The beautiful, simple girl was to him the incarnation of all that was sweetest and truest in real life, as in poetic dreams. He had more than a suspicion that she was his if he liked to claim her, that the first fresh tender love of her kind and gentle heart was lavished on him with an unquestioning romantic devotion which was like Jean in every way, like her guileless single-mindedness and unexacting unselfishness. He had an impression that if he gave her up at last, after he had sought her for two years off and on, in a secret, temporizing manner, she would never blame him. She

would make every allowance for his difficulties, forgive him and let him go as if she had been the fickle woman and he the faithful man; she the wrong-doer and he the wronged sufferer. His behaviour was not very flattering to Jean if she had stood upon her rights, but it showed sufficient distinct preference and unswerving constancy to touch and win a girl so modest and unpretending; and she would make it out that there had been some demerit in her, some failure in what he rightly valued, which had lost her his regard, so that he could not help himself. Her heart would bleed with that slow inward bleeding which it is well-nigh impossible to staunch, and to the end she would cherish his image as one that had never forfeited its pricelessness in her eyes.

Curiously Steenie Oliphant, with all his cleverness, was stupid enough to resent a little the attitude in which he perforce put Jean, whenever he contemplated the necessity of giving her up. My young gentleman had not sufficient strength and delicacy of mind to penetrate the depth of the compliment which she would thus pay him. He fancied he would rather have her rage and rave, expose both herself and him, and make a spectacle of her forsaken condition. But the chief grievance was that he could not bring himself to take the initiatory step in forsaking her. Who shall say that he was dallying with temptation—that he was not rather hovering on the brink of a sacrifice which, if accomplished, might have made a braver, truer man, and something nearer to a poet of him? Who shall venture to decide that in the balance of his following or turning his back on the just instincts which led him to Bonnie Jean as his fit mate, because she was the delight of his eyes and the desire of his heart, because his reason and conscience told him she was the best, most God-fearing, brother-and-sister-serving woman he had ever known, there did not hang the freeing or the fettering, the bringing to completeness or the marring of all the higher, nobler elements in his character.

At the same time, nobody could deny that Steenie Oliphant's choice was hard to make, and his position trying. He was soft and dainty, squeamish and easily offended. His taste was too good for him to be offended with Jean, who was like the gowans on her green and the cream in her dairy; but, alas! for her whole surroundings. Her blustering,

broken-down father, her homely mother, her plain kindred, and rustic friends and associates, her common, hard work, went far to disgust him, if not with Jean herself, with all else concerned. Her very artless ignorance, which had such an exquisite charm now, he could see far enough, with sufficiently world-enlightened eyes to comprehend, might become a sore perplexity and grievous burden in the time to come.

The reigning laird of Burn Foot was an active-minded, politic-tempered man, almost as much so as his friend and ally, Mrs. Melville, was a shrewd woman, while he had also a share of his son's finicalness. He was easy to get on with in a general way in spite of his martinet side, for he was too wise to waste his energies in storming over trifles and raising storms in teacups. Indeed, he prided himself on a certain well-bred liberality and agreeability which marked to-day's educated gentleman of good descent from the churl and boor of yesterday. But beneath the silken glove was the steel gauntlet. The plausible gloss scarcely concealed from those who came near him, inflexibility on certain points. Steenie was his father's only son and only child, who had lost his mother in infancy. Burn Foot was both proud and fond of his heir, though he allowed himself some good-natured banter of the lad's elegant accomplishments, his sonneteering, his flute-playing, his dabbling in water-colours, since Steenie flirted with the muses all round. But none knew better than Steenie that if he crossed his father's will on any question which seemed vital to Mr. Oliphant, he would be inexorable. He could not disinherit his son, because Burn Foot was entailed, but it was a poor moorland property in itself, the returns from it being got for the most part by the laird's judicious nursing of the estate. His principal income came from money in the funds, over which he had entire control. He could will this away from Steenie any day—nay, he could keep him out of Burn Foot for a score of years, the laird having married young, and being at this time a hale middle-aged man, with more chance of living to a good old age than Steenie had. It was not impossible, though Burn Foot had remained so long a widower, that he might not under provocation marry again, and have a second family late in life to dispute Steenie's inheritance with him. Burn Foot might

even, if bitterly incensed, curtail or absolutely cut off his son's allowance, so that, unless Steenie went to law with his father, and wrung the means of subsistence from him by the aid of the Court of Session, he would be in danger of starvation. For the young man, though not without his gifts, could not dig, while to beg he would be ashamed. A stomach at once proud and delicate like Steenie Oliphant's is apt, under certain conditions, to reduce a man to a lamentable state of dependence. It was one proof to Steenie how utterly unmanageable his father would be at the most distant prospect of his son's making a marriage beneath him, that Burn Foot not only ignored all danger from the beauty at the farmhouse, which was within a quarter of a mile of the mansion house, he coolly rallied his son on what the elder man chose to consider a platonic, poetic admiration for Bonnie Jean. "Well, Steenie, have you seen your nymph of the farm lately? I met her this afternoon coming up from the ten-acre clover-field, with an armful of newly-cut grass for her pony. I declare she reminded me of Ruth with her load of barley in the Bible. Why don't you write a new version of corn rigs and make the rhymes jingle to Jean?

"Corn rigs and barley rigs and corn rigs are green,
And there, afore the stooks were set, I met my bonny Jean.

"Why don't you paint her in character? I'm sure the Moabitess could not have been a more charming lass."

Yes, Jean was fit for the honour of a song, fit for a sketch to figure in an annual, but so utterly unfit to be the mistress of the mansion of Burn Foot that the idea of her in that light was simply inconceivable.

Running parallel with his apparent insensibility to the risk of having Jean for a daughter-in-law, was the adroit manner in which the pawky laird took it for granted that only time was wanted to make Steenie comply with the extreme advisability of his taking Hay Melville to wife. The shrewd gentleman never committed himself or "dared" Steenie by direct advice, which the young man might have found himself called upon in the interests of truth to disclaim, or which might have goaded him to downright rebellion. But Burn Foot was in the habit of talking of the future in a way which implied his comfortable assurance of the ultimate

union of Balmayne and Burn Foot, a conjunction that would make as fine an estate as was in the neighbourhood.

"If it ever came about," he would say, in a speculative way, "that the places became one in the next generation, the laird could hold his own, not only against Sir Dauvit Sprott, but against the Earl himself," referring to the head magnate of the district. "And there is a grand site for a new house befitting what the property would be then, just where the marshes meet at the 'Hangman's Plantin.' The name could easily be altered. It's a most picturesque spot, where I've often thought—and a fellow of taste like you can see—a country-house might be set down that would beat three-fourths of the gentlemen's seats in the county for beauty of surroundings."

To appeal to the possessor of a single field on his chance of adding to it is to address a nearly universal instinct of the human mind, and to offer a Scotch laird, even a laird in embryo like Steenie Oliphant, such an attraction, is to play on a ruling passion.

This treatment deliberately and steadily applied by the elder and stronger man of the two, to a young fellow, sensitive, unpractical, unused to quarrels, averse even to violent efforts, shrinking from scorn and contempt whether justifiable or unjustifiable, was well calculated to develop the fundamental weakness of Steenie's nature, while the first effect was to make him writhe and struggle against his bonds.

The light in which his father's conduct, and for that matter the Melvilles', caused him to view Hay, was peculiar. Had Hay become a party to the matrimonial scheme by manifesting the slightest personal inclination for the unwilling partner in life assigned to her, he might have been tempted to despise and detest her, instead of pitying her. But not even his vanity, tickled by the sense of his merits, could delude him in this respect. Hay was supremely indifferent to his finest qualities. He was forced to see in her only a common victim to the worldly-minded planning of their seniors. Here, again, as in the case of Bonnie Jean's generous magnanimity, he was so foolish as to feel aggrieved by the merry carelessness which ought to have been a signal relief to him. But the provocation kept up an additional if somewhat pungent interest in a girl he had known all his life,

and liked in another and quite a different way from that in which he loved Jean, because Hay stirred his languid pulses with wonder as to what she would do next, and amused his weariness of spirit. In addition he had a half-surprised, half-envious admiring perception of her energy and self-reliance, as he had of his father's.

Steenie Oliphant, thus dragged in opposite directions, was highly uncomfortable, and the unpleasant process naturally rendered him more delicate, fanciful, and unreasonable than he might otherwise have been. He flew to Bonnie Jean for comfort, which she was fain to give him, but in giving, made the situation more untenable.

Jean had no sense of duty to fight against in listening to young Burn Foot. Had it been otherwise he must have gone to the wall, even if her heart had broken for it. Jean was the most dutiful of women, and she had fully recognized the central truth which even good men and women are often fatally late in learning; not only that there can be no blessing, there can be no love rightly called so, no undying regard which cares more for the man or the woman beloved than for the love itself, and values his or her highest honour and enduring welfare beyond every temporary gratification in this world, if love, falsely named, and duty are at war, and love is suffered to gain a superficial and transitory victory.

But Jock Scott was only too anxious to promote his young laird's doubtful and underhand advances to the farmer's daughter. Mrs. Scott was simple, like Jean, as well as broken-spirited and timid. She could not venture on acting in opposition to her husband, and she clung with desperation, for which there was some excuse in a mother's pride and anxiety, to what appeared a prospect, however small, of not only saving Jean from the wreck of the family fortunes, but of securing to her a great success which was still not beyond her deserts. For who so bonnie as Jean, or who so good according to the verdict of the entire country-side?

CHAPTER XXIV.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

THEREFORE Jean was guilty of no filial disobedience and no double-dealing, though by general courteous consent, in deference to her modesty and the awkwardness of the situation, little was said in the family beyond a sly, subdued joke now and then, when she accepted young Burn Foot's attentions—such as they were. For he would saunter over to the farm, and loiter there at times and seasons when his movements were subject to least observation.

He would linger beside Jean with fitful clumsy attempts at helping her in her proper business, helping which she would smilingly set aside. No, he was not to soil his long white fingers, or give himself a crick in the back, or get one of his bad headaches, or spend his breath and bring on his touch of asthma, by his kindness in thinking to assist her in work to which she was accustomed, that she could get through quite well, unaided. But he might, if he liked, stand by and even hold the basket in which she shred the bean-pods, and put the cabbages, carrots, and turnips which she brought from the garden, for the family kale. He might look on while she washed the vegetables by the draw-well. He might fill for her once or twice the scoop in which she took water from the Cart to sprinkle over the hanks of yarn that she and her mother had spun, which lay bleaching on the strip of green by the burn. He might go with her when she fed the chickens in the yard or the young calves in their stalls, or even—strange experience for fine gentleman Steenie not to recoil from—the special pig in its stye, or to seek the hens' nests and gather the eggs. He might even walk with Jean as far as the pasture where her superannuated pony was turned out, in order to catch and bridle and saddle the animal when her services were required. Another expedition was reserved for the pair when the single "stout" (robust) maid-servant at Burn Foot was engaged in field work, and so all the housework, with some of the out-of-door work, was left to Jean and her mother. Part of the last consisted of

the noonday milking of the cows, which were not brought in for the purpose, but remained at their grazing ground, where the turf was oldest and sweetest, and soonest starred with buttercups and daisies, eye-bright and wild thyme. There Steenie might stand with his back to a tree and watch Jean in her clean cotton morning gown on her little stool, which she had allowed him to carry for her, with her bright burnished pail in front of her, and her dark head resting fearlessly against the cow's red or dun side. He could paraphrase for her benefit, not 'The Corn Rigs,' as his father had lightly suggested, but the matchless pathos of Jean Elliott's 'Flowers of the Forest,' or else the exquisite tenderness of the Irish lover's lament as he summed up the perfections of his dead mistress :—

> "She milked the dun cow,
> Which ne'er offered to stir,
> Though wicked to others
> 'Twas gentle to her."

But probably Steenie would have been more apt to paraphrase the half classic conceits of Gray or Shenstone or Thomson, or even Allan Ramsay, for English verse, though amended by Scott and Byron, and Scotch song, though emancipated by Burns, still showed manifold traces of the artificial era of Queen Anne.

After the milking there was an adjournment to the dairy, which happened to be in an out-house at Burn Foot, and in it there was no end of occupations not too engrossing to forbid dallying. The pouring of the new milk into basins was followed by the skimming of yesterday's milk. There was the twice-a-week churning of butter as a prelude to the moulding of the butter into yellow pats and pounds. The milk had to be converted into snowy white curd, out of which the green whey had to be squeezed. The curd had to be committed to the "cheshert," the great stone screwed in the frame so that the weight might further condense and shape the cheese.

When Steenie witnessed these elaborate operations, Jean was wont to coax his appetite, with the most heartfelt, unsophisticated wish to do him good, by means of glasses of new milk, plates of scones of her own baking, buttered with the freshest of butter, accompanied by cheese-parings, the

strips cut from the recently-made cheese, whilst it was still freshly salted and crumbling curd.

Steenie was less by Jean's side within doors, for then, unless when the farmer was certain to be abroad, and Mrs. Scott as sure to be detained out of the parlour, the couple were liable to interruption and to the observation, however wary, of their neighbours. But sometimes when Jean was at her wheel, while her mother was in the kitchen or store-room, her father in the fields, and all her brothers at their trades in Logie, young Burn Foot would stand leaning against the window-frame or the chimney-piece. He would take the unlettered girl into his confidence, read to her his last literary effusion, draw his flute from his pocket and play an original air to her, or show her the most recent daubs and scratches in his scrap-book, on all of which Jean would bestow the most humble, reverent, unbounded admiration.

The entire disobedience and the whole deceitfulness of the affair, which was rather craftily permitted than openly countenanced by the elder Scotts, were Steenie's, not Jean's. It was an indication of the tenderness of her conscience that the knowledge that he was to blame cast a cloud over her contented, trustful spirit. It is little to say that she felt the departure from duty on his part more than he felt it, for in fact the spice of wrong-doing and risk in the connection was one of its fascinations to him. Steenie was exactly the style of lad at the age to have something of a morbid craving in the middle of his innocence for the experience and reputation of a Lothario. He indulged in a private conviction that stolen water and bread eaten in secret far surpassed all other water and bread in sweetness. He questioned in his own mind the plainest moral and religious axioms. He half persuaded himself in the inmost recesses of his bosom that he was at heart, if he got the opportunity, as interestingly lawless and unbelieving as—say, the Corsair or Don Juan. He was too radically pure-minded, too well brought up in what was in the main a healthy, manly, honest, religious atmosphere, too safely protected by a worthy attachment, ever to be guilty of a tithe of the iniquities of his heroes, but he had no objection—quite the contrary—to the excitement of guilt in a comparatively harmless, mild, small way. Here, again, Jean was young Burn Foot's good angel. She

would let him follow her about at any lawful hour at her father's place, but she would not arrange beforehand to meet him in private, whatever might be the pretext. "Na, it wouldna be richt," was an answer that was conclusive to Jean, and if she was pressed for an explanation she would add, straightforwardly, "for aething, it would hae an ill look, though we mean nae ill, and we're bidden in the Book to avoid the very appearance of evil. It would vex your father if ever he found out, and I'm grieved enough already at the notion of ever costing him a sigh," said Jean, with a long, soft sigh on her own account. "I ken he's your father, and no mine; but though that maks an odds it doesna end the matter. Na, sir, I'll no walk wi' you in the Hangman's Plantin in the gloaming, or meet you on the Lammer Law in the early morning, or mak an appointment when I gang wi' the coach to spend a day or twa with my mother's friends in the next town, to forgather with you sometimes—among the ruins o' the auld kirk, of a' places—without letting my auntie and my cousins ken."

No entreaties or reproaches from Steenie Oliphant—dear as he was to her—could induce the girl to alter her resolution; and she could not guess that at the time he took it upon him to entreat and reproach her, he was wholly undecided as to his ultimate course of action with regard to her. He had never directly mentioned marriage to anybody concerned in the affair. The plain contemplation of marriage with all its consequences, to Jock Scott's daughter, though that daughter happened to be Steenie's Bonnie Jean, continued not only strongly repugnant to him, it was actually about as impossible to the son as it was to the father. Still shutting his eyes to the fact, Steenie persisted in cherishing his ill-omened attachment.

The incident of Jock Scott's histrionic performance, when he was reduced to sell fish in the hearing of the Thursday's corn-market at Logie, which had been a source of pain and affront to his women-kind, was really also a serious blunder of Jock's at this stage of his daughter's history. It had been partly a piece of foolish bravado, with the object of winning a drunken wager; partly a cunning attack on his laird, which had answered so far. But there was another aim in the escapade which had come to signal grief. Jock had certainly

included in his calculations a mistaken attempt to push things to extremity, and force young Burn Foot's hand as well as his father's. And all the purpose his manœuvre served was to send Steenie Oliphant nearly beside himself, and drive him into even more flagrant and inconsistent conduct. Now he would absent himself from the farmhouse for a period of days, during which he took good care that it should be known he was a great deal at Balmayne, or in other quarters where there were marriageable daughters, eligible matches for young Burn Foot. As for Jean, she would droop a little—there would be black shadows beneath her soft eyes, darkening the pure ivory tint of her skin; but she would go about her work as busily and earnestly as ever, and would not breathe a word against the defaulter.

Presently Steenie would reappear, and be never absent from the farmhouse, where his company was winked at, thus exposing himself to any amount of gossip. For it could hardly be possible, though his father chose to make it out so, that the young laird was always scribbling verses or making sketches under the shadow of the hay-ricks or the thrashing-mill.

In this renewed fit of devotion the lover would turn the tables clean upon his mistress, and blame her severely for their recent separation. He would behave just as he had done at Moshie's ball. Steenie had accused Jean of being cold and avoiding him, and had sarcastically reminded her of the dances she had given to other men, the truth being that he had held himself aloof and refrained from asking her hand even when he was not dancing with other partners. He had shown himself on that, as on many occasions, the dog in the manger, and much more mindful of appearances which might compromise him, than of her feelings.

At last, when he had nearly succeeded in so completely bewildering Jean as to tempt her to believe she had been hard and heartless, he would fall back on his health. He would positively sport his wanness or his pink and whiteness, his slender figure, his semi-transparent hands. He would calmly hint, and have a pensive pleasure in believing his hint, that after all nothing signified much, as everything here would soon be over for him, and no unkindness could hurt him long. He would be at rest before many months had passed.

under the green turf in the Oliphant's burying-ground in the Logie Kirkyard, beside the young mother he had never known. Doubtless his poor father would miss him for a time, but he, too, must make up his mind to the inevitable.

The mingled threat and prophecy against which Jean found breath to protest eagerly, while the prophet shook his head in mournful deprecation of her unbelief, in reality filled her with terror and smote her to the heart. Poor Jean, who was so brave and patient for herself, wasted many a hidden tender moan and salt tear over the vague prospect of Steenie Oliphant's untimely end which he dangled before her.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DAY OF THE CRAWS AT BURN FOOT.

THE mansion-house of Burn Foot had not all the advantages which Balmayne possessed. In the former case there was no pleasant proximity to Logie. Neither was there a crumbling morsel of an old tower, which, to be sure, was not greatly prized in a generation once or twice removed from that of to-day. Hay Melville took pleasure in pretending that the ruin was the corner of a forgotten, half-fallen down "doocot"—no more. Doocot or no doocot, the bit of hoary masonry lent a certain air of respectable antiquity, a fine historical flavour to the comparatively modern commonplace freestone mansion beside it. That was only old-fashioned enough to be inconvenient, and deserved nothing better in itself and its poorish grounds, apart from the fragment of the tower, than to be forsaken for a finer house in a more desirable situation, as Burn Foot obligingly proposed when his son's pocket should be replenished by Hay Melville's tocher. Burn Foot, well acquainted with his son's proclivities, did not fail to make the most of "The Toor, the auld Toor o' Balmayne." *There* was a subject for a study either with pen or pencil. The subject was keeping its ground still, though it presented only a few

feet of crumbling masonry with the rudiments of a turret so very fragmentary, that, as the last of its daughters maintained facetiously, it might never have been anything more imposing than a dovecot, while the traditions and records referring to it might have had no origin save in men's lively imaginations. Yet granted the tower, one could conjure up "Sir Andry," Mary Queen of Scots' attached master of the household, who figures so picturesquely on the German stage in Schiller's play as a venerable old man, with the longest and whitest of beards, in a black velvet tunic, with the daintiest of silver keys of office at his girdle. Why, Sir Andry might have dwelt in his boyhood within those very walls, or entered them in old age, when his heart was broken by the sad fate of his royal mistress. There was authentic evidence to the contrary, say you? Oh, never mind authentic evidence contained in mouldy letters and dilapidated house books. If all artists had been stopped by such scruples what would have become of the most attractively romantic of their achievements?

But if Burn Foot had not such available capital as any rustic toor, or for that matter any historical Sir Andry, majordomo to an unfortunate Queen, it was not altogether destitute of individual good points. It was situated near the burn, as its name implied, the mansion-house and the farmhouse, Lauder Mills, and the town of Logie itself all lying, as so many old towns and houses lie, at irregular distances, up and down on either side of the water, which formed the connecting thread between them. Built on a crook or bend of the river, with Lauder Mills opposite, but further down, the house of Burn Foot, with high gables, rough dashed and yellow, was in a hollow, well lined with fir-wood. These firs —larch and Scotch firs—were some of them fine trees, prized both as good wood and agreeable features in the landscape by the laird and his son. More than these two had a real and vested interest in the plantation, and approved of it heartily. A colony of crows had from time immemorial built in the fir trees, and at special season the birds asserted themselves so loudly, that their cawing disputed successfully for supremacy of sound with the murmur of the burn, unless in times of "spate," when the murmur rose to a conquering roar.

The presence of the crows, with the annual increase to the colony, caused a day to be familiarly known as "The Day of the Craws," or "Craw-Day," at Burn Foot. Hay Melville said her family tried to get up an opposition in "The Day of the Daws" at Balmayne, the day when the chimneys were ransacked for jackdaws' nests, and the young birds were either destroyed, or were distributed among eager claimants of the feathered amateur thieves and practical jokers. But that was a small affair compared to the other, and engaged only the farm-servants and a few hangers-on. The craws on the contrary afforded sport for all classes of men, not boys merely, and when the sport was over, or in well-chosen intervals of the pastime, a famous dish, fit to set before a king, concocted of select portions of the doomed birds, was invariably offered as an appropriate ceremony and fit refreshment for their slayers. To prevent the craws increasing to an alarming extent and proceeding to eat up the seed of the earth, as well as the grubs at the roots of the grass and corn, a solemn assembly was convened at Burn Foot, of all the "guns," great and small, far and near, and a deadly warfare was kept up, which lasted from early morn to dewy eve, and resulted in heaps of massacred victims. A continuous pattering, popping, and cracking endured for hours, to which the wild cawing of the alarmed birds supplied a bass that sounded like desperate shrieks for mercy alternating with hoarse groans of despair. The idea was not cheerful, but perhaps it was deprived of its melancholy by the knowledge that the slaughter was committed on the common enemy of all the farms and gardens for miles—an enemy which when kept within bounds could be reckoned on as a useful ally, but when allowed to increase indefinitely, turned upon his protectors and filched their very food from their mouths.

Anyhow, the decimation of the craws was regarded as a country festival. Seeing it occurred but once a year, and did not extend over more than a single day, craw-shooting was very different from partridge or pheasant-shooting; not only was it beyond the province of the game laws, it was with the consent of the laird free to all classes. Ardent shots of whatever rank, so that they could beg, borrow, or steal a gun, were welcome to come and help to kill the craws—the obligation being to dispose of a sufficient number within a given

time. As a reward, the volunteers had their share of the spoil, together with lunch, dinner, or whatever they liked to call the meal, served out to them in relays all day long in the dining-room and kitchen; and in each room, as the crowning dishes at every separate repast, intended to give a special character to the cold meat and cheese, the claret and whiskey, which were there as a permanence, smoking craw-pies were put down with a flourish on the boards.

The whole affair had more of the nature of a free-and-easy hunting breakfast, or an election entertainment, or a piece of family rejoicing in which there was a popular element, than a standing private lunch or dinner. As a rule such feasts were limited to men, but in the case of Burn Foot an innovation had crept in. Mrs. Melville was always eager to draw closer the friendship between the heads of the respective houses, with the hope and determination of its extending in a warmer fashion to the younger members of the two families. She sought every occasion to identify the Melvilles and Oliphants publicly, so that insensibly a precedent might be established, and a subtle web woven to entangle the unwary feet of Steenie and Hay—for their good, of course. In this excellent aim the lady was ably seconded by the laird of Burn Foot. She was in the habit of proposing in the frankest, kindest manner to go over to Burn Foot, where there was no mistress, on the Day of the Craws, to overlook the servants, nay, to lend them such assistance as even lairds' wives were not above giving still, and help the laird and Steenie to entertain those guests who came up to the drawing-room and had cake and wine or tea instead of craw-pie.

Whatever the servants might think of the offer, Burn Foot accepted it in the spirit in which it was made.. But he seemed to be of opinion that more was due alike to himself and Mrs. Melville. Since she was so good as to countenance the craw-shooting and support him in the attendant hospitality, there must be other ladies to keep Mrs. Melville company. She must bring Miss Melville, and perhaps Miss Lindesay would accompany her father—the auld Captain liked a shot at the craws as well as any 'prentice hand. The young women of another laird's family near Burn Foot, the Clephanes, of Muirend, would think themselves left out if they were not "bidden" also. Young people liked a ploy of

any kind—all was grist that came to their mill, though Miss Betsy and Miss Nancy Clephane's father was an invalid, and their only brother had lost his right arm by an accident, so that nobody connected with them could purchase their right to be present by doing execution on the craws. Lady Sprott was in the same predicament. But young Sir Dauvit would grow up in course of time to have craw-shooting of his own at Kingscroft, which marched with Burn Foot on the opposite side to Balmayne. It became his brother laird to support the little baronet in the person of his mother, whom it would be invidious to leave out of the list of guests. There was too much of the feudal feeling still intact not to render the attention obligatory. The same influence prevailed in the case of Jock Scott, in spite of his recent outrage on propriety, and as many of his sons as could get a day's leave of absence from the shops in which the lads were 'prentices. It was as good as their right to be on the spot to demolish the craws, which to be sure were in danger of doing at least as much damage to the farmer as to the laird. Jock's bulky body in his brown home-spun coat and leather gaiters, with his gait half-slouching, half-swaggering, his grizzled bullet head and red-rimmed eyes set in the heavy tan of his face, formed a conspicuous figure among the rougher part of the company, and moved about, with an exasperating air of proprietorship, on the edge of his fields.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AROUND BURN FOOT.

NOTWITHSTANDING Mr. Oliphant's increasing antipathy to his tenant, the laird was true to his policy. He invited Jock to bring up the gudewife and Jean to help at the house and enter into the festivities. Mrs. Scott, conscious of falling beneath her former position, declined the invitation; but Jean came, in all singleness of heart, to help. "What for no?" when the laird himself had thought fit to ask her. She hardly knew how distasteful her presence as the farmer's

daughter was to young Burn Foot, who was indifferent to sport, and hated the institution of the Craw-Day, with its motley crew, its perpetual firing, that made his head ache, and its oppressive smells, turning him sick, of baked meat and whiskey, pervading the whole house for an entire day. However, even if Jean had suspected in full Steenie's feelings with regard to her appearance on the scene, she would have considered it a failure in her duty to his father to be absent. Surely she could help on a day when the Burn Foot housekeeper and servants stood in need of help, far better than Mrs. Melville, though she was a clever, active lady, or any of the other ladies of the lairds' families. Jean could go down into the kitchen, which they were not likely to do, and be of service in ways out of their province; and if she could be of use in the house, then she, of all women, was bound to be it, Jean reflected, with a beautiful blush. It was doing something for Steenie's father and Steenie. In addition to the benefit of her voluntary aid, there were other reasons why she was free to come into the drawing-room afterwards. She was the farmer's daughter. She was a schoolfellow of Miss Lindesay's, not only at the parish school, but at Moshie's, where Jean had also danced her "steps" in the same row of dancers with Miss Melville, and picked up a youthful acquaintance with the frank and fearless heiress of Balmayne. Jean would be well content to stay in the background and look on and admire the fine company. It seemed to her she would do it all the more instead of the less, because she was assured in her heart of hearts that the son of the house loved her before the best lady present; and if it rested with him, she might come in time to preside over the establishment in which she was then consenting to serve.

It was a fairly fine day in early summer, with occasional clouds and passing showers, which, though they afforded no respite to the condemned birds, caused the glistening fir branches to scatter drops on every side, and rendered the beds of brown needles beneath sufficiently soaked to prevent the ladies, even when their nerves were sufficiently steady to stand the shooting, going out to view the sport near at hand. The women, if they wished to see what was going on, watched what they could follow of the day's proceedings from the windows of the house. The scene they commanded

was sufficiently animated. Beyond the narrow belt of pleasure-ground lay the wooded hollow by the Cart, to-day alive with men of all sorts, from well-conditioned lairds like Burn Foot and Balmayne, to young bucks such as Adam Lauder and Steenie, down to plain farmers like Jock Scott, shaggy gamekeepers, and even working-men, in the rudest of corduroys.

Above the men—all bent on the same object—hung a wildly agitated cloud of birds, which now soared aloft till they were mere specks against the banks of cloud and streaks of blue sky, now sank down as if drawn by an irresistible attraction within reach of their foes; now strayed far afield, carrying the enemy in hot pursuit—over pasture meadows, by green corn and turnip-fields, and across dry stane dykes innumerable, till presently the craws returned, infatuated, to their covert among the fir trees, as a hunted beast will strike back on its lair.

The lively panorama was visible under shifting effects of light and shade as the sun glinted forth, with the clear shining of sunlight after rain on the drooping boughs of the larches and the copper stems of the Scotch firs, or hid itself in the quick gloom of a cloud that looked the colour of slate and the weight of lead, and threw everything—trees, men, and birds—into deep shadow. The performance was anything save silent. It offered a perfect Babel of sounds, extending from man's loudest shouts to the faintest chirp of some frightened small bird. Hay Melville, who could fire a gun with her own hand and not often miss her aim—though to do her justice she had never pointed her weapon at living game, she left that feat for some dainty modern belles—did not seek to join the sportsmen. But she did not shrink from the sight of the fluttering, falling birds as Lizzie Lindesay, though the true daughter of a brave soldier, shrank. When Adam Lauder, in his green coat, like a German Jäger, undeniably the best shot on the ground, had only to load and fire as fast as he could accomplish the operation to bring down his quarry, occasionally winging two birds with one shot, Hay leant out of any window she happened to be near and clapped her hands. The applause was not without personal risk, for the hunted craws sometimes flew in the direction of the house, right across the privet hedge, which

was all that separated the shrubbery from the fir-wood, and the more rash and undisciplined sportsmen could not always resist an impulse to fire, whatever the cost, whether to Burn Foot's windows or his indoor guests.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BURN FOOT DRAWING-ROOM ON THE CRAW-DAY.

AT intervals, gentlemen, singly or in detachments, forsook their occupation and sheltered themselves from the showers for a space, joining the ladies in the drawing-room, which became animated in its turn. It was a cold, formal room, rejoicing in angular satin-wood, scanty apple-green moreen, and such pieces of embroidery in tent-stitch on screens and footstools as the late Mrs. Oliphant had indulged in. Nobody in the house, not even the musical Steenie, cared to open the spinnet. He declared it wanted half the keys, and was so out of tune it would set any one's teeth on edge. In fact, Burn Foot and his son rarely used the room. But to-day it was full of colour and animation, the windows lined with women's faces,—mostly young, eager faces, quick to smile and laugh, —and behind the women, changing groups and solitary specimens of men, young and old, come in to report progress, to be questioned, praised, or chaffed.

Mrs. Melville's presence was a clear gain. The comely, ready-tongued matron was full of tact, while she acted as the representative of the late and of the future Mrs. Oliphant. Mrs. Melville had a gracious, welcoming word for every comer. She had a clever mode of distributing people, while not appearing to interfere with them, and of dealing out to each the treatment best suited to the individual. She prevented lumbering stagnation and awkward hitches—always in danger of occurring in mixed gatherings.

The Clephanes, of Muirend, were good-natured, chattering girls, who carried off their plain looks, not so much by birth and breeding, though they possessed a respectable amount of

both, as by sheer force of good spirits and independence of the awards of fortune in the matter of personal appearance. One of the Clephanes was at the end window with Lizzie Lindesay. The other sister was at the second window with Lady Sprott, whom the young lady was drawing out and enjoying. She was making capital of her ladyship, for the next company Miss Nancy Clephane might enter and entertain. The third window was occupied by Mrs. Pollock, holding the child, Sir Dauvit, whom his mother had brought with her, as she had him carried to most places, that he might be introduced betimes into polite society and initiated into practices which became a laird and baronet. Sir Dauvit, in his smart pelisse, and when his hat had been removed, his Valenciennes cap tied closely over his short rings of hair, seemed to have made a conquest of Hay Melville at his side. In the intervals of watching the sport she amused herself, rather to the annoyance of his keeper, with the small tyrant's exactions and humours. Ready to relieve both Mrs. Pollock and Miss Melville when the latter should have tired of her play with the child, stood Bonnie Jean. She had come up ushered by a grateful servant after there was nothing more for Jean to do below stairs, in the way of dishing and garnishing, fetching and carrying, so that she had become at liberty to let down the gown she had turned up, and throw off the apron with which she had arrived, in order to mingle with the guests. She had been drawn to the neighbourhood of the child, partly by inherent child-worship, partly by a duty imposed upon her by Lady Sprott.

The moment her ladyship's light blue eyes had caught sight of Jean, Lady Sprott had turned the farmer's daughter to account for the use of her baronet without ceremony. "Eh! Jean Scott, what are you seeking here? But since you are here, and your goon winna spile, you'll lend Mistress Pollock a hand wi' the bairn—Sir Dauvit. He's bound to be fractious among so mony strangers, and if he begin to yammer and kick, he'll weary his nurse and deave us a'."

"I'm obliged to your leddyship for your consideration, but I can manage my charge mysel', or I'm no fit for my place," protested the vexed and decorous Mrs. Pollock—always restraining herself, yet unable to stifle a tone in her voice which sounded very like, "I wish you would mind

your own business, my leddy, and leave me to manage mine."

"I'll be very happy to do as her leddyship wishes, if you will let me," said Jean, her pleasant voice casting oil on the troubled waters. "I'm fond o' bairns, and whiles I can please them, though, no doubt, I have not your experience, Mistress Pollock; at least it would be an ease to your arm to let me tak Sir Dauvit if he should get restive. He's a fine big laddie for his years."

"Isna he, Jean?" exclaimed the gratified mother, bobbing her head under the costly white lace "square" hung over her chip bonnet. "He's sic a wecht, you wouldna think, but you're used to wechts. I dare say, now, you can carry a race o' water from the burn, or an armfu' of claes from the hedge without aince standing still to draw breath."

"You must answer to me for interfering between me and Sir Dauvit," interposed Hay Melville. "Do you not see I'm setting my cap at him and mean to make Lady Sprott a dowager before she knows what she's about."

"But I'm no' aboon five or six years aulder than yoursel'," declared her ladyship in shrill protest; "and Sir Dauvit will no' be takin' a wife until you're an auld maid—if so be you wait for him."

"We'll see, Lady Sprott," declared Hay briskly. "He and I, we'll see. It will be our affair." She turned to Jean Scott—"You've not forgotten me, Jean? You mind Moshie's old *pas de bas* and *entrechats?* You pleased him best at the *pas de bas.* He would have it I skipped too high, but I beat you hollow at the *entrechats.* I saw you at the ball the other night. Do you think the scholars danced as well as we danced? I saw you at the market, too, but you were always so busily engaged both at the ball and the market that I could not get more than a word with you. I'm very glad to see you here where we've time to renew our acquaintance. How well you're looking, Jean."

"You're very gude, Miss Melville," was all Jean could say.

The recognition was cordial, and the praise generous, while Jean held them to be of even more value than they actually were. She could not quite penetrate the truth that her fine lad, her grand friend, Mr. Steenie Oliphant, to whom Burn Foot would belong, beside whom Hay Melville,

of Balmayne, stood as a fit partner, was in reality nothing to Hay, nothing more than an old playfellow and familiar acquaintance, whom she had teased, at whom she had laughed since the two were children together.

Jean was looking well in her old-fashioned chintz gown, which had been her mother's, and had cost a good deal of money in its day, made down to fit her. The skirt was drawn through the pocket-holes to show Jean's quilted black silk petticoat. That was the remains of another old gown which Jean had quilted for herself in the long winter nights, when there was less farm and housework to be done at Burn Foot, and Steenie Oliphant had sometimes looked in, though he ought not to have been out so late in the rough weather, to stand for a little, a tall shadow by her quilting-frame, and bungle over the threading of her needles, which her brother Niel, the draper's assistant, could do for her in a trice. Jean had also plaited the rustic straw of her hat, which looked almost uncouth beside Lady Sprott's chip. But the face beneath, in its delicacy and purity of outline and colouring, bore the belle over all the faces in the room--not merely over the Miss Clephanes with their sallow skin and mouse-brown hair, that was not to say much, but over Lady Sprott's fresh roundness, Hay Melville's china whiteness lit up, as a lamp is lit up, by the spirit within, and Lizzie Lindesay's sweet bloom.

A stranger—an English lad visiting in the neighbourhood—had been brought to the crow-shooting. He had been told the story of Lady Sprott, and plied with endless anecdotes of this version of King Cophetua's beggar-maid. He was curious to see her, and when he entered the Burn Foot drawing-room with Steenie Oliphant, immediately looked round him to identify the heroine. His eyes settled instantly on Jean, who had got Sir Dauvit in her arms. That magnate had summarily disposed of Hay Melville's advances by all at once turning on his amazed admirer, with the peculiar unreasoning fury which distinguished the little Sprotts when they were offended, clenching his small fists, making the most horrible infantile grimaces at her, and screaming to her in his scanty vocabulary,

"Gang! gang!"

Hay, in her intrepidity, had stood her ground for a full

moment, and then fled, extinguished, with her hands over her ears.

Mrs. Pollock herself was so much overcome by the scandal when the child went on struggling, screaming, and declining to be pacified, that she was persuaded to yield him to Jean, who took him to her bosom, and tried all her gentle, homely repertory upon him, till the little fellow stopped his hullabaloo, put his thumb in his mouth, and stared at her, uncertain whether to laugh instead of crying. Jean had walked up and down hushing him. She had played,

> "*Peter Dick, Peter Dick, Peter Dick's peastack,*"

drumming lightly at every syllable with her disengaged hand on the wall behind her. She had sat down and gone through in an undertone, for the child's private benefit, the drama of shoeing Sir Dauvit's right foot, as a smith would shoe a horse, to the rhyming accompaniment—

> "*John Smith, a felly fine,*
> *Can ye shoe a horse o' mine?*
> *Yes, indeed, and that I can;*
> *Just as weel as ony man.*
> *Put a bit upon the tae,*
> *To gar the powney climb the brae*
> *Put a bit upon the heel,*
> *To gar the powney pace weel,*
> *Pace weel, pace weel,*"

a final refrain to which the supposed "powney" was swung rapidly backwards and forwards in an appropriate and highly acceptable pantomime.

The last performance completed Jean's conquest. Sir Dauvit nestled to her in an ecstacy of delight, and she bent over him with answering pleasure.

At that instant the stranger's eye fell on her, and he leapt to a natural conclusion. "By George!" he exclaimed, whispering in Steenie Oliphant's ear, "I do not wonder at the late baronet. She may be half a fool, but she's the loveliest woman I ever set eyes upon. At this moment, hushing her child with the mother's light in her eyes, she's positively divine. I must crave an introduction to the charming, low-born widow."

"You are out in your conjecture, Norton," said Steenie, curtly. He was disgusted by the mistake and by Jean's

being there at all. At the same time, his disgust was shot through with a strain of satisfaction, for he was exactly the style of man whose verdict was confirmed by that of his fellow-men, who insensibly set store on their opinion. "That is Lady Sprott," he added, covertly indicating the real Simon Pure.

The English lad looked round bewildered. "Then the nurse is worth a hundred of her mistress," he declared. "Sir David had not been gifted with such good taste as I gave him credit for; unless, indeed, this prodigy did not appear at Kingscroft in his day."

"You're wrong again," muttered the young laird of Burn Foot, still more irritably, as he told himself what had Jean to do there, posing as a nurse, causing those awkward mistakes, and exposing him and herself to such impertinence? Why should she be at the beck and call of Lady Sprott, of all persons, who had originally been as far below Jean in birth and education, as her ladyship continued beneath the farmer's daughter in everything save her title and annuity? What call was there for Jean to devote herself to quieting a squalling brat in no way related to her? There must be a positive want—a lack of the sense of what was due to him and herself—in Jean to cause her to lay herself open to such liberties.

Mrs. Melville had caught some of the conversation of the young men and guessed more. She came to the rescue, and made her own of the incident. "Yes, isn't she a beauty?" she said, with effusion. "We are all proud of Bonnie Jean. She is the belle of Logie and the neighbourhood. No one dreams of disputing it. I have heard sentimental people call her the Burn Foot Rose, though I think myself she is more of a lily than a rose; don't you agree with me, Steenie? Oh, dear, no! Mr. Norton, she is not a nursemaid: something rather better than that—a farmer's daughter, though I am sorry to say her father is in miserable circumstances. He made a singular exposure of it the other day, which vexed his laird, our excellent host, a good deal. But that story will keep for the present. As for Jean, there, she is as good as she is bonnie. That is why we can have her among us on an occasion like this without fear of spoiling her."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"FEY."

At last the shooting was over, with a hecatomb of young craws as the result of the day's sport. The most of the company, well refreshed, quickly dispersed, only a few of Mr. Oliphant's personal friends stayed to spend the evening at Burn Foot, regardless of morning-coats and walking-dresses. Among the few were the Melvilles of Balmayne, the Clephanes of Muirend, Captain Lindesay and his daughter, and Adam Lauder. The last owed the distinction to other causes than being a *habitué* of the house, for there was no intimacy between him and Steenie. But he was a near neighbour. There was also the necessity which has been referred to, to find beaux to match the belles who were present, and Adam was at least privileged on the score of his uncle, the Emperor, and his father, the parish minister, to enter the charmed circle of the landed aristocracy, though he was not one of them. The evil was that he did not understand the limitation Mrs. Melville was accustomed both to say to others and to show by her behaviour to Adam pretty plainly, in the middle of her general voluble graciousness.

To-night Adam did not respond properly to the compliment of being included in the Burn Foot supper-party. He appeared to have exhausted his energies on the craws, he was singularly dull and retiring for Adam. He hung about the door or the windows, or the further side-tables, almost as if he felt conscious of his lack of lairdly standing. Mrs. Melville's objection for once had no foundation. Adam showed no inclination to come to the front and attach himself to any of the attractive metal, in the shape of the young ladies, usually so irresistible to him.

It was not that Adam Lauder was cast into the shade and put out of conceit with himself because a base advantage was taken by young Burn Foot, in airing his accomplishments and proving himself the better man of the two in his own house, where he was master of the situation. Steenie Oliphant had not got over the shock and restraint of Jean Scott's presence

at Burn Foot earlier in the day, though she had gone home hours before. He continued moody and preoccupied. He had the grace to make an occasional spasmodic effort to entertain his father's guests, but on the whole the young ladies who looked to these two young men for entertainment were to be pitied. The girls had to become the entertainers in their turn, and, like Madame Maintenon with the great Louis, found it a hard task to amuse ungrateful men who would not be amused.

Betsy and Nancy Clephane, who were as merry as crickets, and as obliging as if they had their bread to earn by their good nature, inaugurated all their best games; but where was the use of forfeits or riddles, or Scotch proverbs, or that ingenious trap for stiff tongues, "*A peacock picked a pea of pepper out of a pewter plate*," when the players who ought to have put the most spirit into the play hardly exerted themselves so much as to utter a single monosyllable?

"I was acquainted with dumb-bells in my school-room days," Hay Melville was heard to say, "but I am not aware that I have ever before seen dumb beaux."

Then she relented and tried to atone for her mocking speech where Adam Lauder was concerned, since there could be no question that he was not himself. He had a troubled dazed look which was altogether foreign to his ordinary bold blithe bearing; and there was a smothered nervous excitement about him, betraying itself in quick, impatient movements, when he was aroused, and sudden plunges into whatever was going on around him, as if to cover his absence of mind and regain his footing. His very face was not the same frank, comely face that was so familiar about Logie. The smooth brow was contracted, the roving eyes set, the mobile mouth hard fixed, the ruddy colour had deepened to a crimson flush.

Adam Lauder was ill at ease and flurried, with all his dash and gaiety he could not conceal it, for whatever faults he had —and they were many—hypocrisy was not natural to him.

Lizzie Lindesay, as well as Hay Melville, remarked the change in the young man, and wondered what could ail Adam.

More than the girls noticed something amiss. Members of the company, putting two and two together, recalled that

Simon Lauder had been over in Logie again during the earlier part of the week. No doubt he had looked into the business transactions at the paper-mills, along with their young manager. Surely there had been fault-finding which had rankled in the defaulter's mind, though the Emperor had the reputation of being only too generous and indulgent to his nephew. Yet the elder man, when last seen and spoken with, had looked as resolved as ever to take the crown of the causeway. He had expressed himself perfectly satisfied. Still this supposed displeasure was a feasible explanation of a state of mind which had led Adam to snatch a desperate relief in his hot despatch of the craws, and left him later glum and distrait.

Hay Melville was moved by the signs of care which she could not comprehend in Adam Lauder as he pulled his whiskers and shaded his eyes. Young love, which ventures in

"*Where it daurna weel be seen,*"

sharpened her eyes to detect something seriously wrong with the young man, whom she had known as the gayest, most gallant, undaunted lad in the country-side, the foremost rider, hunter, shooter, fisher, flirter, leader in sheer noise and nonsense, regardless of the consequences, withal the cherisher of a tolerably presumptuous ambition, whom, in spite of her friend Lizzie Lindesay, a wag of Hay's finger could at any moment bring to Hay's side, and a glance of her eye lay at her feet.

The spirit of perversity which was strong in Hay likewise tempted her in positive bravado to improve the occasion of being with her father and mother at Burn Foot, to show herself sweet on Adam Lauder.

Was that the simple truth, or was the old Norse superstition of feyness doubly fulfilled? Did the extraordinary unaccountable transformation in temper and behaviour which is believed to cast its shadow before a crisis in life show itself in the bearings both of Adam Lauder and Hay Melville this night? Had they changed parts for once, and once only? Was the change symbolical of an upheaval and overthrow of social barriers?

It was Hay who was tender and reproachful, who hung upon the little he said and did, who had neither eyes nor ears to spare for anybody else in the room. The madcap was so metamorphosed that it was like infatuation and magic.

When the games, including the never-failing cards, fell flat,

M

music before supper was resorted to. Hay opened the tuneless spinnet, and brought something of jingling, halting melody out of it. But instead of playing her Battle of Prague style of piece, she broke into the airs of Adam Lauder's best known songs, '*The Garb of old Gaul,*' '*Hark, sing tally ho!*' and looked round with a soft arch invitation for him to join her with his presence at her side, and his voice as an accompaniment to her playing.

But Adam hurriedly excused himself. He was not accustomed to sing to any other playing on the piano than his sisters', and it was so long since he had been at home that he had got out of the way of it. He could not sing to-night, he felt a kind of hoarseness to which he was subject coming on.

Mrs. Melville smilingly suggested that perhaps Steenie would do the company the favour of accompanying Hay with his flute. But Steenie did not show any eagerness to adopt the suggestion, and Hay put it down summarily by stating that she was not in the humour for a chamber concert. Then she burst out afresh into the air of the rampageous rant,

"*Hey! Maggie; ho! Maggie; hey! Maggie Lauder,*"

which was certainly very unlike what one would have heard at a chamber concert, though Burn Foot professed to snap his fingers in keen enjoyment of its boisterous hilarity.

The Clephanes and Lizzie took their turn at the spinnet. A somewhat languid, three-corner carpet reel was even got up.

But always Hay went back to the music-stool, and every time she played anew, in place of her boarding-school music, or instead of the 'Rousseau's Dream,' 'The Rout is Come,' and the 'Drops of Brandy' of her companions; awkwardly significant tunes, the words of which everybody had at his or her finger-ends.

Now she gave

"*He's low down, he's in the broom,*
That's waiting for me,"

when the audience had a vivid recollection of the graphic picture of a divided household contained in the song—the "cankered carle," the "scolding dame," the "Auntie Kate," "jeering ear' and late" at the lassie who still found abundant

consolation in the triumphant defiance which the music uttered with passionate pathos,

> "*But he's low down, he's in the broom,*
> *That's waiting for me, my love,*
> *That's waiting for me.*"

Again, in cool disregard or in still cooler recognition of the circumstance that Adam Lauder was held in general respect for his gift of whistling like a mavis or a lark, she played the brisk and breezy measure—

> "*Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,*"

until from her flying finger-tips there rang out as clearly as if she had sang them, the lines of the audacious challenge—

> "*Though father and mither and a' should gae mad,*
> *Just whistle and I'll come to you, my lad.*"

Hay behaved no better at the supper-table, where she sat opposite to Adam. When she was asked to propose a toast, she held her head erect, and with that faintest, loveliest flush on her pale face, said boldly though without raising her eyes, "Todlowrie's worst enemy," which being freely interpreted in King's English, meant the most daring rider to hounds in that part of the country. The next time her turn came to supply a motive for emptying the brimming glasses, she proudly requested the company to drink "to him who gives work and bread to the greatest number of his fellows," plainly referring to Adam and his mill-hands. For whatever might be said of his being a paper-maker instead of a laird, it was undeniable that his *employés* exceeded in number the servants at Balmayne or Burn Foot.

Strange to say, though Adam Lauder once or twice woke up to these signs of his victory with a momentary glow and exultation, they did not free him from his burden, whatever it might be, and he fell back presently into his disordered self-absorption. Hay's open encouragement was bestowed so far in vain.

The matchmakers, Burn Foot and Mrs. Melville, behind the screen of their well-bred philosophy and blandness, fretted and fumed helplessly. Even Balmayne was sufficiently disturbed to shrug his shoulders silently and take more toddy than was good for him. He could carry it better than most men, since it did not loosen his tongue, but the undemonstrative laird

smiled benignly upon the room full of guests—Adam among the rest. The auld Captain noted what was going on from beneath his shaggy eyebrows, and thanked his stars with a certain stern satisfaction, that it was not his lassie who was acting with such headstrong folly. He should like to see Lizzie try it.

Betsy and Nancy Clephane exchanged meaning glances with a vivid apprehension of a certain happy event in the future, the astonishing prospect of which would be the talk of the country-side while the year lasted.

Lizzie Lindesay told herself that the end of Adam Lauder's flirtations was coming about abruptly. Was that the reason why he looked so troubled and grave? Yet it was a good end which would please his uncle and everybody connected with him. She was glad to feel it did not darken the world to her; on the contrary, any soreness she had experienced on finding that she had but been one of Adam's "flames," which he could light up and put out when it suited him, had been rapidly passing away. She had the comfort of thinking that she had really kept her heart in safety, even as the heroine in the old ballad had vowed to store hers in a sillar kist, and fasten it with a gowden pin. Lizzie had never been so far left to herself as to compromise herself before her neighbours by betraying her simple liking for Adam, in anything like the same degree to which Hay Melville was recklessly exposing a stronger feeling now. Lizzie could wish Hay and Adam joy with a clear conscience and a comparatively light heart. She could even feel so friendly and favourable to the pair as to believe that they would make a reasonably happy couple. For Hay, after giving the reins to her feelings, would pull them up, and be fully conscious of all she was bestowing—though she might not go so far as to regard it in the light of a sacrifice, and tell her partner in life that she so regarded it. She would unhesitatingly take her stand upon her advantages, keep the upper hand of Adam, which Lizzie had a strong suspicion might be necessary in their relations, and not expect too much from her strapping husband.

Lizzie never doubted that love, which was still the lord of all in the girl's imagination, would conquer every obstacle, and Hay would have her own way, as she had been accustomed to take it in smaller things, in settling her destiny. Mrs.

Melville and Balmayne might not be over well pleased with this marriage for their only child and heiress. But it was not so great a descent after all. The Lauder paper-mills were an extensive concern. The Emperor had long been reputed the possessor of a large law business, with the profits accruing from it, and it was understood that his nephew Adam would be his heir. The wind of trade might come between the laird, or rather the lady of Balmayne's nose and the family gentility — that was all. On the other hand, the Melvilles had no objection to put in their distant relationship to Mrs. Mally Corstorphine, in order to share her bawbees, which, as all the world knew, had been won by the custom of an inn no less than by the cinnamon planting and cochineal bug rearing of the late Governor.

As for young Burn Foot, who ought to have been immensely relieved, the silly fellow was actually aggrieved by Hay Melville's striking her colours almost without the apology of a siege to Adam Lauder, and watched the two with a decidedly dog-in-the-manger air.

In the mean time, the night was drawing on to morning,

"*The wee short hour ayont the twal*"

was about to strike, when the revellers would start, or feign to start, guiltily at the lateness of the hour, call out to have their carriages, gigs, horses, or it might be only their lanterns in readiness, and hurry over the leave-takings.

Burn Foot, on his part, would insist strenuously, as the standard of hospitality and politeness in his day rigorously required of him, on a parting glass and one more song. The laird was in the act of pressing Adam Lauder, whom in Mr. Oliphant's heart he was styling at that moment a landlouper (interloper) with the deil's own luck, to give the company '*Willie brewed a peck o' maut*,' when the dining-room door was flung open hastily.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A LOWE IN THE LIFT OVER THE CART WATER.

THE old man-servant, who united the offices of footman and butler at Burn Foot, appeared in the doorway. Like his betters, he had taken the liberty of not changing the pepper and salt suit he had worn at the craw-shooting for orthodox black. His puckered face was puckered even more than its wont, so that his forehead was drawn up in a very net-work of wrinkles, lending an extreme arch to his thin white eyebrows and a staring look to his bleared eyes. "If you please, Burn Foot," exclaimed Sandy, addressing his master in the first place, and then the whole audience promiscuously, "I hope you and the leddies and gentlemen will forgie me for disturbing you, but I thocht that you and Mr. Steenie and the lave had better be tauld that the lift's in a lowe * ower the Cart water."

"'The lift in a lowe.' What the mischief do you mean, Sandy?" cried Burn Foot, starting up with the rest at the singular interruption. "It's not the time of the year for the northern lights, and you're not such a fule as to come in bletherin about them."

Naturally there was a good deal of excitement, though the first word was but of an atmospheric phenomenon. Was it the moon, which ought to be up by this hour, looking red through the night rime above the burn, as the sun looked before setting on a winter afternoon?

Some of the guests went to the windows, which, however, did not, like those of the drawing-room, command the firwood and the Cart; some were following Steenie to the front door, till only one person was left at the table, and that, oddly enough, was Adam Lauder. He stood for a moment as if arrested, and then he banged his great fist on the wood of the table with a violence that shook decanters and glasses, cried hoarsely, "By the Lord, it's my mills on fire," and rushed from the house.

There was a second's pause, then the cry was caught up,

* Sky's in a flame.

and a stampede of all the men present followed Adam. Those who had got a glimpse of the cause of Sandy's announcement, realized that the red reflection seen through the intervening trees in the sky above, and on a reach of the water below, must be close upon the spot where the Lauder Mills, like the house of Burn Foot, was built in a hollow, hidden from view by the rising ground. It was only too probable that Adam Lauder's guess was right.

"Dear, dear! What an unexpected calamity," said Mrs. Melville. She never wanted an appropriate word for the most unlooked-for event; she would not have been struck dumb or knocked off her mental balance by an earthquake, or the eruption of a volcano. "I hope the fire will not be serious, with the contents of the mills so combustible. I trust no lives will be put in danger. I am afraid it will be a bad job for Mr. Adam Lauder if the flames get the mastery," ended the lady, in the same even tone of voice, in which there was no trace of acute distress.

"How do you know there are flames," protested Hay, impatiently, "or that they will not be put out in five minutes? I am sure there are enough helpers gone already, and enough water to do it. Adam Lauder will succeed in whatever he undertakes. He will not be beaten by a spunk, with the whole Cart at his elbow. I should like to go down and see him. I was never at a fire."

"You'll do no such thing, Hay," said Mrs. Melville, with sufficient authority to keep even Hay back. "Stay where you are when I tell you, bairn, it is bad enough as it is." Then she hastened to add, in order to give another application to her words, "It is bad enough to have your father out at his age, in the middle of the night, in such a Shirramuir * of fire and water."

"And there's the auld Captain with his pains" (rheumatism),

* The name of the disputed battle, of which an eye-witness could say no more than that.

> "*Some say that we won,*
> *Some say that you won,*
> *And some say that nane won ava, man.*
> *But this I ken, at Shirramuir a battle there I saw, man.*"

"Shirramuir" was long a household word in Scotland for any scene of excitement and confusion.

interposed Betsy Clephane, as ready with her commiseration as with her good fellowship.

"Oh, my father will not mind, after the campaigns he has seen," said Lizzie, with a certain pride. "He has been at the blowing up of a town; he may be able to advise Adam— I mean Mr. Lauder."

"That loon of a coachman, Jeames Deer," resumed Mrs. Melville, discontentedly, "will be off to the fell-like ploy, no doubt, leaving his horses to take their chance."

Even Mrs. Melville spoke Scotch a little when she was moved.

"And as you were to drive us over and drop us at the turnstile, we'll not reach home till the middle of the night, and get a worse flytin' than Hay here ever dreamt of for breaking our father's first sleep," cried the Clephanes in one delighted voice, as if the calamity which brought them such an adventure were matter for congratulation.

"Upon my word, you take things coolly," protested Hay, with a half hysterical laugh. "You're as bad as the 'mantin laddie' (stammering boy). Oh, yes, Nancy, you've heard the story a hundred times," in petulant protest. "He could sing, but not speak plainly. He ran up to his father, the miller, with the laddie's eyes standing in his head, and began to gasp. 'Faith—faith—er.' 'Sing, callant, sing,' the father had the wit to adjure the son, and the spell was broken. The tortured messenger got out his bad news to a blithe lilt:

'*Faither, faither, the kiln's a-lowe.*
Faither, faither, the kiln's a-lowe.'

I declare you and Betsy and my mother are no better without so good an excuse. Only Lizzie here is white and trembling with neighbourly feeling. Come back with me, Lizzie, to the drawing-room—we may be allowed to do that, particularly when Nancy and Betsy say they will not be home till the middle of the night—if it is not that time already. We'll try what we can make out from the west window, peering like howlets into the dark."

Not Hay and Lizzie alone but all the women repaired to the other room, from which there was a view. They watched the lurid light over the Cart, which was all they could distinguish of the mischief. They became every moment more

and more impressed by the abnormal effect of the mystery of that fiery flush in the sky, dimly reflected at right angles on the bend of water, quenching and swallowing up the moonlight, which looked so wan by comparison. At last Mrs. Melville was stirred to the pitch of consenting that as the night had turned out fine, the ladies, who under the circumstances could not go to their respective homes, should sally forth in their wraps, under the escort of the only man who was left about the place, old Sandy, carrying a stable lantern. They might ascertain for themselves what was wrong, and see how the struggle went—whether, if the Lauder Mills were really on fire, it was to be victory or defeat.

Sandy had stayed to keep the house as a point of honour. He was as keen as the youngest there to avail himself of any opportunity of seeing the fire, but he felt it necessary to make some politic reservations. "Weel! it is my business to bide here, but I'll gang to pleasure ye, leddies. I dare say there'll be nae ill-doers about, forby the throng at the mills—that will tak' up a' the folk the nicht. You'll clear me wi' the maister gin he object, for it is you and no me that has broken bunds."

"Never mind. We'll say we made you take us," promised the eager petitioners.

"Auld donnert stick!" muttered Hay, in her impatience. "What need have we of him? He'll keep us back, instead of helping us forward."

"Should we not go down to the Scotts at the farmhouse?" proposed Lizzie. "The farmhouse is just across the water from Lauder Mills. You can see the buildings plainly."

Lizzie was a soldier's daughter, with a share of her father's old promptness and clear-headedness in action.

"What a capital idea, my dear!" Mrs. Melville applauded the suggestion. She did not relish the idea of spending an hour or a couple of hours on the high-road, or at the best under a tree, in the middle of the night, though the season was already summer. "We can easily recompense poor Mrs. Scott if we put her about by intruding upon her at such an hour."

"Nobody will be asleep at the farmhouse to-night," predicted Lizzie, "though it is hours since Jean went home."

"Oh, aye, Jean will see to us." A chorus of voices caught at the name.

"Yes, to be sure," assented Mrs. Melville, "Jean is a kindly, capable creature. She will make us comfortable," as if she felt it due to the Lady of Balmayne to be made comfortable at a fire as well as in her pew in the kirk, or anywhere else.

"And if the Scotts' house is full," suggested Lizzie again, "for great and small will be running out fast from Logie, and more than me will have thought of Burn Foot farmhouse, we may at least get the shelter of a shed of some kind, and see better there than from any other point."

Hay pressed Lizzie's arm and whispered to her, "Come with me, Lizzie, to one of the sheds after we have got the others settled. I must see what is going on, and I'm not able to stand my mother's pet reflections and Betsy and Nancy Clephane's giggling remarks to-night."

The question of the road between the laird's mansion and his tenant's farmhouse, consisted for the most part of a long hedge-bounded loaning, muddy with the recent showers, descending to a lower reach of the Cart. Sandy's lantern was in request to enable his companions to avoid the biggest "dubs," or as he expressed it, to "pike their feet." There was little aid from the illumination in the sky, which was less distinguishable here than from the mansion-house. It was only when the gradual descent was accomplished and a corner turned, that a striking spectacle burst upon the party. Adam Lauder's mills were all alight from the basement to the topmost storey. Men, singly and in knots, were hurrying to and fro, showing dark against the glare of the building. Their shouts and calls sounded above the monotonous lapping of the slightly swollen water, and another continuous and increasing noise proceeding from the rising roar and crackle of the flames, which were as yet confined within the building.

The farmhouse of Burn Foot, like Burn Foot House, had been abandoned to women, and but for one cause of detention, they too might have rushed abroad in the breathless excitement of a terrible event, which, however common where the wooden structures of foreign countries come into play, does not occur once in a generation in regions that have to do with stone and lime. As Lizzie had foreseen, Logie, having

become alive to the destruction threatening the theatre of its solitary native manufactory, was pouring forth its inhabitants, partly with the friendly impulse to do all they could to help Adam Lauder in his strait, partly with a burning curiosity to witness the drama. The Scotts' house was the goal of many in the crowd, and Mrs. Scott and Jean felt it incumbent on their womanly and housewifely instincts to stay indoors and do what they could for their self-invited guests. Jean had even set out bread-and-cheese and ale for the refreshment of the unexpected visitors, and was anxiously turning over in her mind whether the kebbock—the only one brought in ripe from the cheese-loft—and the beer barrel; not to say the puncheon of whiskey, would stand the exhaustive demands suddenly made on them.

There was still room for Mrs. Melville in the seat of honour—Jock Scott's arm-chair, in the window which looked right upon Lauder Mills. Betsy and Nancy Clephane placed themselves at the Lady of Balmayne's back, ready to make way for Hay or Lizzie, or any one else, if the Clephanes' places were wanted. But Hay and Lizzie had stolen out unnoticed, after a word with Jean, who advised, "Try the granary stair. There's a landing at the tap, and the roof's on overhanging rafters, so that you'll be scouget, while you'll have the mills and the water clear at your feet. Nobody else may think of the stair, so that you may have it to yoursels, without being crushed or having to warstle for the front rank."

Jean's counsel was excellent. Burn Foot farmhouse, like many old farmhouses, was built in close contact with its offices, the whole forming a square. The granary was in a line with the house, fronting the Cart, but as it constituted an angle of the square, the stair itself was in strong shadow, and had been overlooked as an advantageous station, while the thrashing-mill, the pigeon-house, the hay-loft, and the very "stainchels" or shafts to raise the stacks, with the body of a stack which had been half taken down, were besieged by applicants for places to witness the spectacle. Hay and Lizzie were for some time alone and unseen in their place of observation. Instinctively the girls clung to each other, and drew long sighing breaths as they gazed on the disastrous, awe-inspiring beauty of the fire, with its stern combatants. They were fighting an unequal battle with the treacherous ally who

had changed in a twinkling from a humble slave to a savage master, and straining every nerve to overcome him, to bind him hand and foot, and slake him with the Cart water till he should sob out his last breath in ashes.

There was abundant water at hand, but the knowledge only served as a goading consciousness, for there were no modern contrivances to bring it to bear with much effect on the fire, which before it had been discovered had taken deep root and spread so far as to render a few bucketsful at a time of little use. Men toiled as they best could with the primitive tools of tubs and barrels, troughs and cans, but the means were miserably inadequate to the end. The Cart might flow by while the world lasted; so long as there was not the power practically to alter the channel of the river, and turn it upon the burning mills, the chances were desperate, and the game a losing one.

The whole western horizon was fast kindling with a light ten times brighter than the sunrise, and rosier than the sunset. The water of the Cart was suffused and dyed with the uncanny glory—here half white with a dazzling radiance, there half pink with a sanguinary blush. The internal glow which for a space had made the paper-mills—a spick-and-span, tall, narrowish pile of building, adjoining an old disused meal and flour mill—like a huge lantern, was beginning to leap out, amidst gushes of smoke, in yellow tongues of flame, which licked the sashes of the windows. The fire had been well diffused among congenial material—piles of paper and heaps of rags—before the lowe in the lift had attracted attention.

The Mill House, Adam Lauder's goodly home, which had risen many a time before Lizzie's imagination, so fresh, cool, and sweet, with its garniture of roses and ivy, amidst its thickets of holly bushes, laurustinus, and lilac, its natural growth of larches, rowans, and birch trees, had become included in the glare cast upon the doomed place, and was in imminent peril of similar destruction. It seemed as if the summer flowers and foliage thus brought into unnatural prominence, must be shrinking and crackling under the furnace light and heat, even before they were ruthlessly torn and trampled down by hurrying, heedless feet. The old meal-mill, which had been in existence long before the paper-mills, and had been given up at the commencement of the later

undertaking, so that it had served for years merely as a receptacle for worthless odds and ends, remained untouched close to the central danger. It was an instance of what often happens—the precious destroyed, the valueless spared.

What wind there was blew towards the dwelling-house, and carried with it showers of sparks which were certain to propagate the evil. The working machinery and the stores of material in paper and rags in the mills had been from the first beyond rescue, though the volunteer rescuers did not readily resign anything. These volunteers were of all kinds and classes—lairds, farmers, ploughmen, clerks, and shopmen from Logie, together with the mill-workers, likely to be cast adrift with their master by the catastrophe—and all went gallantly at the hopeless adventure. They strove to save something, were it but the crumbling shell of the building, from the general devastation, and continued to make mad snatches at what, if secured, would be little better than half-charred rubbish.

Other wiser helpers were more sagaciously engaged dragging out Adam's good furniture and handsome wardrobe, with superfluities of sporting prints, stuffed birds he had shot in life, ornaments of bears' paws and eagles' claws, eccentric drinking-tankards, and grotesque snuff-boxes. The things were cast down in heterogeneous heaps on the "green" or lawn. Lizzie had a queer recollection of her old maid's tea-pot, bought in Logie Market. Was it shivered in the racket? Had it been saved among the other bachelor treasures? Was anybody halting, even at such a moment, to laugh and wonder how Adam Lauder could have come by the attribute of an old maid's garret. Or had he turned the tea-pot over long ago to his housekeeper? The likeness of Lark in earthenware was still safe in Lizzie's keeping, and she was not aware of any obligation to present it to Hay Melville.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE "BLACK BANNOCK" THROWN FROM THE OLD MEAL-MILL.

OH! what a fool Lizzie Lindesay was, and how selfish, she told herself, to be thinking of a trumpery tea-pot, when the poor fellow to whom the mills belonged, conspicuous among the other men by his superior height and his extraordinary exertions, was running madly to and fro, plunging up to the middle in the Cart, staggering under these useless "races" of water, which, when lifted and flung down, only raised a little scalding steam, but did less than nothing to arrest the deadly element. Yes, indeed, where he figured there, wet to the skin, soiled and blackened as if he had been on fire in his own person, hoarse with shouting to his supporters, yet compelled to see his worldly goods perishing before his eyes. Adam Lauder was in a sorry plight, which even his worst enemy might have pitied. These two girls who had stolen apart to look on were neither of them his enemy. One could have loved him so wisely and well, that recognizing him to be what he was, she bore him no malice for giving her back the great possibilities of her love. The other did love him with all the ability she had to love.

It was not three hours since Hay Melville had rattled the keys of the old Burn Foot spinnet to the tune of

"*Hey! Maggie; ho! Maggie; hey! Maggie Lauder!*"

since she had called on the company to drink Adam's health, as the man in the country-side who gave work and bread to the greatest number of his fellows. At the present moment he was furnishing work to a more numerous and motley company than he had ever before supplied with that not always coveted commodity. But as for the bread—would he have any left for himself? Or if bread, would he ever again be able to provide the diet cake which was the only fit staff of life for a girl of Hay Melville's degree and prospects? She might have done her part in so feeding a household, but

could he, after this calamity, still hope to fulfil his in the years to come?

Yet Hay did not flinch at this moment, which truly was not the time for such a question. On the contrary, she watched her lover with strong admiration and keen delight.

"Do you see how Adam outstrips every other man there?" she pointed out exultingly to Lizzie. "There is none like him. Look, he is dragging along that water-cart with his own hands. He has lifted the heavy barrel without any help. He has trodden on the burning brands to pour in the water." She could have cried, "Well done!" as she had cried at his shooting that morning.

Lizzie protested in horror.

"Oh! he will burn himself. The others should not let him. It is not right to run such risk, even for his own and his uncle's property."

But Hay had no fear for him. "Not he!" she cried defiantly. Her Achilles was invulnerable in her eyes. Her sole anxiety was for his success, and here she gave way a little, and yielded to trembling doubt and fear.

"Do you think he will do it?" She suffered herself to implore Lizzie to answer her in the affirmative, as if the result depended on Lizzie's opinion. "Oh, yes," Hay went on to bias her counsel, "the fire is big and fearsome, but the mills, not to say the house, are standing yet; everything within cannot be consumed in so short a space. The Cart will not run dry. The water must put out the blaze in time, Lizzie. Mortal could not do more than Adam is doing, and it cannot be in vain when he is battling for more than his mills or his very life. His good fortune—just when he was prepared to grasp it—will not crumble in his grasp in this way."

"I cannot tell, Hay," answered Lizzie, in pained perplexity. "I try to hope the best. If the wind would change or fall entirely, if the clouds would gather and showers like those we had in the morning descend in an even down-pour, something might be saved. I suppose it is like life or death, in God's hands," she ended reverently. She wondered if it would be a sin, savouring of profanity, to pray that God would interpose with something akin to a miracle to preserve a remnant of Adam Lauder's mills.

"Lizzie, Lizzie, the lowes are sinking, I'm sure they are,"

was Hay's next triumphant assertion. "Adam will not be ruined stoup and roup; no, nor half ruined, for depend upon it the mills are insured," she added, shrewdly; "and when he has been the conqueror in such a struggle, neither his uncle nor any one else can have the heart to blame him, or to refuse to trust him, or say him nay."

It did seem for ten minutes that the fire was either burning itself out within certain limits, or that it was yielding to the desperate efforts to extinguish it. The flames no longer leapt out of every aperture, but drew back into the red recesses from which they had sprung; the roar of the burning lessened, the brilliant light faded.

There was a murmur of relaxed nerve and muscle. People looked round to say to each other that the corner was turned; it was not all over; everything was not lost; the fire would be subdued in the end.

It was at this moment, when there was a natural slackening of the hitherto riveted attention, when the eyes both of body and mind were averted for an instant from the object which had been engrossing them entirely, and when neighbours were giving gruff or complacent congratulatory nods to each other and at Adam Lauder, that involuntarily Lizzie followed the general example. She lifted her aching eyes from the burning mill, and let them fall by the merest accident on the mill which was not burning, the old meal mill which had stood unhurt in the peril. Then she became fully conscious of a singular, inexplicable incident. During the brief interval when the public gaze was withdrawn, something solid in substance, round in shape, not unlike a black bannock or scone, was thrown with force from one of the frameless windows of the meal-mill, and fell right on the paper-mills, into the heart of the fire. Hay also saw the thing. "What was that?" she cried, quickly; "are they trying to aim from the old mill? Was it a cake of salt, do you think, Lizzie? Salt is good for killing fires. I have seen a handful sprinkled on the grate when there was any fear for the lum" (chimney).

But the salt, if salt it was, had lost its savour, or had changed its character. It might have been sugar from the effect it produced. For almost simultaneously the flames burst out afresh, and raging fiercely, rose into a pyramid in the

sky. The wind soughed and whistled, and bore not only sparks, but bits of blazing wood right across to the house. All hope was at an end.

Hay, in her disappointment and despair, thought no more of what had caught and engaged her attention for an instant previous to the last outbreak. But Lizzie's heart beat wildly, and then seemed to stop beating. She grew faint and sick, while she cowered back in the angle of the granary. She had heard her father speak of the blowing up of a town, set on fire by its inhabitants, with the fire kept up beyond control by inflammable matter launched from the windows of the houses, while the invading enemy was marching up the street, before the charge of powder was applied which sent thousands into eternity. What was that black bannock which had come from the old mill, and who sent it on its flight, as the immediate herald, not of the decline, but the renewal of the fire, outleaping the possibility of mastery? Where was Adam Lauder, who had been toiling all along like ten men? There he was, to be sure, in the centre of the lurid turmoil, still toiling and shouting with the best. If he had not left his post for a moment and perpetrated the iniquity, if it was a reality and not a dream, bred of the confusion and excitement of the moment and of her father's campaigning stories ringing in Lizzie's ears, then who else was the man? What could be his motive? Did Adam know? Was he art and part in a crime? Had all his exertions been mere play-acting—a little overdone, perhaps? Was he an arch-hypocrite, or had he been taken unawares, like the people around him, and betrayed without his suspecting it? Was that Adam's dog Lark howling from the meal-mill? Had he shut up the beast there to insure its safety? Or had it followed its master unawares and been left behind, and was in danger of betraying him?

And who or what was she, Lizzie Lindesay, to conjure up such horrors, as if the burning of Lauder Mills was not bad enough without them? But if they were true, what a dreadful piece of knowledge she had become possessed of, which she must guard even from her father, if she would not bring an old acquaintance and friend to ruin and ignominy. These thoughts passed through Lizzie's mind with the speed of lightning.

In the mean time the granary stair was assailed by the last arrivals at the spectacle. The foremost to climb the steps was Lady Sprott with a cloth mantle pulled over her gown and fastened awry, and a hat with nodding feathers tied regardlessly over a laced nightcap. "Dinna tell me I'm the hin'most," she cried, panting with haste and eagerness. "Mak' way for me, you lasses. I've been at bridals and burials, but I've never been at a fire afore, and it will be hard after I spent the whale day at the craws at Burn Foot—a stane's throw off—if I've missed the fire at Lauder Mills. I loupet out o' my bed and cleeket up my duds at the first jow of the toon-bell."

"Is Logie town-bell ringing?" asked Lizzie, with a gasp.

"Ringing with a' its micht, and I hae run the maist feck o' the road. Mistress Pollock said I was to tarry till I got a coach; but wha was to tarry with a fire in the wind? and wha was to fetch a coach or drive me wi' the whale toon out here? What ailed Burn Foot that he did not bid me bide to supper with the lave? I ken I'm a weedy woman and a' that, bud I'm sure I'm neither dowie nor dreich," remonstrated Lady Sprott, with some show of justice on her side. "I had my trials when I wàs a wife, and I ken when I'm weel aff. But Sir Dauvit has been out o' mischief in the mools for a gude year and a half, and it's no fair that I should aye be hadden doon by him."

The invasion of the girls' sanctuary had ceased to signify. No doubt there was still a great sight to witness in the victorious fire doing its worst, reaching out its red arms, and with its ghastly white fingers clutching far and near, as it was caught by sudden gusts of the night wind. Lady Sprott would be repaid for her hurried night walk. Even she would be subdued and would content herself with joining in the women's chorus of "Eh, sirs," and "Wae's me," "And think o' the cost o' the building and the machinery and the furnishing." "Hech! for the grand mills and the braw hoose and the puir mill-hands, but" (without) "work and wages."

But Hay Melville and Lizzie Lindesay had got enough of the catastrophe. Hay, her little white face set rigidly, with gloom and something like sullen resentment in the compression of her thin fine lips, did not seek to meet a beaten

man—the less so that she had fooled him and herself to the top of their bent last evening—the reaction had come with a vengeance. She desired nothing more than that her mother should take her home, which Mrs. Melville was fain to do. Lizzie, hanging her head already in strange trouble, like a dumbfounded, appalled creature, was also longing to get away.

In fact, a considerable proportion of the spectators who had business to transact next day were preparing to leave. They had looked their fill at the fire, which they were sensible was at its height, and could present no more sensational aspect. It was bound to do its worst now as far as Lauder Mills and house went, while there was no other house within half a mile, except Burn Foot farmhouse, and it was in no danger, with the Cart burn flowing between and the wind blowing in an opposite direction. The improvised, incongruous troop that had grappled gallantly though fruitlessly with the foe were acknowledging themselves baffled and withdrawing from the encounter in despair. The auld Captain, with his red and yellow bandana tied like a bandage round his head to supply the loss of his hat and protect his deaf ear, was remembering his "pains" and his daughter. The Rev. John Ochiltree, who had been in his shirt-sleeves while he was one of the leaders among the workers, took to drawing on his black coat with a slightly shame-faced sense of something boyish for his years, something unclerical in his late activity. The Merry Andrews could not resist beginning to joke again under the breath which they had been reserving for a better purpose. Even Adam Lauder was letting his weary arms drop to his side, and staring helplessly with a haggard face at the blazing ruins before him. He was burnt out. The Lauder Mills were gone. There was nothing more to be said.

The Lauder Mills thus summarily disposed of, how would Simon Lauder take the misfortune, and what was to become of the young paper-maker, his nephew?

The Emperor behaved as well as he had always behaved to Adam, and carried matters with as high a hand under his loss as when the mills were declared to be a great success. He could hardly have got back to Edinburgh when he had to return, summoned by the tidings of the accident, in the Ferry-boat and the coach, with an amount of alacrity for his

years that testified to his business energy and to an interest in the circumstances so great that it was next to premonition apprising him beforehand of what was going to happen, and what would be called for from him to repair the damage. He let it be understood, without supplying details, that the mills were so heavily insured, the insurance companies would be the chief sufferers, and any farther deficit would be a flea-bite to a man with his ample resources.

The Emperor loudly proclaimed that Adam had not been to blame in the emergency. He had exerted himself in a way which, though his exertions had been frustrated, had won his uncle's gratitude, and must earn the lad general respect and admiration.

Simon Lauder was generous, even munificent, to the former workers in the mills, now standing a few tottering blackened walls—a blot on the landscape by the Cart. Their owner already talked of setting about rebuilding them on the earliest possible opportunity, so that Logie was hopeful it had not received a death-blow to its solitary manufacture.

This prospect of the speedy restoration of the Lauder Mills was aired extensively by Simon Lauder in any quarter whence the report was likely to be carried to Balmayne. In fact, he went so far as to apply through third persons to Mrs. Melville, not only as the Lady Bountiful of Logie, fond of exercising patronage in all its various channels, but as an acquaintance and friend of his nephew's, who might even be supposed to take a more than common interest in Adam's welfare. Adam's uncle wished to ascertain where his nephew was most likely to secure the desirable lodging which he must occupy for a term of months, till the mills with the Mill House were rebuilt. Mr. Simon Lauder had resolved that his representative should remain on the spot, to be ready to overlook the building, to watch the re-erection of machinery, and to resume a flourishing trade, which had been checked, but far from stamped out, at the first possible moment.

Mrs. Melville rose to the occasion. She strongly recommended her favourite among the few letters of lodgings in the town, and fluently ran over the benefits this paragon could confer. But Mrs. Melville did not, as the uncle and nephew might have expected, invite Adam to take up his residence at Balmayne till his future rooms were put in order,

or for as much longer stay as he chose. She was chary of any invitation to the young man, and privately reproached Mr. Melville for supinely permitting Adam to fling rods with him when the laird was fishing in the Cart.

As for Hay Melville, during the next ten days, she stayed more closely at home, where she was decidedly flighty and irritable, and was less seen in and about Logie than had ever happened in her life before. It might or it might not be because she had recovered the cool head and the worldly wisdom which wild wit and wilfulness and strength of passion had outrun for a season, so that she was thinking twice over certain passages in her recent experience, on which second thoughts were best. It might or it might not be because Adam Lauder, when he was not fishing or pigeon-shooting, or training dogs for coursing, cub-hunting, pointing, ratting, having nothing else to do at present, hung much about Logie in those lengthening summer days, and was often to be seen standing in the shop-doors or sitting in the open window of this or that tavern.

Foiled in his first aim, Adam sought to become one of the frequenters of the Lindesays' house. But though he sometimes played bowls with the auld Captain, or smoked with him in his summer-house, it was in vain for him to try to revert to his quasi-courtship of Lizzie, which was what he really wanted to do, as a crying necessity of his gallant nature and in order to pass the time. Mrs. Lindesay, who had the principal voice with regard to what company should visit the house, could not be troubled with idle beaux of Lizzie's, beaux who were either without serious intentions, or were in no hurry to declare them. Lizzie, too, nervously avoided him.

Was Lizzie also of the mind to renounce a man whose fortunes were hovering in the balance, with an inclination the wrong way? Perish the thought where Lizzie was in question. She was the truest soul that ever breathed. The reason was not even that she was quick to detect the deterioration sure to be wrought in Adam in more than one direction by idleness and cruel reverses. She was largely influenced by a cause of which he had no idea.

Lizzie was greatly troubled. She secretly trembled at the very sight of Adam Lauder, as she had quaked at the most distant allusion to the fire since the night it happened. It

seemed to her that either she had become against her will an accomplice in a strange act of wicked fraud which filled her with fear and horror, the nature and consequences of which she could by no means measure, or else she was in her own mind shamefully slandering her neighbour—one who had been her own familiar friend. It was impossible for her to take counsel and be guided by the opinion of older and wiser people. In her innocence she shrank with the utmost distress from the strange atmosphere of suspicion and possible guilt into which she had been launched in spite of herself.

Well might Adam Lauder wander disconsolately along the familiar path by the Cart, and stare gloomily with his hands in his pockets, as he fiercely gnawed the blade of grass he had plucked, at the forlorn spectacle of his mills and house, roofless, with yawning doorways and cracked lintels.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MRS. MALLY CORSTORPHINE SICKENS, AND HAS MUCH BENEFIT FROM THE LEARNED PROFESSIONS AND HER FRIENDS GENERALLY.

MRS. MALLY CORSTORPHINE had what has been styled emphatically the bones of a strong woman in her, but her constitution had been severely tried at more than one crisis in her life; and even before Moshie's ball, which she had attended, she began to show signs of failing health. Lizzie Lindesay was honestly sorry. The Melville family, represented by Mrs. Melville, redoubled their delicate attentions to a remote kinswoman. Hardly a day passed that the Balmayne carriage or one of the Balmayne servants did not stop at the Crown Inn in order to make particular inquiries. Numerous were the dainty offerings, in the shape of such rare forced vegetables as were not grown in Mrs. Mally's garden—fresh dairy produce, tender ducklings and chickens, which found their way to the well-stocked inn larder.

Mrs. Mally received those mindful gifts with an imperturbable countenance and a few lines of formally polite thanks written in her stiff upright handwriting.

Mrs. Melville was not alone in the increased fervour of her friendship for the mistress of the Crown Inn and the sister of the late Governor Lowrie. The three learned faculties—law, physic, and divinity—in their Logie functionaries, seemed to awake in a lively manner to the merits of their respected townswoman, and were bent on showing her tokens of their disinterested regard. Mr. Lyon, Lady Sprott's man of business, who had occasionally transacted business for Mrs. Mally, was sedulous in looking in upon her with all the legal news of the town, with earnestly expressed interest in her health, and with friendly hints cautiously conveyed as to what must be the burden of the management and settlement of her affairs to an aging, ailing woman, with his willingness as an old, and he hoped he might say, trusted friend, to relieve her of the burden.

The principal doctor, no mere rough country surgeon, but a polished man of the world, dropped down by some chance into Logie, was not content with doing his best to restore Mrs. Mally to health as his patient. He began to suspect that he could not repair the damage worked by time and old passionate sorrows, hidden out of sight but ever there, in her youth and prime, sapping the foundation of her strength, and eating it away by a slow undermining process. But he did not by any means relax his zeal, or spare his skill in order to employ it where it might restore waning health and preserve life, the maintenance or loss of which meant comfort or misery to helpless dependants. Dr. Hepburn continued assiduous in his attendance on Mrs. Mally and in his prescriptions for her benefit, even after she declined, with a half humorous, half sardonic smile, to take any more of his physic or rely further on his promises of her bodily amendment.

The Rev. John Ochiltree, who had a genuine regard for his parishioner, was anxious that she should make a satisfactory end of this mortal coil. It was not that he doubted her Christian profession, which, for one thing, had much of the modesty and sincerity of true reverence in it, but he did wish Mrs. Mally to give an exemplary display of faith according

to the most orthodox standard, while he was well aware that she was a woman of original, independent character, who had never submitted readily to fixed lines. He did not covet his friend's goods for himself or his children, but he did think, in the light of Mrs. Mally's having survived all her near kindred, that she could not do better than bequeath a handsome sum to his Kirk-session for behoof of the poor of his parish, of whom he was the natural guardian. Nay, if she went farther and founded a local charity in the shape of almshouses bearing her name, or did something special for the church in the way of a much-wanted new session-house, for instance, it would be a credit to Mrs. Mally and a public boon, moreover it would put a feather in the Rev. John Ochiltree's cap in the eyes of his brethren of the presbytery.

Mrs. Mally, her unmistakable "breaking up," whether her last days were to be edifying or the contrary, and how she would dispose of her wealth, became leading topics of the hour in Logie.

The heroine was perfectly conscious of the fact, and was not beyond enjoying it. It must be acknowledged that even in such serious circumstances she played pranks with the public curiosity, and laid herself out to baffle it with a grim humour which, perhaps, she had always found it hard to restrain. She developed in her age and weakness a positive tricksomeness and perversity, enough in themselves at any moment of her history to lend some show of authority to the asserted relationship between the old lady and Hay Melville's family. Any one interested in hereditary claims might have been tempted to say it was plain from whom Hay had taken her dash of eccentricity, and that she deserved a legacy, if for nothing else, because she had inherited so doubtful a gain. There were various traits of mental resemblance between the woman of upwards of three-score and the girl under twenty, whose physiques were so unlike, the currents of whose lives had run in totally different channels. The odd likeness here and there might have something to do with blood, which had a common source at not quite so distant a date as that of Adam.

Mrs. Mally declined the aid obligingly put at her service by Mr. Lyon. She sent for a lawyer from a town at some

distance. It was the gentleman whom she had employed to buy the farm of St. Kennet's for her, and she had found reason to be satisfied with him. He had the crowning recommendation in her eyes that he was a stranger in Logie, so that he was not merely impartial, but fit to become the recipient of Mrs. Mally's confidence without any chance of his being tempted to betray it to her familiar acquaintances. She was not content with telling the worthy man what she wished in regard to the disposal of her means, she took him behind the scenes as it were, and called upon him to enter with her beforehand into all the racy peculiarities of the situation, with that last craving for human sympathy which she was not at liberty to seek elsewhere. She indicated to Mr. Peter Thompson the points which struck her, and called upon him to appreciate them with her. She still farther astounded and well-nigh scared the lawyer, who was not accustomed to clients so strong-minded, by bidding him remark the result when she was not there to see.

Mrs. Mally's inn, which had been in the family for generations, in the high *morale* of which she took great pride, had a large place in her thoughts. She had made up her mind, in the anticipation of a lingering illness, not only to appoint a worthy successor, but to resign the reins of government into his hands while she was still living, after making a few reasonable stipulations. She would have the older servants get the option of continuing in their situations to begin with at least. She would retain for herself during the period that she might need them her old rooms. She would have Moshie given the choice of continuing in his quarters.

"The making over o' the Croon will be a surprise to the toon," she told the agent in the business, with as much keenness of anticipation as if she had been to share in the surprise. "The new landlord is a stranger in the place like yoursel', Maister Thampson, the son o' a cousin distant enough, but a hantle nearer, I wat, than the family at Balmayne—no that they would keep the Croon. I have taken pains to assure mysel' that he's a douce honest laud, and he's been bred to the calling, for mair than ane in my father's family was in the inn line. I've made it worth his while, as you ken, to give up his ain concern and tak in hand mine, for I couldna thole to think that if the Croon didna dee

with me, it should be misguidit and lose its auld character. Winna the new man be looked out for and watched w' gled's een to see what metal he's made o'? Weel, I hope he'll ring sound."

"I'm sure I hope so, mem," acquiesced Mr. Peter Thompson, whose share in the conversation did not go beyond a civil assent or dissent.

The will proper came next, and in contemplation of its effect, the testator fairly laughed with a positively eerie glee, so that her auditor, who was both conventional and timid, felt his hair stand on end.

"You maunna lose the grand opportunity of studyin' human nature," she recommended him, as she leaned back among the cushions of her easy-chair, "though I'll be past sic studies. You maunna fail to watch the faces when you're reading my last testament. There will be some getting that's no counting on the windfa', and there'll be some expecting that will be sair disappinted."

"These misunderstandings are very painful in families, but I suppose they cannot always be helped," muttered peaceable Mr. Peter Thompson uncomfortably, but his employer did not seem to regard the matter in that light.

"Man," she exclaimed, "I wuss I could get a glimp o' the faces; I could read them brawly, however clever their owners might be at smoothing down their birses. There's Balmayne, solid chield! Weel, I'll say this for him, I dinna think he's preened his faith to his succession—ony way clacking about his expectations has not been in his way. But madam is another person with her sonsiness and frankness and fracaw * with me, and her clavers about my late brither, the Governor. Puir Lowrie! she wouldna have looked the earth he was in if she had kenned him just as an innkeeper's son, no better than any other clerk laud afore he crossed the seas to puss his fortune; nane would have been quicker to tak' note o' that than Governor Lowrie; gin he had been a black sheep she would have forgotten his very existence. Governor Lowrie was no the only man in the world sib to me. You're a stranger, Maister Thampson, I may enlichten you as to ae fact. I had ither and even nearer kin than an only brither who made some noise in the world in his day,

* Corruption of *fracas*.

but they've passed clean out of my Leddy Balmayne's memory. I'll no say they deserved aught else, but whether for good or ill there are mair faithful memories," ended Mrs. Mally dreamily.

"The best of memories play their owners false at times," observed Mr. Peter Thompson temporizingly, painfully conscious that he had more knowledge of Mrs. Mally's antecedents than she gave him credit for.

She went on without deigning to notice his obvious truism: "I've nothing to say against the lassie Hay, who has not her mother's dooble tongue, except that Lizzie Lindesay is worth a hunder Hay Melvilles. Na, but you're blin' bats, you men folk." She raised herself on her elbow and apostrophized the whole sex with strong contempt.

"I'm sorry you've got that impression of us, Mrs. Corstorphine," Mr. Peter Thompson asserted, plucking up a little spirit.

Mrs. Mally was ready with her explanation. "I suppose the blin'ness is a punishment for your sins, and we ought to be richt thankful for it when it saves a heart whose price is aboon rubies from throwing itsel' awa', and then breaking for the very peety of the thing, and with ettlin' to put a back-bane into a six feet lump o' comely flesh and blude, or to tak' a firm grip of a slippery fish, or gar a toom sack stand uprícht. To gang back to Hay Melville, with whom we've to do," resumed Mrs. Mally, with one of her abrupt transitions, "she's a hiech-headed, headstrong lassie, but she'll get her taming, gin she ha'na gotten it already—however, we'll let that flea stick in the wa'; I've minded her as muckle as she's entitled to, and I've that confidence in her common sense, young as she is, that I believe she'll see it hersel'. Do you think I'm a hardened auld wife?" asked Mrs. Mally, with a twinkle in her grey eyes that were waxing dim.

"By no means, by no means," protested Mr. Peter Thompson, who, not being one of the merry Andrews with a tickling sense of drollery, paid rather dearly for Mrs. Mally's selection of him as her legal adviser.

"I'm no sure o' you," she told him coolly, "ony way, I've my saft side," and her manner did soften wonderfully as she continued: "No to speak o' ane who did me a great service aince, out of sheer guileless gudeness, and never so muckle

as dreamt it constituted a claim, there's my auld frien' Moshie, the finest gentleman you ever saw. Mony of my other auld friens have no objection to see that I'm deein'; but he denies it stoutly, as if to shut his een to the truth will keep me alive. Yet he waylays Merrin ilka morning to see how I've rested, and he has waured all his wiles that would de[illegible] the very bird from the tree, gin he liked, to try to persuade me to swally some pushen of a drink he mixes hissel, and ca's teesen (*tisane*), which he believes is a sovereign remedy for a hoast—a kirk-yaird hoast, Maister Thampson; gin you ever be fashed wi't, you'll ken there is nae quietin' that save in the stillness o' the grave."

"Don't say so," besought her visitor, "medicine has great resources."

"To cure a' maladies, even the steady decline of auld age?" Mrs. Mally suggested.

"Well, it is distressing to hear you speak like this," remonstrated Mr. Peter Thompson, "and it can do no good. You are not so very old or so very ill either. Why, my mother is ten years older than you, and she coughs like—like a ship on fire, or a thrashing-mill, but she has no idea of dying yet awhile."

"And so michtna I, gin I had a strapping son like you to the fore," she told him composedly, looking over his inches, which were not many. Then she turned away with a little sigh. "But you see I havena, and that maks a fell odds. You, who are a worthy gentleman, should ken that," she ended more gently.

"Still you've the other friends you were referring to a moment ago. Think what a grief your loss would be to them."

"It will not be their death," said Mrs. Mally dryly, "no that I wish it would. Own, Mr. Thompson, it wouldna spile your denner—why should it? It's no shame to you. And speaking o' denner, you maun be fent wi' hunger, as I'm fent wi' waikness. I'm black affronted with having keepit you so long. Gang awa' down to the dining-room like a man, and ring for Merrin. I'll promise you she'll serve you up a dinner that will do no discredit to the Croon, though I'm sitting helpless here; and gin you're ower late for the coach, or want to rest and look about you in Logie, you're

welcome to a bed—I'll vouch it's weel aired, so that you'll no gang hame to your gude wife with a cauld in your banes."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MRS. MALLY'S PRANKS BEFORE SHE SETS OUT ON A LONG JOURNEY.

MRS. MALLY cracked so many jokes on the slowness of her recovery—supposing she was to recover—that she succeeded in putting her doctor out of countenance. She kept reminding him—"What was't ye telled me, doctor—that I was't to be young and bonnie again? Hout! that maun have been a woman's fulish freit—that I was to be walking a mile, or was't ten? without booin a hough, afore June was weel begun? When am I to begin, if you please? I'm wearying for the start." She actually drove the pleasant-spoken physician from the field, and reduced his visits to the fewest in number and the shortest in duration he had ever paid either to a well or an ill-to-do patient.

But it was to her minister that Mrs. Mally behaved worst. True, she listened with absolute humility and joined with the utmost reverence in the worship, when he read a chapter of the Bible or "put up" a prayer for her.* But when he attempted to sound her frame of mind, or to bring her to book either with regard to her opinion of her spiritual prospects, or her last intentions where the mammon of unrighteousness was concerned, she showed herself as slippery as the fish which she had employed for a metaphor in her talk with Mr. Peter Thompson. She went off at a tangent and evaded every stratagem to bring her back to a straight course, with an adroitness and cleverness that reflected much more credit on her unclouded mental powers than on her docility of temper. She had always been, if her brethren clerical and lay would but have taken it into consideration, and would have exercised faith on this count, a God-fearing,

"well-living" woman, and it was not likely either that she would change at this late date, or that she had left to the last moment the settlement of the most momentous of her affairs. Doubtless she had, as the Roman Catholics say, "made her soul," and was satisfied with regard to the grounds of her trust. But with national and individual reserve she resented keenly—almost comically—every endeavour to lift the veil. Her sympathies would have been with the sturdy peasant whose son had risen to fill the parish kirk, and felt it his duty and privilege to ascertain the nature of his dying father's faith.

"I hope you are resting on the Rock, father?" ventured the younger man, the minister.

"What business is that of yours, Sandy?" demanded the high-spirited old man. "You may be content there is a Rock to rest upon."

It was certainly no business of the town of Logie whether Mrs. Mally Corstorphine was resigned or loth, happy or "wae" to go the way of all living; and the townspeople might have had the civility to wait till she was fairly gone before they sought to learn what she had done with her money.

When the minister practised the most insidious manœuvres to bring round the conversation to the sick woman's deepest experiences and finest feelings, or to pious bequests and charitable "mortifications" of sums of money which had become useless to their owner, for the spiritual and physical well-being of her neighbours, Mrs. Mally stared the speaker stonily in the face, while she made private biting comments on his eloquence.

"What would the man be at? He's neither a fanatic, nor a fule, nor a rogue, yet does he suppose God canna be glorified in the keepin' o' an inn—in spite o' what the Apostle Paul said o' richt eating and drinking—which as I tak it maun extend to the dispensing o' meat and drink? Whether does the minister think a weel-conducted place o' entertainment for man and beast maintained on Christian and honourable principles, or an awmshoose is the greater blessing to the community at lairge? And wha does he ca' the puir? Only the aff-scourins' of streets like the Coontess or Long Letham, who have rioted and squandered in their day, for whom the

swine's husks is the fit diet till the sinners repent and turn from the error of their ways—only broken-down, handless, waiirless auld ploughmen and mechanics and their wives, whose bairns should fend for them, if they had hearts in their breists? Is there to be no room, where generosity is in question, for honest lauds or innocent lasses gently bred yet scantily provided for in the battle of life? Will nobody speak a word for auld servants who have been faithful in their service, and have toiled their best and laid by a penny—still it may be nae mair than a penny, when their day o' wark is past? What about brave gentlemen who hae made a gallant fecht against misfortunes they could neither help nor hender?"

Mrs. Mally would break in upon the Rev. John's most careful siftings with utterly irrelevant and positively flippant remarks. "Do you ken what's the price o' the fish at the Cross the day, sir?" she would interrupt him ruthlessly; or she would inquire with grave interest, "Can ye tell me, Mr. Ochiltree, if it is true that ane of your claith has been seen in the poopit with a bombazate instead of a bombazeen goon on his back? It used to be bombazeen, but I'm tauld mony haud by silk now-a-days. I wonder they dinna gang in for lawn sleeves like the bishops."

Mrs. Mally descended to the stale imposition of electrifying her minister by announcing that there was a question on her mind which she had often thought of asking him, a doubt he might be able to set at rest that had troubled her for many a day.

Her pastor pricked his ears, besought her to speak out, and prepared to be profoundly impressed.

"Noo, sir," proceeded Mrs. Mally, with wickedness which had not even the grace to be original, "would you give me your candid opeenion whether that puir lassie, Jepthy's dochter, was slachtered outricht by her haythen o' a faither, or was she, as some divines will soften down the awfu' story, just put into a kind o' Jewish nunnery?"

One day Mrs. Mally declared she had recalled a story of Mr. Ochiltree's predecessor which ought not to be forgotten, and that his successor might care to hear.

"He was not an auld married man, like some we hae kenned, when he came to the parish. He was young and

buirdly, as weel as gude. My worthy mither, who telled me the story, has often described him, and would you believe it, sir, for as gude as the young leddies were who waited on his ministry, they werena aboon settin' caps for the first place in his favour. There was ane—she was the dochter o' the colonel of a regiment quartered in the toon—who wrocht him a set o' bands, open-stitched, wi' her ain hands, and marked wi' his name in her hair. She preened a slip o' paper to them, and wrote—it micht hae been wi' her heart's blude, but my mither didna condescend to that particular—'Noo or never, sir. The word o' you keeps awa' ithers,' and signed it with her initials. She sent the present, and he took it and keepit it without ony answer, for, peety me! the man was troth-plighted a' the time."

"Serve her right," protested Mr. Ochiltree, rising to his feet in professional affront. "She must have been an impudent gypsy."

"Na, ye haena heard the best o' the story," the narrator hastened to interpose. "It was only a frolic, for she was a merry mischeef o' a lassie, and it was she who telled on hersel'. She was an engaged woman if he was a troth-plighted man, and the worst word ever waured on her was 'caidgie cuttie.'"

"Then it was in shockingly bad taste," insisted the minister.

"Maybe," admitted Mrs. Mally, "but tastes as weel as fashions differ."

It was another Mrs. Mally who startled Lizzie Lindesay when she was sitting beside the invalid one day with the wistful question, "Do you mind your auld friend Lewie, Lizzie?"

A pang went through Lizzie's tender heart at the unexpected reference. She had been already sorrowing over Mrs. Mally's breaking down, and she took the mention of Lewie Corstorphine's name, which had not passed his mother's lips since his death, a dozen years before, as the worst sign. "She will die now, I am sure of it," Lizzie told herself disconsolately, for she had not so many friends that she could afford to spare Mrs. Mally. But she only said softly, with an effort to master her disconcerted surprise and to speak easily and naturally: "Well do I mind him, ma'am, he

was very kind to me—a troublesome bairn as I must have been."

"He was aye fond o' bairns, and you would not be troublesome to him," answered Mrs. Mally quietly. "Have you ony keepsake o' his? I mean have you ony toy left that he gave you, to mark the friendship between the man and the bairn?"

"Yes," answered Lizzie, "I have still a little kirn that he cut out with his penknife. He made me many more things that were broken and lost at the time, but this happened to be saved till I was older and could prize it."

"Would you object to bring it in, only to let me see it?" asked Mrs. Mally, with strange humility and hungry, piteous longing in her hollow eyes. "I put awa' every trace of my son till I've to beg ane from a stranger—no, not that," she corrected herself, quickly; "but you were only a bairn, and have grown up strange to my laud. If you'll let me have the bit toy, Lizzie, I'll tak care that it is sent back to you, and I'll see that you have some better remembrance of my Lewie."

"Oh, never mind me, Mrs. Mally," broke in Lizzie, in sympathetic agitation. "I like the toy because he was so good to me, and gave it to me; but of course you're the most entitled to have it, if you wish it. You're very welcome to it."

Afterwards Lizzie used to see the toy churn standing hidden from those who did not know where to look for it, on Mrs. Mally's mantelpiece, just above her head, within reach of her upstretched hand. The sight seemed confirmation strong that the mistress of the Crown Inn was near her end.

But Mrs. Mally neither returned the toy to Lizzie, nor did she give her any other remembrance of Lewie at this time. Possibly the non-fulfilment of the promise, which was singular in a woman of Mrs. Mally's character, was occasioned—paradoxical as it may sound—by a change of circumstances. To the surprise of all, and of herself especially, Mrs. Mally did not die but lived. She began one day to "mend," and made such rapid progress that ere long she was in her normal state of health. She had, as she would have said, "cheated" everybody.

Undoubtedly it was awkward, whether she had been

resigned or loth to quit this sublunary scene; she had made all the preparations for her departure, and even anticipated it in some respects. She had used the privileges which are only accorded to dying persons, and she felt now as if she had appropriated them on false pretences. She had the disagreeable sensation of having the tables turned on her.

It became Dr. Hepburn's turn to laugh gaily, rub his hands cheerfully, and remind Mrs. Mally unblushingly, "I told you so, ma'am. You may try your strength, and I promise you it will not give way, by a little walk on the sunny side of the pavement any day."

Her minister was pleased to hail her recovery, and managed to satisfy her with regard to the sincerity of his pleasure. Still this did not prevent Mrs. Mally from being perfectly conscious that she had taken, for a woman who was not going to die just yet, most unwarrantable liberties with him, as with other people. She had, as she confessed to herself, said "every impident word that came into her head," and she could not unsay a single one of them.

Mrs. Mally felt as if she had been betrayed into weakness and wrongheadedness all round.

There was her successor in the Crown positively arriving and taking possession of her own inn, and for anything she knew she might live as a reluctant, not over-welcome supernumerary in the establishment for the next ten years. She was not yet seventy, and her father and mother had lived till they were hard upon eighty. She could not in common justice send the new man back, for he had already got rid of other engagements in order to fulfil her behests. She had not been mistaken in her kinsman so far. He was honest and well-intentioned, but he belonged to the later school of innkeepers. He was illiterate and under-bred, with an ignorant man's absence of tact and delicacy. Without meaning any harm, he had no hesitation in asserting his claims and introducing his different style of management. Fifty times a day he rubbed poor Mrs. Mally the wrong way. Before a couple of weeks were over he had so quarrelled with the old servants that both Christie, the hostler, and Merrin, the chamber-maid, had thrown up their places. Christie and Merrin, to whose services their mistress had been accustomed well-nigh since she began to rule! Mrs.

Mally had to own that she had acted rashly and inadvisedly, and though she submitted to pay the penalty with a kind of "masterly silence," she was fain to hide her diminished head, she was ashamed to show her face. The secret chagrin and worry might have brought back all the worst symptoms of her illness, and so freed the victim after all, had it not been for a fortuitous circumstance. Part of Mrs. Mally's property was in the West Indies, investments of Governor Lowrie's, a more serious matter to realize and transfer, without considerable loss, then than now. A difficulty arose with regard to one of those investments, in reference to which Mrs. Mally's agent on the spot, writing home, expressed his regret that it was out of the question for his client to come out in person to establish her rights, as her doing so would greatly facilitate matters.

"What for no?" cried Mrs. Mally, quick as lightning in seizing on the opening, and speaking in the words of her immortal predecessor, "I'm an idle woman now-a-days. A change will do me gude, and set me up, mair than a' Dr. Hepburn's pheesic. I hae aye wanted to see the world, and better late than never. The chance has come to me at last, in the shape o' a boundin duty. Nae Dutch or Spanish loons shall diddle me out o' my richts, and mak awa' wi' ony pairt of puir Lowrie's legacy if crossing the seas will prevent it. Crossing the seas, what o' that? I'm no an ill sailor, I hae aye keepit my feet and my head in the Ferryboat. Onyway we'll see. At the warst what ithers have tholed I can thole." All remonstrances with regard to her age, her unfamiliarity with travelling, the danger from change of climate, &c., proved fruitless. Mrs. Mally had got the bit between her teeth, and would not be held back from the dauntless expedition. She met every objection with a defiant, "What for no? I haena reached the end o' my tether, my three-score years and ten. Gin I had, I can dee there as weel as here, I suppose, and puir Lowrie wouldna have to lie ony longer his lee lane in ane o' their furrin kirk-yairds. I hav'na to set my hoose in order—all that trouble is weel by. You would like to ken how the gear is left? But do ye think I'm goin' to tell you? My certie, no. I'll have my secret as weel as ither folk. It will keep. You'll be nae waur of the waiting. Deeficulties in makin' my way? How can that be?

O 2

I tell you there's less fash than in a journey to Lon'on or the Hielants. I've a gude Scotch tongue in my head, and I've only to travel to the port o' Leith or some ither o' our sea-ports, gang on buird a vessel and land on the island—which is ane o' our King's possessions, or how could my late brither have been the Governor? Heat? I can bear it—fine that, I'm auld and cauld; heat has ceased to come amiss to me. I'll just take Merrin wi' me for company—you'll have heard Merrin's leaving here, where's she's bidden ower thirty years? There's a ferlie for you, far greater than the going abroad of me or ony other leddy o' substance when she lists. We're in for changes, and it will be a grand thing for Merrin, no less than for her mistress, to travel and become acquent wi' furrin pairts, and folk, and manners, after we're up in years too; we'll gar you all stand about when we come back declining to speak o' onything on this side o' the Paceefic."

Poor Merrin was half flattered by the selection made of her, half in mortal apprehension of the prospect before her. But Mrs. Mally carried the day. After taking an affectionate farewell of Lizzie, a kindly good-bye of Moshie, and a more cavalier leave of the rest of the inhabitants of Logie, she departed with her servant, and the place which had known them heard no more of either, in the natural order of events, for many a day.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE KING'S BIRTHDAY.

LOGIE was eminently loyal. The 4th of June—old style, so that the date came round when midsummer was at the door—brought about such a gala as is not to be found in these degenerate times, when each town sees fit to keep the anniversary of its sovereign's birth on any day that will suit its town council, and Her Gracious Majesty herself decrees that the public celebration of her birthday is not to be necessarily on the 24th of May, but on the date that shall be the most convenient for the authorities.

It was otherwise when George the Third was king, and

the whole nation was understood to rejoice together. Somehow it did not greatly mar the rejoicing that he who was the object of all the shouting and cheering, firing guns and drinking toasts, was, indeed, but "the wreck of the Royal George," an old man sitting with his white head on his breast, by God's awful will in both bodily and mental darkness, parted from his nearest and dearest, hidden away in his invalid suite of rooms in his Castle of Windsor, the saddest spectacle which his wide realms could show.

The King's birthday was more of a town than a country holiday, though the gentry round came flocking in betimes to be present at the public dinner in the Crown Inn. And in the long light evening, crowds of working-men and women, whose day's work was done, thronged with their children as far as the Cross, to gape and stare and spread out their hands, and like the man in the Bible cry, "Aha! Aha!" under the exhilarating influence of the huge bonfire in the centre of the thoroughfare, the very head and front of the rejoicing. The yellow flames lit up, wildly enough, the massed together faces in the well-filled neighbouring windows, including the windows—grated and grim—of the old jail. The highly inflammable nature of the materials employed for the bonfire, consisting of broken-up sugar, whiskey, and tar-barrels, piles of brushwood and barrows full of peats, together with the showers of red sparks emitted, threatened to make another Lauder Mills of this quarter of Logie. Perhaps the peril only added an additional piquant spice to the delight of the bonfire at its height, which was keenly felt by the busy population, while the wild glee was contagious and freely diffused among the crowd. Another element of risk attended on a species of horse-play, dignified by the name of "fireworks," practised on the outer edge of the bonfire and the inner skirts of the ring upon ring of spectators. This performance meant the letting off promiscuously, anyhow, anywhere, of squibs, with their noise and flare, and of the simpler older-fashioned style of rockets. These contributions to the fête were in the hands of ignorant, reckless, irrepressible volunteers, and were made under no regulation or restraint whatever. They were thus accompanied by a great deal more discomfort and veritable injury to person and property than can be readily conceived by a less hardy and more orderly generation.

One more feature in the uproar was the frequent firing of guns, loaded with powder, by their happy possessors. Such guns and their shooters had till lately done honour to the home-going of many a bride, who, riding the same horse as her bridegroom, sometimes narrowly escaped with her life, from the rough importunate attentions of these satellites, engaged in the *bruse* or race for the bride's kiss.

Altogether, whether because there was no serious business to be transacted in the course of the day, the 4th of June was wholly given up to jollity and merry-making, rude roystering and violent excesses, especially towards night. Loyalty then assumed the lowest guise, and was degraded by a good many objectionable items when the King's Birthday was the saturnalia of the scum of the town, and furnished endless "drams" to such pariahs as Long Letham and the Coontess.

Just as the yearly market began to be shorn of the countenance of the upper classes, the more quiet-going inhabitants of Logie commenced to take alarm and fight shy of the orgies with which the King's Birthday ended. The custom was creeping in of making up friendly family parties and spending the day out of the town. No lady ventured abroad after six o'clock to be exposed to rude treatment, fright, and the spoiling of her best or worst clothes. Respectable women of all classes with young people and children, who wished to witness the glories of the bonfire, craved to do it in moderate security from the windows which commanded the sight. And the gazers had to be furnished with the protection of able-bodied escorts before the pleasure-seekers issued from their sanctuaries and repaired to their respective homes. The night of the King's Birthday was more like the daftest of "the daft days," or the night of a popular election than any other occasion, and its mad pranks and narrow escapes were for men rather than for women.

But there was comparatively little of this boisterous rejoicing in the earlier hours of the day, when the population generally turned out in holiday guise and went the round of what was to be seen. The first things to be inspected were the flowers and the flags. There were triumphal arches thrown across the streets at different points, as if George himself were about to ride in, as his far back ancestor had ridden,

and been regaled with a dinner given by the magistrates, an oration delivered by the town clerk, and a song sung by the precentor. The garlands, in which abounded knots of red and white daisies and of yellow and white bachelor's buttons, tufts of blue seggs (irises), the first great cabbage roses of the season, with streamers of striped green and white gardeners'-garters (riband grass), had taken the whole previous day for their construction and erection. The process had been closely watched by many critical spectators. This previous familiarity did not prevent the same spectators going in a kind of solemn state to view the finished work with the greatest relish. One floral device was in the form of a crown, and occupied the centre of the main arch at the chief entrance to the Cross. Beneath the Crown dangled a sign-board portrait of George, taken when he was still a young man, in full uniform, wearing powdered hair, and a cocked hat above the bluff honest face, which his subjects knew so well, the Star of the Garter on his breast and its riband round his knee. This portrait was not only gazed at with admiring eyes: toasts and huzzas were enthusiastically waved to it from the open windows of the Star Tavern. Some loyal subjects who were the reverse of jacobins and black nebs, took it upon them to smoke and singe the royal likeness by firing *feux de joie* in near proximity.

The flags were anything save bannerets, being voluminous affairs, requiring strong supports when reared on high, and left stationary, and a couple of men to be their bearers when carried from place to place. Various more or less tattered or whole versions of the Union Jack, the Blue Peter, and the town's arms thus fluttered in the summer air. One of the Union Jacks was fixed so as to float over the Lindesays' door in compliment to Captain Lindesay as the senior military officer in Logie. In the same manner the militia picquet told off to beat the nightly tattoo, did it in a marked manner where the auld Captain could hear it; and on the King's Birthday the band played 'God Save the King,' and 'See the Conquering Hero comes,' as early as five o'clock in the morning on the same spot. They were rewarded by a salute from the veteran standing at his bedroom window in the undress of his Kilmarnock nightcap, while a servant was sent out with a dram all round. Lizzie was as proud as either

Geordie or Mickle could be when she stepped out beneath the Union Jack, for which her father had fought on many a bloody battlefield, or caught the faintest echo of the inspiring strains to which he had marched, travel-stained and foot-sore, but keeping a high heart in his breast till his warfare was over.

One ceremony of the day to which the public trudged was the firing of a French cannon which had been presented to the town and planted on the Barons' Mount. This was a green hill partly artificial—a relic of old historical Logie which rose in its rear, and was exceedingly convenient for games of ball and for flying kites amongst the youngsters. It was also useful for short promenades, in which the maximum of fresh air was a consideration, and a bird's-eye view, not only of the surrounding houses and gardens, but of the adjacent country, a gratification to the seniors. The popular belief was that the French cannon, a trophy of the Peninsular war, had been won for Logie by the single-handed prowess of the auld Captain. Certainly he presided over its one volley at noon on the King's Birthday. He was always surrounded by an irregular staff of the younger military men who had pitched their tents in or near the town; but though some of them were richer in the world's goods, some even of higher rank in the service, none disputed with him the command of the captured cannon or the gunner's job of discharging it. He would have done it all with unmingled satisfaction as he stood there in his full-dress uniform, in the presence of his wife, his little sons, his daughter, his fellow-officers, his townspeople, had it not been for one small drawback, in a version of Mordecai at Haman's gate. Yet the objection was honourable to the auld Captain, while it was tantalizing and interfered with some of his best moments.

The *arrière pensée* which haunted and troubled Captain Lindesay had its origin in a refinement and exaggeration of generosity towards a fallen foe. That foe, as represented by the members of the *Grandè Armée*, the Scotch soldier had known too well, when they closed with him and his comrades in deadly combat, not to hold in high respect.

How did Moshie de Saye feel when the French cannon was fired from the Barons' Mount? Captain Lindesay shuddered to think of it. He took elaborate precautions

that the dancing-master should be made acquainted with the exact hour when the rite was celebrated. Every opportunity was afforded him for absenting himself, a proceeding which his natural enemy would have immensely preferred. But there, as surely as the event happened, the Captain in his British uniform was confronted by Moshie in his copy, at the hands of a philosophic Scotch tailor, of his old French regimentals, the blue of which looked cold and pale beside the other's fiery red. From whatever mixed motives of passionate devotion to a lost cause, *esprit-de-corps*, boyish impatience and mortification at his descent in the social scale, with the usual accompaniment of dogged pertinacity and bravado, Moshie had elected to retain his coat in the early days of his exile, he wore it now as a simple matter of habit. His fine thin face in its self-discipline, meditativeness, and even quaint sense of anomaly, was as philosophic as that of the tailor who had cut and stitched his customer's garments, making custom welcome, whether it came from a Frenchman or an Englishman. With his white poodle at his heels, Moshie was ready to look on without rage and disgust at Captain Mickle Lindesay firing the cannon of the ex-Emperor, an exile in his turn, and of his *sans culottes*. For one thing there was no disgrace to the French in the loss of that cannon. Moshie was well assured it had not been won from his countrymen, *sans culottes*, or not, without a hard fight. And there was no affront either to them or to him in the gun's being thus exultantly displayed on the great English national holiday.

If Moshie had been called on to make sport with the weapon for the entertainment of the Philistines, the case might have been different. And yet could these friendly people around Moshie, his hospitable hosts and loyal supporters for more than half a lifetime, represent the Philistines to him?

M. de Saye knew in his heart of hearts what would happen if anything in the loading and discharging of the cannon, over which the auld Captain had presided triumphantly year after year, suddenly went wrong, and he—Raoul de Saye—could remedy the defect and perhaps prevent an epitome of the catastrophe which befell Samson's tormentors. As a de Saye, a gentleman, and a man, he would not only feel

tempted to interpose to arrest the impending calamity, he would be under the most imperative obligation to do so, though the doing it meant the sacrifice of his life for the people who had so long sheltered him, and enabled him to earn his bread.

But Captain Lindesay was acquainted with no such subtle distinctions. The flush deepened on his scarred, weather-beaten face when he caught the critical eye of the man whom the hero of the moment was incapable of regarding as other than his foe, fixed on his operations. Moshie, on his side, raised his hat punctiliously, and a quiet smile just parted his firm, delicate lips.

It is to be feared that the singular ending of the National Anthem, which was sung, shouted, and bawled with the most extraordinary variations, in every key that day throughout the length and breadth of the land, flashed across the mind of the aggrieved victor. Not that Captain Lindesay accused Moshie personally of "knavish tricks." He was wont to speak of him, when the auld Captain spoke at all of the dancing-master, for he was a sore subject that rankled silently in the other's manly, obtuse mind, as "a gentlemanly kind of creature in his way," with a sort of reluctant, rueful favour. But Mickle Lindesay was driven to "confound" Raoul de Saye with all the fervour of the song, and wish him in Paris rather than in Logie on the King's Birthday.

Nevertheless the consciousness of the enemy's presence put the performer on his mettle, for how could he tell that the Frenchman was not a "dab" in artillery practice, since it was an open secret on the martial side of his teaching, that he was as accomplished a fencer as any *maître d'armes* of them all!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A SNUB.

ADAM LAUDER's mercurial temperament rose like quicksilver under the influence of the King's Birthday. The bustle formed an agreeable relief to his enforced idleness. He had been prominent and in the utmost request throughout the preparations. His long legs and strong arms had worked wonders in the erection of the arches and flags. He had superintended the proper piling up of the material for the bonfire, and was known to have laid in a private store of "crackers" (squibs). He had been concerned in the arrangements connected with the public dinner, and was one of the stewards. His praise was in all men's mouths, and the praise of men—especially of women—was as the breath of Adam's nostrils. He was now ready to show everything off and figure as one of the leaders of the festivities of the day. The misfortune of the burning of his mills seemed out of mind with him.

But to Adam's chagrin he did not find his troubles were out of mind with the very two of his neighbours whom he had the greatest desire in different degrees to please. If Adam had recovered his spirits and was his gallant, devil-may-care self again, it was not so with Hay Melville and Lizzie Lindesay, who were of course both to be met in public in Logie on the morning of the King's Birthday. There was an indescribable cloud over the two girls, manifesting itself in different ways according to their different characters. The eclipse was not outward. Hay especially had never been seen in such fine feathers; as a rule she had shown herself careless and indifferent where smart clothes were in question, though she knew well enough what became her small figure and white piquante face, and acted on the knowledge. But to-day she was got up almost as magnificently as Lady Sprott was dressed at the market, though where Hay was in question the magnificence was rather better chosen. Everything about Hay to-day was in keeping,

from her rich satin pelisse to her silk stockings with clocks, and the bronze shoes which clad her tiny feet—from the watch at her waist to the embroidered bag with her cambric handkerchief which hung from her arm. All seemed to indicate that the heiress of Balmayne, the young representative of the long-descended Melvilles, was present in such force as even to overshadow Hay herself. Yet Hay was Hay still in the peculiar pungency and asperity which distinguished her humour on this occasion. If like her costly trappings it represented loyalty, then it was loyalty of a decidedly original and exceptional kind.

Had it not been for Lizzie Lindesay's comely looks she would have been altogether in the shade in one of her girlishly unobtrusive, inexpensive muslin gowns, beside Hay in her splendour. As it was, Lizzie's soft bloom was marred by the scare and distress in her blue eyes, which caused her to appear unlike herself. Lady Sprott might be excused for condoling with Lizzie, even on mistaken premises. "Eh, Lizzie, isna Hay Melville braw the day, though weel-a-wat she's no bonnie? How onybody could ever see beauty in a wee, shilpet, sharp-faced thing like her beats me. Forby in the fuff she' in she would fear the French. I'm in hopes I'm no amiss mysel' in my new Indy plaid," and her ladyship pranced and bridled under the gorgeous article. "But never you mind; wait till you get a man, and then you'll cast aside those duds o' yours. It's a muckle shame that your step-mither should gar you wear them, and her in a' her orders o' seeded silks and gowd chains. I was in hopes Mrs. Mally would hae gifted you wi' some of her best goons. They could have been made doon for you, either when she was deein' or afore she gaed awa' to foreign parts. She canna want them yonder, ony mair than in another warld, where there's naebody she kens, let alane Merrin, to see them."

Lizzie, borne down as she was by a secret doubt and dread, yet showed herself stirred to a little maidenly indignation.

"Thank you for your good-will, Lady Sprott, but I'm quite content with my plain frocks which my father gives me. I do not want any other body's old fine gowns, though I would as soon wear my dear friend Mrs. Mally's as another's. Instead, I wish her long life and better health

to keep and wear her own. Neither do I want a man to provide me with new clothes."

"I meant nae offence, Lizzie," apologized Lady Sprott, but the next instant she was as bad as ever. "It is a' very weel for a lass to say what you do," maintained the incorrigible woman, "but dinna carry it ower far. Ye ken 'mim-moued maidens stand long at the mill.' A mim-mou' would na hae gane down with the late Sir Dauvit, and it does sound like soor plooms. Everybody is sensible it mak's a fell odds to hae a man, or to have had ane, and be a married leddy or a weel left weedy, entitled to dress with the best; for we may as weel be out o' the warld as out of the fashion."

In vain Adam Lauder advanced jauntily to the girls, and asserted confidently his claim to be their cavalier while they walked about the town among the crush of the sightseers. Hay Melville, though she had all but thrown down her arms and owned him her master with soft abandonment on that night up at Burn Foot, now turned sharply and jibed at him with mocking scorn. It fairly scathed him for the moment, even while it lashed her into a small fury, and filled her with an uncontrollable repugnance that was still more depressing and confounding to the object of her aversion. The contest was begun, relinquished in dudgeon on Adam's part, and renewed with fresh, desperate hope and energy every time the young people encountered each other in perambulating the little town, busked and wreathed in sweet, fragrant rejoicing.

Lizzie, in the middle of her own grievous perplexity, while her heart was sick with distrust, listened and looked on in wonder. She could not help feeling sorry for what, unless Hay, too, had been quick to draw terrible conclusions from the affair of an instant, was Adam's unmerited discomfiture. Once, after an abrupt parting from him, when he went off with his high head in the air, to hang it before he turned the next corner, Lizzie could not resist making a faltering protest. "What ails you, Hay? Why are you so bitter and hard to Adam Lauder? If he has been unfortunate—and surely it is a great misfortune for him to have had his mills burnt down," said Lizzie, hurriedly, "he is very much to be pitied. He has been trying with all his might to please you. He is only seeking to be of service to you."

Hay stopped and faced round with the white light still blazing in her colourless face, its small, oddly irregular features looking sharp and pinched as they remained fixed in a disdainful smile. "And why are you so dull yourself on this King's Birthday, Lizzie? But that is no business of mine. I tell you there is no other way, if you will have your question answered, since the man has not the sense to take a hint. I must either be cruel to him or to myself, and to him kindness would be the greatest cruelty in the world after what has come and gone; you may allow me to judge. I have no objection to pitying him if you wish it, but pity is one thing and—well, regard another. I pity a beggar or a dog; I don't pity my match or my master. Not that I see any particular call for pity where Adam Lauder is the man. His mills were insured, and his uncle is to have them rebuilt some day. He is only having a fine time for his play. It is just," Hay continued, with a curl of her thin lips, "the great fortune Adam was to make, the great things he was to do as a paper-maker, that have, somehow, gone down the water with his *prestige*—what Moshie would call his star."

The young man and the two girls were brought in close contact once more on the Barons' Mount when the cannon was about to be fired. There had been a little delay in the ceremony caused by Lady Sprott's beseeching the auld Captain to give her timely warning, so that she might "dook" her head and put her fingers in her "lugs." For "as sure as ye live," she declared, "I'll gang aff in a dwam—I could never stand so much as a gun shot near at hand without louping aff my feet, though the late Sir Dauvit has fired ower my head when I was not looking, that he micht roar and laugh at my fleg."

"It was monstrously ill-done of him, my leddy," exclaimed Captain Lindesay, unable to restrain himself. "If he had been a sodger he would have acted differently, I'll crave leave to say. You or any other timid female may trust to me. Keep your eye upon me, and I'll hold up my hand before I apply the match."

"I wouldna have come up to the Mount," her ladyship exclaimed, "if it had not been for losing the honourable company here. Forby, I maun tak a lesson, for wee Sir Dauvit's coming o' age. Have I brocht him here, do you

ask? Na, faigs. The gun micht gang aff in your hands, Captain, and shoot my bonny young bauronet. I hae left him safe wi' Mistress Pollock in the rooms that we've taen to see the bonfire. We're to bide a' nicht, and I've Maister Eben Brunton, Sir Dauvit's tutor, trysted to come ower in the morning and walk hame with us, for fear there should be ony spunk of a cracker lying about, bund to gang off in braid daylicht."

"Are you going to abide by your resolution, Miss Melville?" Adam Lauder had drawn near to Hay again, and the whole man was quivering with anxiety and vexation. Drops of moisture, which no heat of the day could account for, were gathering on his forehead. For he saw his ambitious dreams, aye, and his heart's desire, dissolving and vanishing in thin air. "The arches and flags may not have given you satisfaction, though there was somebody at their erection who worked hard to please you, still I grant they're not out of the common. But I can promise you there has not been seen so grand a bonfire as this will be—not for a dozen of years back. A few of us propose to come up from the Crown when the lowes are at their height, and drink the King's health at the Cross, as we drank 'a gude New Year' on New Year's morning. There will be some fine fun with the crackers and rockets. I took it upon me to bespeak a room in case you should come in again to the town late in the day. It is the room above Tammy Aiken's, the barber's, and is the very best for seeing from in the whole street. I'm sure Miss Lindesay here," he looked imploringly at Lizzie, "would not object to bear you company. If Mrs. Melville did not care to stay so long, or to come back from Balmayne, she might trust me to make way for the carriage and put you into it with my own hand, if you did not wish to walk."

"Say no more, Mr. Adam," forbade Hay, with a slight supercilious wave of her hand, which dashed in pieces what he considered his last chance as ruthlessly as if the girl's fingers had held a battle-axe, and the chance had been as brittle as an egg-shell or a skull. "My mother would not hear of it, but don't suppose that I am disappointed. I don't fancy that I have any great turn for bonfires with noisy drinking and rioting. We used to come in on market-day to please our old friend Mrs. Mally; but you see she's gone."

"And is there nobody else you care to please?" he said, in a low, injured tone, firing his final forlorn shot.

"Well, I think I may please myself first of all, may I not?" she asked carelessly. "And as for you, Mr. Adam Lauder, I should have thought, if I had been inclined to waste a thought on the subject, that you have had enough of fires and lowes. It seems to me scarcely decent—if you will forgive me for saying so much—in a man who has so lately suffered from the real thing—a great calamity it is generally reckoned—to divert himself with the make-believe."

Lizzie looked up with a terrified glance, but though Adam's handsome, ruddy face was painfully flushed, it did not blench. He gave a forced laugh.

"Yes," he answered recklessly, "I'm an experienced hand at a fire—bonfire or *bonâ fide* fire, whichever you will—and I'm making the best of my experience for the honour of the auld King and the pleasure of the town; but if you have any fault to find, and do not care to witness the performance, I cannot help it—I must submit, Miss Melville," and he bowed, not without a certain sulky dignity.

There were several witnesses when Adam thus got an unceremonious *congé*. Since he was popular, and had really been exerting himself to make the day go off well, the sweeping sentence was resented, especially by the men present. The Melvilles were the aristocrats of the place, and in a general way they deserved well of the town, just as the town deserved well of them. But the little girl who was heiress of Balmayne, whom most of those about her had known from her childhood, was giving herself intolerable airs to-day, and she was behaving very badly to a young fellow on whom she had bestowed plenty of encouragement not so long ago. It only rendered her behaviour more objectionable if the motive of it was that she had taken into her flighty worldly head his prosperous days were over, and his back was at the wall.

However, it was more in his good-nature and under the impression that he had stumbled on a lover's quarrel, which he might help to set at rest, than from any feeling of masculine indignation, that the Shirra, Mr. Andrew Lamb, who came up with the minister, put his blundering oar into the conflicting currents and stormy waters. He had been

regretting to himself benevolently that the holiday should be marred for the foolish young people, even though it was by their own fault. Presently he commenced to give an account of the marriage of a young friend of his, "the finest fellow in all the world," the week before, to a "nice young lady who had the 'penny sillar, the only thing the swain wanted.'" "It was the very best thing she could have done," asserted the rash optimist of a Shirra. "He'll help her to spend her money and get the greatest happiness out of it. 'Now they're crouse and canty baith.'" The narrator wound up his tale by giving Adam Lauder a resounding slap on the back, and telling him never to lose heart when he sought to win a fair lady, but to go in and conquer in the light of so excellent an example.

"The lady must have been sorely left to herself," said Hay, calmly. "Why did she not make as good a bargain as she could for herself, and get her money to buy, not merely the finest fellow in all the world—there is a wonderful number of such paragons—but land to match with her land, supposing she had land, or rank to raise her rank, if she cared for that? If she was nice as he was fine, why was the advantage to be all on his side?"

The Shirra, in spite of his good-nature, was nettled by the slight to his story. "I was thinking of a quality called love being concerned in a marriage, mem, and not of its being a simple matter of buying and selling," he said dryly. "When I was young, men and women married for love, and not for a sideboard and silver forks; and if there were a sideboard and silver forks on the one side and not on the other, good and well—their possessor was proud to ware them where a leal heart had gone before: compared to it they were not worth the counting."

"The ladies do not need to be told that," interposed the Rev. John Ochiltree, speaking both from a professional habit of pacification and from the gallant manners of the day, which the Shirra, of all men, had for a moment forgotten. "We know their soft hearts, and are not ashamed to confess our debt of gratitude to them. Who so ready to make sacrifices on their own account, to go before us in acts of self-denial, to keep us in the paths of prudence, as our fair enthrallers when they honour us by consenting to share our lots? Depend upon it,

Shirra, it was woman, lovely woman! who, on setting up a house upon a small income, gave her greatly obliged husband the sound advice—to begin with a herring for dinner if he wanted to end with a hen."

"Speak for yourself, Mr. Ochiltree, or rather for Mrs. Ochiltree," Hay's sharp tongue contradicted the complacent speaker; "at least let me say there is one woman who does not pretend to be lovely, and is hard-hearted enough to be of opinion that those who need to dine on herrings should not aim high. I doubt if there are such frugal folk left. I fancy the practice is rather to make a snatch at dainties all round, wherever the money is to come from that is to pay for them. But granted there are frugal folk, I think it would only be reasonable and modest in them to choose partners in their own rank of life, accustomed to the fare, and to leave the diners on hens to the dishes the poor ladies are entitled to and have been accustomed to throughout."

There was no good to be got from prolonging an argument with Hay Melville in this mood, even though her opponents were a witty Shirra and a learned divine—either of them old enough to be her father.

But Hay was not appeased by having the last word. When the cannon was fired, and she and Lizzie had turned their backs upon their companions, Hay said with indignation, "The Shirra's an auld fule, and the minister is not much better. Can they not mind their own business and leave other folk to mind theirs? Do you know how the Shirra was caught the other day? It was washing-day in the family, so he had a servant's brat tied round his big waist, and was sitting in the kitchen helping his daughter to shell the peas, when the servants were at the Water-Ends with the clothes. He was not a bit ashamed, and only said he thought he might be useful in the house when he was not presiding in the court."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CLOSE OF THE KING'S BIRTHDAY AT BURN FOOT FARM.

"LIZZIE, I cannot stay at home this afternoon, and the streets will not be pleasant after the gentlemen have gone to their dinner at the Crown. It is fine summer weather, and we ought to make the most of it. I want you to walk out with me to Burn Foot Farm; we've seen all that we can see, and I'm sure it was not worth the looking at—a wheelbarrow or two of common flowers and half a score of old flags. We'll be away from the din that is making my head ache already. I have a message from my mother about the yarn that she gave the Scotts an order to spin for her, on the night of the fire. We have time to go home for lunch or dinner, and to change our gowns; then if you'll meet me at Balmayne gate, we'll walk out. Jean will give us an early tea, and the carriage will be sent to bring us back."

"But Jean may be coming in again for the bonfire," objected Lizzie, doubtfully. "Her brother Rob is with the Pauties (Patons). Their house above the watch-shop commands the Cross, while I rather think, too, she's intimate with the Todds next door; so she has two strings to her bow, besides having plenty of brothers to take care of her, and see her safe out to Burn Foot, if her father is not to be trusted."

"No, she will not be in the town again," Hay was able to tell her companion. "I spoke to her at our gate this morning, and said we might look out this afternoon. Of course, she said she would be blithe to see us, and she hoped we would not mind finding her keeping house by herself with old Maisie, for her mother was coming into Logie in the afternoon. Oh! not to see the bonfire. Poor body! I should say she was long past bonfires. I suppose to try with the help of her sons to drag her bad bargain of a man home before he gets into some fresh scrape. Don't you think it is a pity Jock Scott's horse does not fling him one of these nights, as happens with many a better man, and

make an end of him? The man will never do any good now."

"But his wife and bairns may have some feeling left for him," remonstrated Lizzie, at this easy way of disposing of the unlucky Jock. "It would be a heavy blow to them if he came to a violent end. Mrs. Scott has been a good wife. It is not good wives, however tried, who wish their husbands out of the way; and I'm sure Jean is fond of her father, little as he may deserve it, while he is fond of her, too, after his own fashion."

It was agreed that the girls should go away quietly on their country expedition, leaving the mirth of the town, which was getting faster and more furious, behind them, and finding the quiet and freshness of the fields and flowery dyke-sides all the more welcome for the change. The country was lying in the sunny, drowsy tranquillity of a summer afternoon when the corn was yet in its green strength, and the leaves of the trees still not "dunned" by the Lammas floods, while the birds had hardly ceased their song. The pasture down by the Cart was more golden than green with tall king-cups, nodding among the seeding grass. Apricot-coloured irises, crimson ragged-Robin, ivory-tinted meadow-sweet, grew among the sedges on the banks of the river, and were reflected in the clear water. Even the old farmhouse of Burn Foot, which was but a tumbledown, ram-shackle place, in keeping with the fallen fortunes of its tenants, as it stood in the rustic square formed by its offices, looked its best on this cloudless 4th of June. The yellow house-leek was budding on its olive-thatch, a bour-tree bush at the end of the house had its dark green leaves half-hidden by the fan-like white flowers—of which the notable Mistress Jean was brewing her home-made wine, when the Laird of Cockpen intruded upon her inopportunely. Through the hawthorn hedge of the kail-yard—never so severely clipped as to be left without a spray of blossom or berries here and there—a "bonnie briar-bush" had thrust its prickly stems and leaves and its "wee white cockades," which smell with a spicy variation on the delectable scent of roses.

White, and blue and green-backed ducks were lazily floating and floundering among the vivid green duckweed of the pond. Hens, speckled and brown, black and white, were

already retiring to roost, breaking into an unsteady rocking trot as they approached the hen-house door, a peculiarity of gait which suggested that rest was sweet after an industrious pursuit of worms and seed since daybreak. A cock with a magnificent orange and red neck and long legs, so far forgot himself as to bring up the rear in the same style. Silver-grey young turkeys fluttered about a meek, weak-minded turkey hen, while a "bubbly-Jock" stood guard over them with a beak like a Roman Emperor's nose, white ears and a gorget of bells ready to change at a moment's notice from blue-white to brick-red, while their owner was in the act of accomplishing an extravagant gobbling performance worthy of a bully and tyrant. The house-dog, so old that Jean remembered when a child to have ridden on its back, lay reaping the reward of long and faithful service, a plate of porridge and milk within his reach, his toothless jaws resting on his paws, his eyes, with the blue film of age creeping over the balls, blinking idly at the flies which were beneath being snapped at.

Jean came out to receive her guests, wearing the same quaint, richly-coloured old chintz gown which she had worn at the demolition of the craws up at the House of Burn Foot, her uncovered dark head and fair young face looking more womanly and beautiful than ever. A would-be artist like Steenie Oliphant might well have been excused for thinking the rustic scene fit for a picture.

The one flaw in the prospect was on the opposite side of the water in the gaunt, gaping ruins, scathed and smoke-soiled, of Lauder Mills. They stood still untouched by the builders. The trees, bushes, and turf of the old pleasant approach to the Mill House remained broken, torn, and trampled down, with no effort at restoration, except the first patient attempts of nature, almost imperceptible in the few weeks since the damage was done, to repair it slowly but surely; or if not, to mantle it over tenderly, and hide it from view. Lizzie turned away from the sight with a shuddering sigh that was more like a gasp of fright and pain. Even Hay looked doggedly in another direction, biting her lips.

It struck Lizzie that though Jean was pleased and flattered in her modest fashion by their visit—though she was kind—when was Jean anything else save kind to the most tiresome,

unwarrantable usurper of her few minutes of spare time, the most wretched beggar who craved a broken bannock or a cold potato from her hands?—still, Jean was not quite so glad at the sight of her friends as Hay had painted her. There was a little air of constraint, baffled expectation and troubled anxiety, which now and again broke through her serenity. However, she forgot what was weighing on her mind in her hospitable efforts, while the novelty of the situation had its natural effect on the visitors, and they were pleased with everything. The spirits of the three girls rose in spite of themselves after the new-comers were rested and ready to wander all over the farmhouse and offices. Jean did the duties of a hostess as zealously as if she had not a single care. She helped old Maisie to set out the peculiar luxuries of a real farmhouse tea, the freshest of butter, the thickest and sweetest of cream, honey just taken from the comb.

Jean's ancient crony was a brisk little woman, who even in the height of summer had to wear a plaid shawl and hood over her cap to protect her rheumatic shoulders and palsied head from every breath of air. Jean got Maisie to talk to the young ladies, and tell them the stories which were most interesting to Maisie's young mistress; of the spate in the Cart which carried away the auld Pedlar's Brig; of the hard winter when so many sheep had been "smoored" in a drift; of the thick of the French wars, when all the capable lads were volunteering as soldiers, and bairns were frightened to go to scule lest they should meet Buonaparte and his men in the woods or on the moor.

Jean took out the strangers while the sun was setting in its glory, and the stacks were throwing long shadows across the turf of the corn-yard. She introduced Hay and Lizzie to the haunts with which the young laird of Burn Foot was familiar; she showed them the full milk basins in the dairy and the cheese pressing in the cheshert, and ransacked the hens' nests for any forgotten eggs; she pointed out the different horses returning from the fields, their harness jingling at every step, and "the kye coming hame," pausing to pluck one more juicy mouthful of grass and clover before they withdrew to chew the cud in the privacy of their dark byre, steaming with that warm "breath of kine" which Jean

asserted, commiseratingly, was gude for poor creatures deein of decline.

And always, as Jean did her best to entertain her not altogether welcome company, the native generosity of the woman who had little to give came out in her desire to lavish such treasures as she possessed on the intruders. They must—since the Balmayne carriage was to come for them—take these eggs, laid this very day. The auld Captain or Mrs. Lindesay would like one for to-morrow's breakfast, and the sweet milk kebbock might be a dainty to Mrs. Melville or the laird, even though they had the best of Stilton on their dinner-table. The very lavender from Jean's garden was not spared. She pulled almost the whole of it, and tied it up in bunches for the young ladies to scent their drawers with.

Neither Hay nor Lizzie could resist the goodwill thus eagerly displayed. The three girls had been talking and laughing together for a long time in the friendliest, cheeriest manner when they returned to the parlour to wait for the carriage. Jean, in answer to the entreaties of her companions, who had not been taught the twin arts of spinning and reeling, had sat down to her wheel and her reel in turn, pulling her thread and turning her reel, the latter to the accompaniment of an arch, sweet cradle song:—

> "Can ye sew cushions?
> Can ye sew sheets?
> Can ye sing baloo
> When the bairnie greets?"

As if in obedience to a spell, a shadow crossed the window, a foot sounded on the threshold, and without the ceremony of a knock, Steenie Oliphant entered.

"*Maister* Steenie!" exclaimed Jean, snapping her thread, ceasing her song, and blushing like a rose as she sprang up, and went to hand him a chair. Instinctively she put a greater emphasis on the "Maister," to qualify the freedom of the young gentleman's entrance, and the fact only known to herself that she had been expecting him all the afternoon, though the two had not been "friens," as she would have put it, since the craw-shooting at the House. He had kept up his resentment at what he was pleased to consider

the disregard of his wishes in her undesirable, unbecoming appearance among his father's guests. The couple had seen little or nothing of each other since then, and Jean's tender heart had been sore, while she was unable to comprehend the extent of her offence. But she had felt certain that he would condone it at last; whatever it might be, he would not lose the opportunity of the King's Birthday, especially if he ascertained, as he might easily do, that she was keeping house with nobody at home to bear her company save old Maisie. He was here, as she had anticipated, but Miss Melville and Miss Lindesay had been before him.

If the *contretemps* had happened to Adam Lauder, in what were already beginning to be called the old days, when everything was smooth and fair with him, he would very soon have got over the difficulty. In truth, he would have enjoyed nothing better than to be the solitary centre of attraction to three girls—each a belle in her way—with the chance of captivating one and all.

But Steenie Oliphant was made of different metal. He was very much put out. He stammered some lame excuse of having promised Mr. Scott to look in at the farmhouse in passing, and see that everything was right. Steenie had soon got enough of the public dinner. He would not for the world have waited to be drawn into the rude child's play of the bonfire. It was one of the reproaches brought against Steenie that he could not take his drink like a gentleman, and fought shy of what would have been "a fine ploy" to any other young fellow. Accordingly he was perfectly sober —a sobriety rapidly passing into gloom—when he found that Bonnie Jean had other company than Maisie.

It was rather wonderful that young Burn Foot did not proceed according to his custom to revenge on Jean what was her misfortune and not her fault, her loss no less than his. But, happily, he did not to-night. He had not the heart. The couple had been separated lately, though no doubt the separation was his own doing, and his heart had been beating high at the prospect of being with her again. And there was Jean, bonnie, and he could not doubt kind as ever, while her voice had sounded wondrously sweet in the snatch of song which had reached him through the open doors and windows.

"Can ye sew cushions?
Can ye sew sheets?
Can ye sing baloo
When the bairnie greets?"

Jean ought always to spin and sing such songs, and then there was no woman in the world to compare with her. Hay Melville was piquante, she had "long pound notes," and would succeed to the fragment of the tower in which Sir Audry might have been lodged. The auld Captain's daughter had a charm of her own—a charm made up of maidenly grace, goodness, and sense at a strait; but both were far behind his Jean.

"What should be wrang here or onywhere the nicht?" Jean was asking in happy though agitated assurance. "I think my faither and mither have gone daft about the risks o' the King's Birthday—a whean tar-barrels, torches, and squibs, whose very smush is no to be detected half a mile from the Cross o' Logie. I had no thought of going in to see the bonfire—it is more for lads than lasses—yet there was my mither as thankful as if I had escaped a doonricht danger, that I was not to be exposed to the crush and the flaring of the links and the flinging aboot of the crackers. I'm no tow to flie up in a blaze," ended Jean with a laugh.

"But I am sure we're all better here," said Lizzie in a tone of conviction.

And Hay assented.

Steenie might have privately wished the shadows of two of the party to grow less before his eyes, but he became so far reconciled to their obnoxious presence as to be about his best—the really good company which Jean found him. In reality, though Steenie Oliphant was totally unlike that squire of dames, Adam Lauder, Steenie was also a man calculated to shine in such society. He was far more at his ease with the group of friendly girls than at the noisy public dinner he had quitted.

One consequence of young Burn Foot's being so far at his ease, was what he did not perhaps count on or care for. It grew suddenly clear to more than the person principally concerned that he could not keep his eyes off Jean Scott. He talked more to Hay and Lizzie, but he caught up Jean's slightest word with an involuntary attention which he did not give to their longest and cleverest speeches.

It was the first time Hay Melville had given a serious thought to the floating rumours that the laird of Burn Foot's son was smitten by his tenant's daughter. There was no doubt the confirmation thus presented to her must have been a shock to Hay. It was an invasion of her domain, an appropriation of property bespoken for her, by a social inferior who, however beautiful and good, was so totally out of the question as a wife for Steenie Oliphant, that her image had never even presented itself to Hay in this light. She had strong social prejudices; in the middle of her easy ways and frank condescension there was not wanting a dash of arrogance and exaction, along with a share of her mother's keen and smooth worldliness. The new idea was startling, and not particularly agreeable to her. Yet there had been something about the peaceful happy afternoon which she had spent in the homely farmhouse, with all its kindly domesticities and pleasant rural occupations, even under the griping clutch of poverty, that tended to disarm Hay. There was also something in the personality of Jean Scott, whom Hay Melville had always liked; and something in the transformation wrought in Steenie by the strange, self-forgetful light in his usually self-conscious eyes, the involuntary eagerness in his ordinary languid tones, that affected Hay to a degree she could never have supposed possible. She marvelled, she condemned in part, because according to her criterions she was forced to condemn; but she was neither full of wrath nor of contempt. Acting on her first impulse, she was quiet in a subdued wistful manner, which was a phase hitherto unknown where Hay's behaviour was concerned.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"MY LOVE THAT DIED FOR ME."

THE rattle of the wheels of the Balmayne carriage was heard faintly in the distance. Steenie Oliphant had risen, and was moving aimlessly about the farmhouse parlour. He was bandying a jest with Hay Melville, who had roused herself to ask when he was going to publish his poems, to

which he had answered he was ready if she would accept the dedication. While he was speaking he took up Jock Scott's gun, which had been standing all the evening in the corner by the window, where its owner had left it on coming in from shooting wild pigeons. Steenie lifted the gun with a slight awkwardness and carelessness, for though he was born a laird in the middle of country sports, he was not born a sportsman. He was speaking and laughing as he turned the weapon round, not thinking what he was doing, till the muzzle pointed at his breast while his hand was on the trigger.

"Oh, Steenie, tak' care what you are about, the gun is loaded," a woman's voice cried impetuously, and Jean, who was a few paces from him, sprang forward, seized his arm, and dragged it aside.

A flash of light, a loud report, an instantaneous heavy fall, two women's voices uttering simultaneously a shrill, wild shriek, a man's deep groan, and all that was left of Bonnie Jean Scott was a terrible heap on the floor.

Oh, life! is it not the most awful of your tragic possibilities, that in the midst of you, at our busiest, gladdest moment, we are also in the midst of death? Misery may come to us at any instant, and overthrow for ever the poor, frail fabric of earthly happiness, which has taken long years to build up.

There was a second's appalling silence. There were three still alive—the same in every limb which shook and swayed under them, the same in the brains that continued to think and the hearts to beat, though hearts and brains were strained to bursting, as the three had been hours, years ago. But it was for an instant as if all were shot dead, or as if the last day had come, and the history of humanity were at an end.

The ghastly silence within was broken by the increasing rumbling sound without of the Balmayne carriage as it drew up to the farmyard gate, and by a nearer patter that had a harsh distinctness, though it was only the echo of the feeble feet of old Maisie, who had heard the going off of the gun, and was hurrying to the spot to see if there was anything wrong.

All was wrong at Burn Foot that summer night—a wrong that could never be mended, as the hoarse voice of a frenzied

man rung out through the little room, "Jean, my Jean, speak to me—say that you are not hurt—that it was not I who did it."

Maisie stumbled in, threw up her hands with a horrified "Eh! sirs, what's this?" and then sank down, cowering, on a chair, covering her face with her apron. Even she, with her age and experience, could not confront what was flowing along the floor and spattered on the wall.

It was Lizzie Lindesay who first recovered some power of thought and speech. She was a soldier's daughter, and she had inherited, as has been said, a few of the invaluable qualities which had rendered the auld Captain a strong tower in dire extremity, though the qualities in Lizzie had been suffered to lie rusting till now. "Fetch a doctor," she cried to Steenie, though she and everybody else knew that all the doctors in the world were useless here; but it was forcing the poor lad away from the woeful work of his own hand, and was giving him something to do which might save him from death or madness.

Steenie stared as if he neither heard nor comprehended her. Yet he staggered to his feet from where he had fallen on his knees beside his slain love, and went out to obey Lizzie.

Hay had drawn back into a corner, shivering and moaning. Lizzie took her by the arm and led her out into the hallan. "The carriage is here, Hay. You must drive quickly to Logie. I think you should go straight to the manse—the minister will be back from the Crown, and tell him to send after her father and find her mother and brothers. Oh! God help them!" and Lizzie, as white as a lily, nearly broke down.

"But what will you do, Lizzie? Will you not come with me?" inquired Hay, through the chattering of her teeth. "Oh! it is terrible—terrible. Is she really killed—dead? But I must not ask. Oh! poor Jean! poor Jean!"

"Whisht!" cried Lizzie, almost with a shade of her father's sternness in action. "There will be plenty of mourning for her when the time comes, but now we must think of others. No, Hay, I cannot come. I cannot forsake Maisie and her in there. I must stay till her folk come back. What a home-coming! But, haste ye, haste ye.

They should know as soon as possible, the longer they are of being told the worse for them, When you've done what I've said, if you can come across my father, send him. He has seen deaths of all kinds, by pistol-shot wounds as well as in other ways—but woe's me; there is nothing for him to do here."

Hay went, and Lizzie was left as she had begged, for three-quarters of an hour—a time to be always remembered in her life. One of the farm-servants who had not gone in to Logie to see the rejoicings was apprised of the fatal accident, and came and stayed in the kitchen in case he should be wanted. But though he was a stalwart middle-aged man who fared neither "beast nor body," and could have taken a mad bull by the horns, he would not encounter what was lying so still in the farmhouse parlour—not though he had been honestly attached to his young mistress, as every creature who had come near Jean had been fond of her. Perhaps he did not realize at once, without seeing the spectacle, what otherwise it was hard to believe, for Lizzie, though she could distinguish the shuffling tramp of his feet and his heavy breathing across the narrow passage, only twice caught a smothered groan.

Lizzie spent part of her dreary watch in appealing to Maisie, who had not lived so long in the world without knowing "trouble" of many kinds, seeking to rouse her and to learn from her whether anything farther could be done to break the blow to the survivors.

But Maisie herself had been driven half demented. She kept muttering, "I rocked her in the cradle when she was the sweetest bairn that ever lived. I thocht to have seen her the brawest bride, and now I'll no even straik her. Na, na, it will be a man's job—only a man could thole the sicht. Men's hands will put a' that is left o' Bonnie Jean Scott in her kist."

Lizzie forced herself, clenching her hands and setting her teeth, to draw near the corpse, but nothing stirred, the very blood had ceased to flow, and was congealing in the pool from which she had to hold back her skirts. As Maisie had said, no woman could stand the sight, when the image of God, which had been so lovely in Jean, was clean defaced.

The first spark of comfort came from that last gruesome

aggravation to the tragedy. Jean was not there,—not even in the fair empty shell. It was as if all of her, which her friends had known and prized, had gone in a second to the God and Saviour whom she had loved and trusted, whom she had sought in her simplicity and humility to obey and serve.

Lizzie had no thought of any obligation to leave things untouched for a legal investigation. There were no coroners' inquests in Scotland, and this was not a case for the fiscal. Steenie Oliphant's worst enemy could not impute blame to him. On the other hand, so great was the need, that when she did succeed in calming Maisie, and stirring her up to think of Mrs. Scott, and the other near kindred, Lizzie, a young girl—simply because her heart was at once brave and gentle—helped the old woman in trying what they could to remove the more obtrusive traces of the frightful work of a second. It was a task which, before he had put his hand to it, the stout-hearted man in the kitchen would well-nigh have been shot dead in his own person.

The two women ended by spreading a white sheet over the body. All the time they worked the old house-dog, awakened to a sense that something unusual had happened in the house, uttered low piteous whines and short, sharp barks of fright from the depths of the kennel into which he had crept.

Lizzie could never quite tell how she rendered these last solemn services. It always seemed to her afterwards that it was somebody else than herself who had done them. Whenever she did recall the scene, by a painful effort, it brought back vague memories and confused pictures of piteous old-world tragedies of which she had read and heard. She saw Rizpah watching her dead all through the weeks of the barley harvest. Or it was the wife of John Brown the Covenanter whom Claverse and his men murdered, when she took his shattered head in her lap, covered it with her plaid, and sat on the bleak hill-side before her desolate house till God sent her help. Or it might be another miserable woman, the wife of Piers Cockburn, of Henderland, when the moss-troopers burned her tower and slew her knight, and she took his body on her back and laid the mools on his yellow hair.

It was never just Lizzie Lindesay and old Maisie of Burn Foot staying in the farmhouse where Jean Scott had been slain by a wretched mischance, till her family should return.

Jean had not been Lizzie's nearest and dearest, but she, too, had been fond of Bonnie Jean, her old schoolfellow, her faithful friend, the best and fairest woman Lizzie had ever known. Above all, there was none except herself that night to do what had to be done. When it comes to that pass, in a supreme emergency there is always a devoted soul, man or woman, young or old, to step to the front. Human nature has not fallen so low as to fail, under God's moulding, to provide a heroic spirit for its desperate straits. Sometimes it turns up where it is least looked for, in a tender child, or a grey beard, a weak woman, or a sin-soiled man.

At last relief, the arrival of which had been in itself a dread, came. The Scotts, father and mother, and two of the brothers, returned in the Balmayne carriage, followed immediately by a chaise with Dr. Hepburn, Steenie Oliphant, Mr. Ochiltree, and Captain Lindesay. The poor Scotts were stunned still, while Jock was effectually sobered. It was perhaps a mercy to them that in the first violence of their grief the presence of strangers acted as a restraint. Lizzie could see the same unacknowledged influence keeping down Steenie Oliphant's quivering agony, which was yet so evident that the greatest of his fellow-sufferers spared him even the dumb reproach of a look. When the lamentable truth was established beyond dispute, he was induced to go away with Dr. Hepburn to the refuge of his father's house. Later in the evening a third of Jean's brothers appeared with an aunt —a sister of Mrs. Scott's, whom the young man had the forethought to bring with him, and Lizzie felt she could leave with her father.

The auld Captain and his daughter walked home along with the minister in the dewy stillness of the summer night. There had been no available suggestion for Captain Lindesay to make, and though he had concealed his feelings under a firm and quiet exterior, the old soldier had been considerably unmanned. "I have been on many a battlefield, and beheld death in a far greater variety of forms than you can have seen it, sir," he told the minister; "but I never witnessed

a more harrowing sight than yon," with a motion of his elbow back towards the farmhouse. "Puir innocent lassie! and sad as her fate has been, that unhappy young Burn Foot's is worse." Then he pressed his daughter's arm, which was drawn through his. "Lizzie, you stood gallantly at your post. I'm proud of you, my dear," he said simply.

"You may well be," chimed in the minister from a full heart. "I'm proud of her, too, though I do not own her; I'm sorry to think there is not a drop's blood of mine in your veins, Lizzie. You are only my faithful young parishioner."

"Oh! do not say I did anything more than I should have done," protested Lizzie through her fast-falling tears. "I did nothing—alas! there was nothing to do. Poor Jean would have stayed by me or any friend—friend! any creature, any brute beast, living or dead—though it had cost her a thousand times more than it cost me."

But though Lizzie honestly disclaimed all credit, a tender thrill went through her heart at the praise from her father and her minister.

When the three reached Logie the grievous news was still not spread abroad. It had been stifled in the turmoil. The bonfire crackled and blazed at the Cross. The crowd around it cheered, stamped, and swayed here and there to escape from the flying crackers and the shots from the guns, though these were only charged with powder and fired right overhead; but the mere sound of them went to Lizzie's heart, and she was nearer fainting than she had been in the whole course of the night. Yet the tumult went on with impunity; nobody, not even the smallest child rashly exposed in the hubbub, was thrown down or trodden upon. The flaming resinous torches failed to scorch the hands of the careless bearers. Not a hair of anybody's head was singed by the most recklessly flung squib, while away out in the peace and safety of Burn Foot Farm, with only the soft song of the Cart breaking the midnight hush, Jean Scott lay with her brains blown out by the hand of him that loved her.

"Death and the Lord of death are no respecters of times and places any more than of persons," said John Ochiltree, as he gazed on the scene which was so widely removed from that he had just quitted.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN JEAN'S NAME.

WHEN Lizzie went out again to Burn Foot Farm next day, she found poor Mrs. Scott wonderfully calm, carried out of herself and finding fond consolation in dwelling on the degree to which Jean had excelled other women's daughters.

"She was gude as she was bonnie—though maybe I shouldna say it. There was naebody like her. She was fit if ever lass was fit for the great change, far better than her sorrowfu', sinfu' mother. It does seem that it wouldna have been meet that she should have deed just like common folk. Ye ken that she deed for anither that she lo'ed weel. There is nae shame in saying it now. Naebody will grudge him to her the day, and I wouldna grudge her to him since it is the Lord's will, if it were not for the poor laud himsell."

Poor Jock was less resigned.

"I never deserved her or onybody like her," he confessed in the bitterness of his soul; "to think a drucken, ill-done deevil is left standing here, and my lassie, my ae bonnie gude lassie, that never offended me, is lying yonder beyond recognition by the mither who bore her. I tell you I deserve to be gien up to the Fiscal and hanged by the neck till I'm dead, for leaving that cursed gun loaded and cocked against the wall, little thinking what it would shoot next."

But here again there was compensation for the gentler, truer nature. "Puir Jock!" Mrs. Scott sighed, rising up and wiping away her tears of infinite yearning. She could not give way altogether, when her husband "took on" as he was doing. Jean would have been "wae" to see her father thus. Jean's mother must do what she could to help him.

But who was there that could comfort Steenie Oliphant, locked in his room at Burn Foot, and refusing at last to open the door either to his father, his minister, or his doctor.

The poor old laird was in despair. His smooth ignoring of what was not to be thought of for a moment, his crafty philosophy, his cheerful contempt for anything that opposed his

plans, were totally upset. It was a tragedy breaking in importunately on the genteel comedy which he had insisted on keeping up, the horror and anguish wrestling with and casting in the dust the passive forces of worldly matter-of-factness and commonplace precedent on which he had confidently relied. He had neither the heart nor the courage to refuse any longer to admit the attachment which had existed between his son and poor Jean Scott—the piteous circumstances of whose death, while that death ended at once and for ever all danger of a *mésalliance*, counterbalanced her lowly origin. Her sad fate raised her to an eminence above social distinctions. As death itself is not vulgar, Jean's death was exceptional and exclusive, setting her apart from other women. It would make her be regarded for all time in a peculiarly ideal light, which rendered her the match and more than the match of any mortal man, be he peer or prince. In addition, the shock of the fearful thing that had befallen Jean and his son, with the distress his father was in about Steenie, had startled Mr. Oliphant from his conventionality and guile into something like simplicity and sincerity, however brief might be the duration of the feelings. He would have granted anything in his power to alleviate the misery which he was compelled to look upon close at hand—anything short of consenting, could to-day have become yesterday, and Bonnie Jean been restored to life, to entertain for a moment the idea of receiving her as his daughter-in-law. But poor Jean, so bonnie and good, was dead and gone as much as if she had passed away a hundred years before, and Steenie's foolish love for her had suddenly become harmless. The connection was like an unequal marriage dissolved by death, when the marriage may thenceforth be alluded to by kindred and friends with comparatively little fear or shame, and without much pain. The entire aspect of the affair had been altered by Steenie's own hapless deed. Yet it was likely to colour his whole future life. It was this last strange, appalling element in the matter, which on the first blush acted on Mr. Oliphant, overwhelming him and depriving him of the slightest unconfessed sense of relief or faintest hope of subsequent good from the awful disaster. The time might come when the laird of Burn Foot would say to himself with serene if not pious satisfaction, that the calamity in which his son had been concerned, which was, however,

clearly the visitation of God, had been all for the best. Poor Jean Scott, a good lassie, a very good lassie, he believed, was at rest from the cares and troubles of this life, no doubt immeasurably better off than she could ever have been here, while Steenie was free to do what had been reasonably expected of him, which at the same time he might never have done had his first love been spared among the living. For he was just the lad, not to have taken a rash, compromising step, perhaps, but to have wasted his life on an idle dream, to have held aloof from other women, and remained a bachelor all his days for Jean Scott's sake.

But this was very far from being Mr. Oliphant's frame of mind at present. He was anxious to pay the Scotts every mark of respect and consideration in their affliction, and to give them all the assistance and sympathy they would receive at his hands. He proposed, as a matter of course, to attend the funeral, and to take any part in it which the relations would assign to him, though he was fain that Steenie, in the condition he was in, should be "let off," as his father put it, and kept away from the scene, by all knowledge of the day and hour being, if possible, withheld from him.

The laird of Balmayne was even prepared to let Jock Scott continue in his farm and to give him a new lease on the easiest terms. It was little enough to make up for the misfortune which could never be repaired, while it was all that Mr. Oliphant could do, and, as he well knew, the whole country would cry shame on him if he did not do it.

But the laird's first thought was naturally for his son, in whose interest every effort had been as yet of no avail, who had ended by barring out any chance of approach to him. Mr. Oliphant, in his difficulty, went over to Balmayne. It was not so much to take counsel with his old ally, Mrs. Melville, as to ask her to co-operate with him in the only resource that occurred to him. "Mrs. Melville, I can rely upon your friendship," said the perturbed man. "I am going to ask a favour of you. Will you bring over Hay and Miss Lindesay to Burn Foot and see what they can do for my poor laddie? They were all together when the deplorable accident happened, and they can convince him—what I sometimes fear in the midst of his horror and grief he is tempted to doubt—if so his life or his reason may be the forfeit—that it was not he

who fired inadvertently, it was the poor lassie who, knowing the gun was loaded, pulled aside his arm and brought death on herself by causing the weapon to go off in his hands. Your daughter and Miss Lindesay were Jean Scott's old schoolfellows and friends, and sometimes when a man is sick at heart, as when he is sick in body, women can do more for him than his fellow-men can accomplish. Besides, Steenie is a gentleman, and he will not keep his door shut in the face of ladies."

"Certainly, sir," Mrs. Melville acquiesced at once. "Hay has been ill and confined to her room from the effects of the shock. She never saw a death before, and this was such a death for a girl or indeed for a man to witness. But she is better and able to be downstairs again. She and all of us will only be too glad to be of use to you and poor Mr. Steenie. Do you say he will not come down to his meals, or open his door to let them be taken in? Oh! this must not be suffered to go on; no, not on any account."

Hay, though still looking very white and scared, expressed herself to Lizzie as quite willing to go over to Burn Foot. "I should like to do what I could for poor Steenie, and for poor Jean too. She would not have wished him to be killed by her death—which he could not help any more than you or I—or, what is worse, to be driven demented. I used to laugh at him for being so thin-skinned and as easily hurt as a girl, but I cannot laugh now, and I always liked Jean. But oh, Lizzie, I was thankful to get home—back to my own room here, to shut myself in, and it—it that had happened at Burn Foot out. Then I grew so feared, I had to ring up my mother and get her to spend the rest of the night with me. How could you stay on in yon house or go into yon room again?" and Hay, high-spirited though she was, shuddered convulsively at the bare recollection.

"I just did it because it had to be done, so I suppose the power was given me," said Lizzie, humbly and reverently. "Maisie would have gone out of her wits if she had been left all by herself, for Wullie the ploughman would not come near her."

As the Balmayne carriage was seen driving out to Burn Foot, Lady Sprott ran out of her door and made a signal to the coachman to stop. "No, I'm no wanting a lift the day"—

she anticipated the excuse which sprang to the lips of the occupants for not inviting her to accompany them on their sorrowful errand. "I'm only seeking to ken about the straiking and the kisting. Hae you heard ony word? for I can get no satisfaction. Is it true that she was just rolled in a sheet in her bluidy claes and laid in her coffin—her that would hae made sic a bonnie corp? If a' thing had been richt I would have invited mysel oot. It would have been an honour, ye ken, from a bauronet's weedy, but puir Jean weel deserved it, and she had a sair troke with wee Sir Dauvit."

The carriage road from Logie to Burn Foot House did not pass the farmhouse, or even come within sight of it, so that two of the party were saved the pain which would have smitten them at the merest glimpse of the thatched roofs of the rustic square, or of the gate to which Jean had come so lately to meet her girl friends, herself a picture of youth, and health, and beauty.

There was something like the stillness of death about the yellow house of Burn Foot among the fir trees, something very unlike the bustling festival air it had presented at the craw-shooting, when the visitors had seen it last. The servants were stealing about, moving and talking in a muffled manner, no doubt indemnifying themselves by much gossip and speculation in the background.

The old man-servant came forward and addressed Mr. Oliphant, who had appeared from the stables, and was standing ready at the front door to hand the ladies out. Sandy spoke in an undertone and with suppressed excitement. He was well-nigh a member of the family, and had its interests deeply at heart. He was as much attached to Steenie as if the young laird had been the old man's son instead of his master. But there could be no denying that gruesome details had a powerful charm for Sandy as well as for Lady Sprott. He was a man who would be in his element in a crape hatband, with "weepers" on his coat-cuffs. "If you please, sir, Mr. Steenie has rung his bell and asked to see a newspaper," was Sandy's communication, made in a tone of mystery.

For the life of her, Hay Melville, subdued as she was, could not restrain a twinkle of her hazel eyes at the anticlimax. She whispered to Lizzie, "If Steenie can command his feelings so far as to seek to while away the time by

taking a look at the newspapers, I think we need not have troubled to come out."

She became grave again the next moment. For Sandy added in the same hushed voice, "I jalouse he's lost the day of the week, and it is for the date."

Mr. Oliphant nodded with an increase of anxiety in his face. He was looking ill himself—aged and harassed.

The laird conducted his guests to the drawing-room, where cake and wine were put out for their refreshment. Lizzie was reminded in a confusion of associations of the wine and the small sugared and gilt biscuits, known as "Bur'al Bread," served before funerals in the middle and higher classes in Scotland. Doubtless a supply had gone out to Burn Foot farmhouse.

Mr. Oliphant tried without much success to talk for a few minutes on indifferent topics—the weather, the crops, the cautious hints in the newspapers of the failing health of the old King, whose birthday his subjects had just been celebrating. At the allusion to the day the speaker suddenly became silent. Then he rang the bell and sent the servant, as if he were making an ordinary announcement—which must, however, be attended to—with the information for Mr. Steenie's benefit that there were ladies—Mrs. and Miss Melville and Miss Lindesay—with Mr. Oliphant in the drawing-room.

There was a little breathless pause until the messenger, who had not been gone for many minutes, came back with the answer that Mr. Steenie was sorry—he must make his excuses—he could not see the ladies.

Mr. Oliphant contracted his forehead, on which the furrows had never before been so plainly visible, and looked blankly at Mrs. Melville, who returned the look as blankly. It was a proof how much the clever, capable woman of the world felt put out, and unable to cope with the new order of things, that even she shrank from interfering farther, or obtruding her presence on Steenie, though she was neither shy nor sensitive, and had always asserted that she had a mother's affection for the lad.

It was Hay, who with tears in her bright eyes took upon herself and Lizzie a painful duty.

"Let us go up to his door, Mr. Oliphant, and speak to

him—ask him to come out to the garden with Lizzie and me. Perhaps he will not refuse."

Mr. Oliphant was only too willing.

Hay had played about the house when a child with another child, who, although older and of the hardier sex, had been, as she expressed it, much the more thin-skinned and easily hurt of the two. She knew her way perfectly, though she had not gone about the rooms and corridors unattended and at her own will since then. Instinctively, as if Hay were a child again, she took Lizzie's hand, holding it tightly and squeezing it to inspire herself with courage. Hand in hand the girls stood with beating hearts before the closed door, and sought to parley with the man in deep waters within, to hold out some rope or twig to him which he might catch, and so keep his head up till the tempest rolled by.

"Steenie," said Hay, in a voice which had lost its old mocking, teasing tones, "do you know Lizzie Lindesay and I are here? We have come out with my mother expressly to see you."

There was a moment's silence, then Steenie answered, his voice sounding harsh and unnatural, and not without a strain of passionate fretfulness in it like that of a woman or a child in grief. "I am much obliged, but what is there to see about me? Have I become a spectacle? Pray excuse me, Hay; I do not know what I am saying; I must ask you to leave me."

"No, Steenie, you will not let us go back without seeing you," persisted Hay, with a mixture of firmness and patience —the last a rare quality with her. "I tell you we have come on purpose. It is hard on us, too, you should remember that. We should like to take a turn in the garden, and you might come with us—with Lizzie and me. You need not see or speak to any one else, if you object. The air is close and oppressive in the house; it is better out of doors, and it will be cool in the garden, for though it is a warm day the sun is not shining. You will do what we wish, Steenie, when we ask you."

His father was right. Steenie was a gentleman, and all his training, with what was generous in his manliness, compelled him to give way before such an appeal. He unlocked the door so abruptly as almost to make the petitioners on the threshold start back.

Steenie Oliphant in his pink and white delicacy of complexion and slenderness of figure had always had a fragile air. Now in the haggardness of sleepless night and days of moaning unrest, he looked dying on his feet, as if but a few more days of misery, and all the misery in the world would be over for him—he should have followed Jean Scott to the silent land. He seemed not to have undressed or slept in his bed the previous night, though he had probably been lying across it with his face hidden in his arms when he was disturbed. The last might strike people, at the first glance, as an unmanly refuge, since he could not at once turn his face to the wall and bid farewell to earth and sky, like Sir John Grame, of the North Countrie. Better for Steenie to have wandered far and wide till his strength was spent and his faculties dulled by the dead weight of fatigue thus brought upon him. Better to have concealed himself from his kind in the depths of the woods or among the dreariest "peat hags" of the moors. Better still to have lifted up his burden like a man and gone out under the open sky to help those who had to suffer with him, to bear the common load. Was there not something womanish and like Steenie Oliphant in his thus locking himself in his room, flinging himself on his bed, and uttering his wail—granted that it was in decent privacy where no one could hear him. But what could poor Steenie do? He was not a muscular Christian, though he might aspire to being an elegant poetaster. He would soon have dropped with fatigue had he flung off to the woods or the wilds with his unspeakable sorrow, as a man of Adam Lauder's physique might have done. Besides, Steenie knew that his father would have had him followed and tracked. If he were to be let alone, his sole chance was in his room with the key turned in the door. As to lifting up his burden and relieving himself by striving to solace his burdened brethren, Steenie had been far too much accustomed to think chiefly of himself for that. He had been used to magnifying his small crosses and even playing with them, in the waywardness of his heart, till a crushing blow overtook him.

But tender hearts were dealing with Steenie Oliphant, even though Lizzie, as well as Hay, could not escape the perception of a certain tragic consciousness about Steenie even now—a tragic consciousness he must walk up to, in settled gloom and

deep despondency, as other men walk up to their acknowledged power and success.

Still there was a new dignity of terribly real misfortune which was not of his creating, though his hand had done the deed, from which he could not rid himself—a going forth of his heart in unutterable yearning for the love he had lost in Jean dead, which struggled with Steenie's consciousness, and was most pathetic to those who could distinguish the true feeling.

But the prison walls and fetters of social reserve and ordinary habits which, unless at brief intervals of sweeping upheaval and reversal, shut us up in our joys and sorrows from our fellows, were as solid and strong here as in most cases, so that the girls and the lad walked in the Burn Foot garden, and even conversed in short, formal sentences, as if nothing ailed any of them and nothing out of the common had happened to them. Lizzie detected an involuntary approach to putting his hands in his pockets in an easy, lounging attitude on the part of Steenie, before he recollected himself and let his arms drop by his sides.

The old-fashioned flowers and fruit were a little dimmer and fainter in colour, smaller and of less flavour than the scarlet and yellow, blue and purple blossoms of modern beds and borders, than the divided and grafted, pruned and protected strawberries and gooseberries, plums and peaches of the latest system of horticulture. Yet, after all, flowers and fruit might be fresher and sweeter in their shortcomings, because of their very spontaneousness, in addition to the midsummer perfection which had lately made even the rustic surroundings of the farmhouse look their best. Indeed, the peculiar fragrance of the garden loaded as with incense the still air under the brooding blue sky, and the grey and white clouds stretched out like the wings of a dove across it. The tall privet hedges were in flower, so were the lavender bushes —the sight of which farther blanched the cheeks and moistened the eyes of Hay and Lizzie—so were the briar roses and the honeysuckle. In place of refreshing the little company, the heavy perfume was too much for a man weak with racking grief and rash abstinence from food. Steenie grew still wanner to the very lips, and stumbled as he walked.

"Oh! Steenie, you are ill, you will fall, you are going to faint," cried out Hay, impulsively, in a succession of small protests, preparing to run to the house for help.

But Lizzie prevented her. "Don't, Hay; he will not like it, he will be better presently. Come into the summer-house and sit down." Then when he still leant back, with his eyes half closed and his lips apart for breath, she suggested doubtfully, "Could I manage to fetch a little wine without telling everybody and alarming Mr. Oliphant? See, he is coming round. You are better, sir?"

Hay directed Lizzie as to how she could best carry out her suggestion, and she went quickly towards the house. In the mean time Hay remained, not without considerable qualms at being left alone with Steenie Oliphant on the verge of a fainting fit. She did what common-sense prompted in the way of tugging at the ends of his crumpled neck-cloth till she had unloosed it, and chafing his livid, cold hands to restore them to warmth.

The floodgates of a man's pride broke down. "I am not worth your trouble, Hay," he gasped, with returning animation. "Why should I live when she is dead—killed by me?"

"It was in spite of yourself; you could not help it. Nobody, not even her nearest friends, blame you for a moment," said Hay, forced to speak on the subject to allay his gnawing remorse. "You were as innocent as a baby, as the loaded gun which her father stupidly left in the way, little dreaming what would come of it."

"Ay, but I tried her many a time," Steenie groaned forth in his weakness, and in the absolute necessity for a sympathetic listener. "My Bonnie Jean—my love—I was hard upon her when she was only doing what was right and wise. If I had come forward like a man, or given her up like a man, she would have been alive and well at this moment; she might have been my wife either now or later, with many a happy year before her; or she might have been spared to be content with some other fellow who had deserved her more than I ever did."

"You do not know. The accident might have happened at any time, and you not the man. It was the will of God. She was happy that night," said Hay, with a woman's

innocent cunning. "I saw it all; you had come back to her; you had left the public dinner and sought her. She was proud and glad. Neither of you could conceal what you felt, though Lizzie and I were by. Oh! be thankful," cried Hay, with a sudden inspiration out of unsuspected depths in her nature, "be thankful that you had made it up with her—that you rendered her so happy that last night."

"What! with the miserable end?"

"Steenie, was it so miserable—so altogether miserable for her? I grant it is wretched for you, but she died seeking to save you. Would you not have done the same for her, and, having gained your end, would you have counted it only bitter?"

"Night and day on me she cries," muttered he, in the living words of a similar sorrow centuries old.

Hay did not recognize the allusion, but she was quick to make her own of it.

"If it is Jean's voice you hear—dear, honest, unselfish Jean—she will speak like me. She will bid you bear her loss like a man and look forward to meeting her again in a better world, where there will be nothing to part you," added Hay, a little vaguely. "She will tell you," she resumed, with more decision, "to live for your old father, whom you are grieving. If you only saw, Steenie, how pinched and worn his face looks!"

When Lizzie came back she found Steenie sitting up with some slight return of life and animation in his aspect, and Hay comforting her old playfellow.

Ultimately Mr. Oliphant was persuaded not to attempt to hinder his son from attending Jean Scott's funeral, and even from taking his place among the chief mourners. "It is all he can do for her now, and he owes it to her and her friends," Mr. Ochiltree took it upon him to advise. "Let him do it, and he will feel the better for it, believe me, sir. Perhaps when it is over the poor lad will attain to some measure of resignation!"

The laird of Burn Foot yielded, while, as if to pay a farther mark of respect to poor Jean, he walked side by side with his son, who, with a face like ashes, still bore himself up with the courage of despair.

After the funeral, Steenie, continuing to shun and shrink

from everybody, fled back to his room, but he no longer locked his door, or refused to appear at meals. Like an ancient mourner of whom most of us have read, he washed his face and had bread set before him and did eat. In time he faced his fellows, though it was but a woe-begone face he showed them.

Mr. Oliphant had requested leave to go back with the mourners to the farmhouse. There and then he discharged the obligation to his conscience and set himself right in the eyes of the public by formally making a liberal offer to Jean's father with regard to the renewal of the lease of the farm.

But Jock Scott was a broken-down man. He could not live on at Burn Foot with the last mournful memories joined to all the others that had gone before them, as his meek wife was capable of bringing herself to do. Some of the more well-to-do kindred who had come from a distance to the funeral took pity upon Jock, and invited him to go back with them, engaging to find an opening for him in a new place, among new people. Neither he nor any one else had much hope of the result, but at least it was better than staying on where he was. Mrs. Scott, of course, would patiently follow her husband's fortunes. There was a roup of the farm stocking, at which Mr. Oliphant bought largely, paying good prices for what he bought, and of the furniture, the sale of which had been long looked for under very different circumstances. A small flitting of an elderly couple soon followed, until but for the sons who were apprentices in shops in the town, scarcely a trace of the family remained at Logie.

Notwithstanding there was a grave not yet green in the Kirkyard to which a young man came for a period of weeks in the early summer mornings and late summer gloamings. The gravedigger could have told of the visits, though he was not asked for the key of the gate, but merely watched surreptitiously, peering from his neighbouring cottage window at a figure leaping the wall at the most obscure spot in the corner next the Corp Wynd. The intruder would fling himself down on the grave, regardless of the heavy dews, though he had been accustomed to be sedulously cared for, and it was about his health that Bonnie Jean had been so concerned. The exposure was enough to be "his dead" the watcher told himself in considerable mental disturbance.

He felt as if he were privy to the self-murder of a foolish, unhappy chap of a young laird, and would have to answer to Burn Foot for being concerned in the sacrifice. At the same time, old Allan Birrel, who combined the offices of "bethel" and grave-digger, could not take it upon him to interfere with the daft-like proceedings of a young gentleman like Steenie Oliphant, not even to save him from destruction.

If anybody had been near enough to hear Steenie, the eavesdropper would have listened to words piteous enough to have been wrung out with the very heart's blood, and handed down from generation to generation.

. . . .

"Oh, would I were where my love lies;
Night and day on me she cries,
My love that died for me."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CHANGES.

It is a well-known fact, that while year after year will glide over men's heads in the most tranquil, unmarked manner, the long calm is often the prelude to a short period weighted with trouble and change. A year will certainly come heavily-laden with cares, in which the different fortunes of a family or of half-a-dozen families will be decided afresh, summarily, amidst a crowd of unexpected events, within a few months.

The accumulated crises coming by fits and starts are specially noticed when the epochs are unfortunate, whether because man's pessimist side causes him to pay particular attention to any cause of lamentation, whether because a crowd of disasters is more common than a host of blessings, and it is literally true, according to a paraphrase often sung in Logie Kirk, that

"Ills on ills by Heaven's decree
In man's estate are found."

This year was striking and trying to Lizzie Lindesay. It did not make much difference to her that the old King died and a new King reigned in his stead. But she saw vanish into empty air her first maiden fancy for a young man. She witnessed the departure to the ends of the earth of her old and constant friend, Mrs. Mally Corstorphine. She was doomed to entertain a hideous suspicion of a base fraud committed by a former friend, still undetected, and so preying the more on Lizzie's youthful mind, for she believed the ugly secret was guessed by her alone. She had been present at Jean Scott's tragic end.

That sounded enough to have happened to a girl in a single year of her life, but the year was not finished yet, and it held—if she had been so hapless as to foresee its unwelcome gifts—further passages of sorrow for Lizzie.

The autumn at Logie was always commemorated by local races of some standing and repute. They were upheld not simply by the neighbouring gentry, but by many of the first families in Scotland; therefore, the townspeople naturally regarded "the Races" not only as a perfectly legitimate source of interest and amusement, but as a highly exhilarating means of combined profit and pastime. For as the inns were not large enough to contain the influx of aristocratic visitors, who generally stayed over the three days of the Races, suites of rooms in many of the larger houses occupied by professional men were let to oblige patrons and clients for the short term, an obligation which implied a handsome honorarium. This arrangement did not prevent social family parties repairing to the race-ground. Indeed, one of the most coveted treats which an indulgent husband could give his wife was to drive her, in her best clothes, in a landau or buggy, over the three or four miles of crowded road to the course, and there to find her a good place in the ring, where she could sit at her ease in her own hired carriage and see the fine company on the grand stand in the first place, and the running of the horses in the second.

It was a treat Mrs. Lindesay set store upon, and the auld Captain would not deprive her of it, though it was a bitter east wind, and he had been labouring for the last few days under a severe cold.

"You need not let on to your mother that I don't feel

quite up to the mark," he owned to his daughter. "For my own part, I would rather bide at home in the house, with my feet on the fender, though September is early for fires. But I must not give way. I dare say it is a bad habit, as your mother says, though I am growing old."

"I don't think you give way, father," said Lizzie wistfully, "but I don't like to hear you say you're growing old."

He gave her head a pat, which he had not done for a long time, and smiled a softened smile, though it was a little sad. "Nevertheless, it is true, lassie, and your liking or disliking to hear it will not alter the matter. But I hope there's some smeddum in me yet, and your mother must not be disappointed."

Lizzie knew that any attempt to dissuade her father from the expedition for which he had no inclination would not only be useless, it would be displeasing to him, as showing her indifference to Mrs. Lindesay's wishes. All Lizzie could do was to bring out her father's shawl neckerchief, which, however, Mrs. Lindesay would not suffer him to wear.

"You're never going to row yourself up on a fine fresh harvest day, Mickle. Lizzie, what are you thinking of to bring out that howster? You should seek to look your youngest and best, sir, when you go abroad with me. You that have such a straight soldierly figure do not want to appear like an auld worricow when you're driving your wife to the Races. It is my wish to show how well my man wears." So the wrap was left behind with Lizzie. She was not one of the party, as the little boys went with their mother, and occupied what space was to spare in the carriage. Lizzie was to go next day, when room was to be found for her in the Shirra's carriage. To-day she stayed behind to look after the house, and picture to herself the gay scene in which so many of the townspeople were figuring. Hay Melville would be there, of course, among the gentry, and very much engaged, for Balmayne House was always full of visitors in the race week. Then there was the prospect of the race-ball, to which Lizzie, in right of her father's position as an officer in the army, was going with Mrs. Lindesay. A card to the ball was a certificate of gentility, all the more precious that it did not extend even to Miss Chawrlotte Bowers and Miss Soph-y Pettigrew, the line being

drawn hard and fast below the representatives of the United Services. Miss Chawrlotte and Miss Soph-y had to indemnify themselves by a great contempt for the frivolous exercise of dancing just at this date, and by a delicate insinuation that they feared the company at the race-ball must be mixed, since it included Lady Sprott.

But in reality Lizzie did not care for the race-ball half so much as for the winter assemblies and Moshie's dancing-school ball. The race-ball was a flight above her. Granted that she was still a gentlewoman among gentlewomen, this fact afforded no contradiction to the other truth that it was only by a species of suffrance she was admitted into the society of earls and countesses.

It was different with Hay, who, when pedigree was in question, could take her stand on Queen Mary's Sir Andry; besides, Hay was the heiress of Balmayne—not so bad a match for the impecunious younger son of a couple of these titled people.

Lizzie wondered if Hay would have a look or a thought to waste on Adam Lauder—not at the ball, to which the Emperor himself could not have procured admittance, but on the race-ground, where Adam was so far acknowledged by his superiors, that he was to ride among the gentlemen jockeys, and none would ride straighter or better than he. Hay had been bewitched by his shooting, but the situation was altered since then, and his riding, though his heart was in his stirrups and bridle-reins, might fall flat.

Inevitably Adam had been over head and ears in the business of the Races for the last month. Yet even though Lizzie Lindesay's dreadful fear regarding him might have no real foundation, she could see that he ought to have more in his head, for in spite of the Emperor's boastful pledges the Lauder Mills continued a blackened ruin. It was said there was some difficulty with the insurance companies. In the mean time the former mill-workers were getting more and more destitute, and no further steps were being taken either by Simon Lauder or Adam to relieve them. Adam was going about hand-idle, growing confirmed in his careless, reckless habits, while whispers were beginning to circulate of his increased debts and failing credit. In spite of that and of everything else, Adam was a great man in his own

estimation and in that of some other people at the Logie Races; and surely the sight of him in his glory would cost Hay Melville a passing sigh, if it cost her no more.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE LAST SUMMONS.

WHEN Captain and Mrs. Lindesay returned late in the day from the course, the Captain looked blue with cold, and kept shivering and coughing long after Lizzie had got him seated in his slippers and easy-chair before a good fire. Mrs. Lindesay was engaged with the children, who were tired and cross, and did not notice anything amiss with her husband.

But next day there was something so evidently wrong with the old soldier, whose erect figure all at once looked bent and shrunken, while his battered, weather-beaten face had taken a cadaverous hue, that she joined with Lizzie in over-ruling the Captain's objection to calling in a doctor. For the sick man maintained half-stubbornly, half-feebly that there was nothing far wrong with him, he had been often a deal worse; it was only a nasty cold.

Dr. Hepburn agreed with his patient, and got him to laugh by reminding him that as a gentleman he was bound to submit to a visit from a lady, a kinswoman of his own—to wit, "Effie Lindesay,"* and Lizzie was sufficiently reassured to go with the Shirra's family to the Races.

Still the doctor did not make light of the cold, and the second day he ordered the auld Captain, who was too nearly beaten to make any great resistance, to keep in bed, so it was with something like a sigh of relief that he let himself sink back on his pillow. He did not propose to get up during the next three days, when he seemed feverish, and could be only induced to eat after much pressure from Lizzie and insistance on the part of Mrs. Lindesay, while he asked constantly for drink, and dozed a great deal, notwithstanding

* The old Scotch corruption of the term influenza.

his cough and oppressed breathing. Both of the ladies gave up every thought of the ball, and listened to the carriages with the guests rolling by, from the Captain's sick-room. But neither of the two dreamt of any serious cause for alarm.

As for Lizzie, she simply congratulated herself on her father's being unusually docile in submitting to lay himself up, rest, and get rid of his cold. There were only two things which troubled her. The one was that Dr. Hepburn made a point of calling twice a day for an illness so trifling; the other was a little incident which happened one evening. She was alone in her father's room in the autumn gloaming, when the Captain woke up and called her to him. "Lizzie," he said, in an undertone, "you will do the best you can for your mother and brothers when I am gone."

"Yes, father," answered the girl, not so much startled, as speaking half-mechanically. The next moment she was able to make the cheerful amendment, "But you will be spared to us for many a long day, I hope."

He made no answer, and she was so accustomed to the ordinary state of matters, that the recommendation failed to make more than a vague, painful impression on her. Her father was in the habit of referring to the future of the family, taking it for granted that they were to survive him. It was natural that his mind should dwell on the remote distance in the leisure and seclusion of sickness. It did not even strike Lizzie as singular—so used was she to the present order of things—that her father, in contemplating his removal in the course of nature from his family, did not show anxiety for her unprotected young womanhood. His mind was too full of procuring a stay for her step-mother, and claiming from Lizzie help to his widow and younger children.

A few more days passed in a similar manner; then there came a night when Lizzie was hastily summoned from her bed to find Mrs. Lindesay in distraction beside her husband, speechless and unconscious.

When Dr. Hepburn was sent for, he merely shook his head and said, with grave regret, "I did not think the end would be so sudden. I hope his affairs are settled."

There was no more settling of affairs here for the auld Captain. He had fought like a lion on many a battlefield, and had survived scores of sore wounds and hard knocks,

but he died at last without further struggle, having "worn" away imperceptibly like any weak woman or little child. A new day in a new world dawned for him, while his dependent women-folk and helpless children were left behind stricken and bereft.

To Lizzie it seemed a woful dream, of the reality of which she was incredulous, from which she must rouse herself presently. She was kept all the longer from realizing her loss and mourning for it, by the loud hysterical sobbing and weeping of the widow, who monopolized the attention of the household, and the scared clamour of the children, incapable of understanding the truth, but frightened by the unrestrained violence of their mother's grief. When everything possible, including the relieving her of all the melancholy arrangements, had been done for Mrs. Lindesay by her doctor and minister and other family friends; when she had been plied with sal volatile, put to bed, and finally had dropped asleep, and the children were shut up in the nursery, then, and not till then, Lizzie was at liberty to bow her head, wring her hands, and cry, "Oh! father, father, have you indeed gone away from me, never to come back!" As she stood behind the drawn blind of the window in her little room, she recognized the first jarring discord between her and her world—that outside world of Logie streets on which the mellowing sun shone again, in which life was going on the same as ever, though death had come so near to her, and her whole earthly existence was changed. Even poor creatures whom nobody cared for, who were regarded as useless encumbrances of society—Mary Mettlie, keeping the crown of the causeway; Long Letham, hanging about the corner; the reprobate Coontess, hawking her cawm stanes, in her draggled rags—were spared. Lizzie recoiled at the idea of grudging them their comfortless lives; yet she could not help asking herself piteously why her father, who was not so old, who had so well earned the rest of his latter years—the responsible head of a household that could ill spare him—should be taken, and these worthless waifs left? No doubt it was only the other day that, by a misadventure, Jean Scott, in her youth and beauty, had perished; but not even the tragedy of the country-side and of the generation could come home to Lizzie like this personal trial in the unlooked-for

loss of her father, though he was up in years, and died in his quiet bed, with all the aid that could be got for him exerted on his behalf, and his nearest and dearest watching by his side.

In a small town like Logie, where everybody is intimately known, a death—especially the death of a respectable citizen, a husband and father—excites abundant sympathy. There was no lack of it in the case of the Lindesays, the lion's share falling to poor Mrs. Lindesay, who had been so good a wife, wedded to her home and devoted to her children, to whom the removal of her husband, while she was left, with her three little boys to rear, educate, and establish in the world, was a heavy misfortune.

There was truth in the conclusion. It was also true that Mrs. Lindesay might have been guilty of a vast deal worse than could ever be laid to her charge. One must consider that she was still a young, not particularly strong-minded woman. She had been wedded to a man old enough to be her father—the veritable father of a girl, certainly not young enough to be Mrs. Lindesay's daughter, whose position in the house, though it was her father's house, became thenceforth something of an exasperation and offence to the second wife, and the mother of the second family.

But let it be spoken with diffidence as opposed to the great weight of popular opinion, there seems something to be said in support of the occasional aching protest in Lizzie's breast, which the girl at the same time loyally resisted, "She has her children, they have her left, while I—I had only him, and he is taken from me, yet nobody appears to think my loss anything compared to hers. No doubt his widow has the first claim, even when it comes to the right to sorrow for him, but I wish she would not keep bemoaning herself and her children, as if nobody else was a sufferer. She continues bringing forward the lapsing of his half-pay and his pension, as if that was to be mentioned in the same breath with the death of my dear father. Why she refers to that as if it were a wrong done to her and my little brothers; as if my father ought not to have died and deprived them of his income; and oh, father, you were so careful of them— But there, it is I who am selfish and wicked to think such things, and he lying cold and still; to know how

much he thought of her, and how fond and proud he was of his boys; how he bid me do what I could to help them that night—yet here am I beginning already to find fault and assert myself."

The funeral day arrived with Mrs. Lindesay the heroine of the occasion. But Lizzie did not think of that, as from behind the closed blinds she heard the sadly suggestive sounds, the muffled voices, the heavy footsteps, the grating wheels, which are more harrowing even than the sights they represent, and knew that her father was indeed departing never to return; that up the Corp Wynd was passing a numerous company of nearly the whole men of the professional and trading classes in the town. Funerals in Logie, especially if they were those of "auld residenters," were apt to take this crowded character as a mark of respect to the deceased and to the surviving relatives. Lizzie had often watched such sombre trains, the horses struggling with the steepness of the ascent, the fantastic plumes of the hearse nodding in concert with the animals' steps, the black-coated men before and behind, with bowed heads and bent backs, as if the men, too, were grappling with the difficulties of a path which the mourners were each and all to traverse in a different fashion one day. But the auld Captain's funeral was much more than an ordinary procession; it was one of those soldiers' funerals sufficiently rare in Logie to render it a pageant which not only the parish schoolchildren, but older spectators trooped to witness, and that was long remembered in the town. The gathering had all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war—from the gun-carriage on which rested the coffin, covered with the Union Jack, bearing Captain Lindesay's sword and belt, to the pathetic notes of the Dead March in 'Saul,' played by the militia band, and to the red coats and red facings of the officers in the "regulars," and the officers and men in the militia, forming a conspicuous feature in the scene.

Many a time, after Lizzie was far away, when she closed her eyes in order to see the old view from her window—the Corp Wynd, with its sordid features unvarnished and unredeemed or transformed by a sunset glory—she beheld the reflection of that funeral train with its brilliant patches of colour, and heard the echo of its stately mournful music.

CHAPTER XL.

LIZZIE TAKES "A PLACE."

WHEN Captain Lindesay's will was read, Mrs. Lindesay had still more reason to deplore her widowhood, in reference to the diminution of her income. The auld Captain had left very little behind him, though without doubt that little went almost entirely by a marriage settlement to his widow and her children. Lizzie had only a hundred pounds—a sum which was probably intended to buy her "providing" when she married, as she would surely do, and as her father might have expected she would do before his death. For anything farther she was a young woman, well-educated, unencumbered, healthy; she could avail herself of one or other of the various resources open to gentlewomen in her circumstances—she could earn her bread as Miss Murdie, and Miss Katie Ochiltree, in her day, and many single ladies, earned theirs.

It was quite otherwise with a delicate, elegant female who had been a petted wife. In addition to the honours and privileges of matronhood torn from her, she had borne the burden of motherhood, and after this double dignity was left a forlorn widow. She had also three fatherless babes whom she was bound to feed, clothe, and train to the callings of gentlemen out of her widow's pittance, which was all she had to depend upon in addition to her own small fortune. Mrs. Lindesay might in her regard for her late husband, and for the step-daughter to whom the elder woman had been a second mother, keep Lizzie with her. But in that case it was to be hoped Lizzie would repay Mrs. Lindesay's goodness by trying not to be a burden to her and by devoting herself to the interests of the family.

As it happened, Mrs. Lindesay still felt perfectly equal to her duties, and did not think of keeping Lizzie with her. The widow was wonderfully composed after her first outburst of sorrow. She was unable to escape a certain buxom air in her extensive size and floridness. But she sat in a widow's mourning cap, a little crushed and dishevelled already, as her

old turban had always been, with her crape to the waist, her weepers to the elbows, and her broad-brimmed handkerchief on the table beside her vinaigrette, and her basin of soup or cup of tea. She had Hill in a black frock sprawling over her and clutching promiscuously at the quilled border of her cap, or at a disengaged untidy lock of her pale red hair. She announced her intention of returning at once to her native county and town, where in addition to the consoling company of many old friends and acquaintances, she could have the support and advice of a brother and a pair of brothers-in-law in the management of her means and the bringing up of her sons. Mrs. Lindesay was one of those women who can do nothing without the counsel and guidance of male kindred or other male friends. She clung to their protection and good offices with a tenacity which was touching and flattering if also a trifle oppressive.

"You know, Lizzie, I would do something for you if I could," her second mother told the slim girl with the heavy eyes, who had begged to take Hill, and been waved off with the assurance, "No, no, dear little Hilly is his own, own mother's darling—her consolation. I could not exist without him in my arms. And Hilly wants nobody but his own mamma. Only he should not pull at the ugly, ugly, horrid, dismal cap which she is wearing for his poor papa in the black hole."

So Lizzie sat opposite the speaker and made an effort to work at some black stuff for a frock to herself, since Mrs. Lindesay had roused herself even in the early depth of her woe to order the children's mourning to be sent out and made along with her own. "I cannot have it spoiled and the lambs made frights of. Now that I come to think of it, Lizzie, you must write to Jenny Stark—of course, I'm not able to write or give personal directions—to get me a pair of new corsets before she comes to try on my best gown. I wish I were equal to anything of the kind.

"I would do something for you," Mrs. Lindesay repeated, "but it is impossible; you must see yourself that I cannot in justice to my dear boys. They are entitled to all which my poor money can buy for them. For anything that your father left, I must say, Lizzie, I was taken aback at the smallness of the sum. I was aware, of course, that his half-pay and

his pension were the most we had to depend upon and that they would go with him. Ah! poor man, he ought to have been doubly careful of his health and life on our account. But I did think, somehow, that his savings were a little more. He was not a communicative man in money matters, and I fancy that he must have made the best of his means at the time of our marriage; or, unfortunately, I had misunderstood him. I mind my brother-in-law, Captain Galbraith, gave me a warning. He said, 'Anna, take heed what you're about,' and he quoted the old saying,

'Ilka Lindesay puirer than his brither,
Ilka Ogilvy dafter than anither.'"

Lizzie's eyes, which were like her father's, gave a flash, but she restrained herself.

"It is greatly to be deplored," went on Mrs. Lindesay, in her lachrymose tones, "not only for us, but for you," she ended, separating the auld Captain's family into two distinct divisions, and keeping the line of demarcation clear between them.

"Don't think of me, ma'am," said Lizzie, with feverish energy. "I am certain my father did the best he could for us all. I can work for myself—I am able and willing."

"I am afraid there is nothing else for it," said Mrs. Lindesay, resignedly. "I doubt it will be against your making a good match. For one thing, gentlemen don't like girls who can be independent. But you have only yourself to provide for, you should be thankful for that. And don't suppose that I'm reflecting on your poor father, Lizzie; of course I would be the very last to do so. I'm only saying that with his small family, and me not strong and never accustomed to be put about, he ought to have been doubly careful. It will take every penny I have to keep a decent roof above my head and to rear my children. I do not know what I should have done without my brother and my sisters' men to fall back upon to advise me how to act. What can a widow woman do for herself and her fatherless bairns? Oh! Lizzie, it is a fell odds to me."

"I dare say it is," admitted Lizzie, more softly.

"I know you would not be so selfish as to wish to hang upon me when I have so little to do with. Besides, all your

friends are here in Logie, and there are your mother's relations —Mickle told me she was an orphan without kith or kin to speak of, and I did not care to inquire more particularly. But depend upon it, there must be somebody, and that he or she will turn up and make an exertion to put you in a way of doing."

"Never mind me, ma'am," Lizzie said again, with a strangled sob in her voice.

Lizzie was forced to forget the past and face the future. She could not wait to be put in a way of doing by relations or friends impelled by common humanity. She seized on the first idea that came to her. She had been nowhere, save at church, and afterwards to her father's grave. Mrs. Lindesay had gone there in a sort of solemn state on the arm of the brother-in-law, who had represented her family at the funeral, with the unwilling Geordie and Mickle dragged to the gloomy region to play their part in the scene. She had made a moving display of her sorrow, and aroused much pity in the single-hearted lookers on. "Puir leddy! Puir leddy! See to her with her bits o' callants that are sic bairns they will never mind they have seen their father, the auld Captain. She will have to be faither and mither baith, and that is a heavy handfu'. That will be her gude-brither who is lending her an arm, of which she has muckle need. For she has aye been a silly" (delicate) "woman at the best—no to look at, judging by the sicht alane, a body would say she was fat and weel-favoured; but I have it on gude authority when her man lived she was seldom aff her sofy."

The principal group had all but eclipsed the auld Captain's daughter, who, as she did not weep and wail, served rather in the light of a foil to the sobbing widow.

Lizzie felt as if she had no more tears to shed, and that it was time for her to overcome her repugnance to appearing in the streets in her mourning, and receiving the grave greetings of her acquaintances. She was not sure that it was decorous for her to be out so soon. Logie had its strict laws on this point. The week after a death and funeral was given up to the reception of callers and condolers, whom the mourners sat in sedate dignity to receive, as, at the opposite extremity of human experience, a bride in her marriage finery was at home to welcome her guests.

But necessity has no law. Lizzie was satisfied that Mrs. Lindesay was, according to the stereotyped answer to the many inquiries made after her health, "as well as could be expected." She was fit and willing to see the ordinary company on the occasion, while Lizzie would at least be spared the torture of going over and over again the sad details to satisfy curiosity, which might be kindly in its essence, but was curiosity still, and to exchange what were inevitably religious truisms and platitudes. Lizzie went straight by the nearest road to the Miss Murdies' school, where she had finished her education. She asked to see Miss Murdie, and was shown through the old familiar lobby with the hats and spencers of the day scholars draping the walls. She heard in the distance the strumming of the piano and the twanging of the harp and guitar, rising above the subdued babel of tongues.

Miss Murdie was even more portentously owl-like than was her wont, to do honour to the interview. But she was a worthy woman in the main, and there was sincerity in her sympathy, though she expressed it in words of three syllables.

Lizzie kept back her tears and bravely stated her object. She must do something to maintain herself. Everybody knew her dear father was not rich, so he had not been able to provide for her. Mrs. Lindesay was going to leave Logie and return at once to her native town. She did not need her—Lizzie. Could Miss Murdie suggest anything? Would she be so good as to recommend Lizzie, from what Miss Murdie knew of her, if any opening presented itself, and she would try her best to do credit to the recommendation.

Miss Murdie wiped her spectacles, and, as she would have said, "pondered" for a moment. Luckily the school was good this year. She had been speaking to her younger sister, Miss Ann, only the day before on a difficulty which had arisen. Miss Brougham, the senior—indeed the sole teacher under Miss Murdie, who represented the whole round of languages, arts, and sciences, in one person, had too little time to give to the younger girls. A junior teacher might be desirable. Lizzie Lindesay, whose attainments and character the Miss Murdies knew, would suit fairly. The arrangements would benefit poor Lizzie, and in spite of the fact that a

prophet has no honour in his own country, would be popular in the town, thus killing two dogs with one stone.

A few questions and answers, and the agreement was made, subject to the approbation of Mrs. Lindesay and Miss Ann. The proviso was a mere piece of politeness, as both the transactors of the business understood. For, Mrs Lindesay having made up her mind that the auld Captain's daughter was to "go out into the world," would certainly be pleased to have her respectably established among old friends; and Miss Ann, on a lower level than Miss Murdie, never questioned her sister's decisions.

Lizzie walked home the Miss Murdies' junior teacher, at a salary not greatly exceeding a servant lass's penny fee. Lizzie was impressing upon herself that she ought to be very thankful for so much help and safety with regard to her future. Yet her keenest consciousness was a greater sense than ever of the unreality of herself and of everybody else under the present circumstances.

There was a little reaction in the public mind towards Mrs. Lindesay when it was generally known that she was to give up the auld Captain's house, sell her furniture, and quit Logie, and that Lizzie Lindesay was going to teach in the Miss Murdies' school. In the first place, the natives of Logie thought there was not such another town on the face of the earth, and rather resented an inhabitant's leaving it on any pretence whatever. If people could not be content with Logie, what town would satisfy them? If they could not find all they desired in Logie, they were ill to please indeed. In the second place it was early days for a widow to abandon her late husband's dwelling, though it had ceased to answer her requirements, and to seek another abode. Logie liked everything to be done methodically and deliberately.

In the third and last place, for the auld Captain's daughter to have also to quit what had been her father's house, and to begin her career as a worker, before her world had become accustomed to the obligation, jarred on the public sense of what was right and proper.

Still Mrs. Lindesay's popularity was so firmly established on old, well-worn lines, that it was only slightly shaken. There was no more than a cooling down of the wide-spread admiration for her. And Lizzie had not violent remonstrances

to encounter on her own account. After all, hers was a case of necessity. The people of Logie understood it the more easily that from the Shirra downwards their wealth was of an exceedingly moderate description. It was a standing joke of one of the Merry Andrews that there were only thirty pounds of floating capital in the town, and that capital was generally borrowed.

Yet Lizzie knew the minister was really vexed when he took her hand in his, and said wistfully, "I would have liked you to come to us, my dear. As it is, you will give us a good part of your holidays."

Lizzie smiled a pale ghost of a smile, while she answered gratefully, "You are very good, sir." She thought to herself —a holiday afternoon when she might make up a cap for Mrs. Ochiltree, and help to stitch the minister's bands, and knit his stockings—yes, with all her heart. But for anything more, with so many calls on his stipend, his invalid wife, Aithur and Charlie at college, it was not to be thought of for a moment.

Hay Melville reproached her friend with not confiding in her, and at least paying a long visit to Balmayne before she went to the Miss Murdies. But both of the girls had a shrewd suspicion that the relations between them were altered, probably never to be the same again. Hay had not known adversity, and could not sympathize with what had befallen her old companion. She was a fair sailor on a summer sea. Her disappointment in Adam Lauder, her accidental presence on the occasion of Jean Scott's violent death, were likely to be the cross and the shock of her life. Already Hay felt shy of Lizzie in her black dress, with her manner subdued by sorrow, and what appeared to be her coming primness, pedantry, shabbiness, and drudgery as one of the Miss Murdies' teachers. This was not the girl who had been as much at ease, as free from worldly care, with as great leisure as Hay herself could command, who had been at her call to walk about and amuse themselves together whenever they would. There would be no more idle girlish days, no more time for fancy work, which was sheer play—amateur albums, collections of riddles, construction of fortune-tellers, the making of pretty clothes, and the showing them off when made—no more carpet dances, and all the other light artillery of the youth of the period. There would

be no more social status and race-balls for Lizzie. No doubt she would still be an officer's daughter, but she must descend several grades in making up her mind to be a teacher.

Hay did not dream of dropping Lizzie's acquaintance. Miss Chawrlotte Bowers and Miss Soph-y Pettigrew would not have gone so far as that. There was a heart in Logie, though the two last-mentioned ladies would certainly show an inclination to patronize where they had formerly been rather disposed to caress, in consideration of the superior advantages of Lizzie's youth, her intimacy with Hay Melville, and her name on the lists of the guests at the race and hunt-balls. It was only that Hay was puzzled to know how she could keep up the connection under the circumstances. What could she do? Nothing.

It might have been different if Mrs. Mally Corstorphine, with whom Lizzie had been so great a favourite, had not left Logie. But Mrs. Mally was on the high seas. She would not be so much as heard of for months yet, and it would be many more months before the news of the auld Captain's death could reach his former next-door neighbour.

Hay, though she had mentioned a long visit to Balmayne, had a correct notion that Lizzie would not have consented to it—she was too sensible and had too fine a spirit. Even if the visit had been paid, it must have come to an end some day, when the question would have been as hard to answer as ever. For Hay was by far too long-headed a young woman, too like her mother, even to contemplate ruefully, as the Rev. John Ochiltree had contemplated, the objections to the visitor's becoming an adopted daughter of the house, with the temporary stay lengthening to a permanency.

Perhaps Lady Sprott entertained the liveliest prejudice against the step Lizzie was about to take, and expressed her opinion with the least reserve, waylaying Lizzie for the purpose. "Are you really going to tak' a place, Lizzie, with the Miss Murdies of a' people? Hae you thocht what you're about? I hae no patience wi' that cheepin', peengin', stepmither o' yours to let you try sic a trick."

"Will your ladyship please to remember that you're speaking of my father's widow?" interrupted Lizzie, breathlessly.

But her ladyship was too full of what she had to say to

listen. "Do you ken you'll never get a man, never on earth, if you mix yoursel' up wi' a scule?"

"I'm not particularly wanting a man, and I'll take my chance," said Lizzie.

"It's easy to say that," declared Lady Sprott, scornfully. "But you're a weel-favoured lassie, who should hae your pride and look high, though there are nae mair bauronets—wanters, in the whale country-side. But no man will ever seek a lass among grawmmars and spelling-books—they're fit to set up his stamach as weel as his birse at aince. Better be a gouvernanty onywhere else, where the trade micht be a fair pretence, and where you wouldna be shut in frae lauds, as it's weel kenned you'll be in a scule. Just think—a young lass shut in frae lauds waur than gin she were in a jile—mind what that comes to! As sure as death you'll be an auld maid, Lizzie, like the Miss Murdies' twa sels, gin you were ever so bonnie and genty and bricht. Sooner than that I wouldna heed though you cam' to me for a turn. I couldna give you wages—na, faigs! for the guardians—mine and Sir Dauvit's—are no ower weel pleased at what is spent in the hoose already. It is very near-handed o' them, since when ane is young, and a woman, ane maun hae a taste of pleasure and braw claes, or where's the gude of being a bauronet's weedy? But ony way, Mr. Eben Brunton has been appinted to the post of tutor to the bairns. Eh! when I come to think o't, Lizzie Lindesay, Mr. Eben couldna cast laith at you, since he's no better than a dominie hissel', and gin he dinna get a kirk he'll hae to sit down wi' a paris' scule. Weel, it's no sic an ill down sitting when other seats fail. It means a bien house and a kail yard, and the salary sure, forby the bairns' fees. Mr. Eben is blate and a wee gleed, but——"

"No, no, Lady Sprott, you must not dispose of Mr. Eben Brunton without his consent, though I'm obliged by your good-will, whatever he may feel," Lizzie tried to say with a little spirit and dignity.

Lizzie was most touched by Adam Lauder's silent manner of giving his opinion the first time he met her after her father's death, and after he knew that she was going as a teacher to the Miss Murdies'. He said not a word, but walked by her side speechless to her door. When he took

her hand at parting he simply looked for an instant ruefully in her face. The whole proceeding was so unlike the man, that it showed how deeply he was moved. Lizzie saw he was thinking of what might have been, and telling himself whose fault it was that everything was so different. She liked Adam better at that moment than she had done for many a day. She knew his heart bled for her as no other heart bled. She was tempted to condone his errors, to believe that he could not be guilty of worse than error, for the sake of that mute confession.

The last day came. The old home was being dismantled. The furniture was in the dreary disorder which precedes a roup. Every article was like an old friend to Lizzie, and seemed to look at her with dumb reproach as she saw it arranged in lots and ticketed for sale. Mrs. Lindesay's trunks cumbered any available space, while Mrs. Lindesay herself was lying back in a chair, exhausted with the effort of seeing other people pack for her, and of making up her mind how her personal property was to be arranged, so that she might have the least trouble in finding it.

The children were careering about with that passion for confusion, and delight in the prospect of a change of any kind, which is in itself depressing to older people. But Mickle had a gumboil and a swollen face swathed in flannel, which every now and then interfered with his Berserker glee in the destruction of the rubbish of the nursery, and drew from him such fits of crying as imperatively to summon one worker or another to lay down her work and seek to soothe him. The office commonly fell to Lizzie, for Mrs. Lindesay was too much engaged even to cosset one of her brood.

Lizzie had done her own little packing with tearless eyes, even when she put up her father's old despatch-box among her goods. Geordie was to have the old Captain's sword, Mickle his father's gun; Captain Lindesay's seal and snuff-box were kept for little Hill; and Mrs. Lindesay had her late husband's watch. There was nothing for Lizzie save the battered despatch-box.

Lizzie had stood hesitating before the "pig dog," which was supposed to be like Adam Lauder's Lark, that Lark's master had given her for market fare. But she could not

think of its being sold to a stranger, or, what was worse, to an ignorant, indifferent acquaintance, any more than she could let her patched quilt and her "fan ladies" be held up in the hands of the auctioneer.

Lizzie's heart was very soft when she was looking at the last sunset she would ever see flood the Corp Wynd, where she saw again a shadowy funeral pass up and out of sight, to the lament of the Dead March in 'Saul'—growing fainter and fainter in the distance—and knew that never more would the militia band file down and beat the tattoo under an old soldier's window.

She could not be altogether sorry for Mickle's big cheek when it softened his heart, and brought him to sit on her knee, lean his head against her breast, and listen to a story from his sister. Sturdy little Mickle was her father's namesake, and in the middle of her attempts to cure him, it was he who said, "You'll tome and bide with us at Ayr, Lizzie, and tell me all about the thretty robbers adain."

Mrs. Lindesay was sufficiently gracious to second the invitation. "Of course, Lizzie, you'll come often and see us. The Miss Murdies' small salary will, at least, cover your travelling expenses. I'll depend upon your making your appearance to see what kind of hole I've got into, and how your brothers are looking, during your first vacation."

Lizzie promised, with a rush of gratitude rising to her lips and eyes. She had somebody belonging to her after all. They were her father's family, and therefore they must be hers in a sense. They did care what became of her. They counted on her caring what became of them. "Oh! yes, yes," she said eagerly, "I'll be sure to come, Mickle; I'll be so keen to see your new home, though I'll have heard all about it by letter many times before then. You'll have grown inches bigger, you and Geordie and Hill, but you'll never have grown so big that I shall not know which is which." She turned quickly to Mrs. Lindesay, "You may depend upon seeing me whenever I'm free, ma'am."

"But, Lizzie," Mrs. Lindesay found it necessary to draw back cautiously, "you must not look for too many letters. I'll have less time than ever for my pen, and you know that was little enough when I had all my own family to write to. You must mind how postages mount up. Besides,

Miss Murdie will not like you to waste your time, which will be hers now, in reading and answering letters. Your poor father used to think uncalled-for letter-writing almost as great and mischievous an idle-set for girls as novel-reading. And, Lizzie, though I'll always be happy to see you, no doubt, still, if you get a better invitation, don't let me and the dear bairns stand in the way. Teachers are often bidden home with the scholars, which is a very good thing. You must recollect it is a long way to Ayr, and you should begin as you mean to end—saving what you can from your salary instead of spending it on travelling expenses. It is my duty to tell you that."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Lizzie, in a far lower and less assured key. "But you will let me see you and my brothers away before I enter on my situation to-morrow." She almost feared the service would be declined, but Mrs. Lindesay was gracious again.

"Oh, yes, we'll be very glad of you to see us off, Lizzie."

CHAPTER XLI.

A NEW WORLD.

THE old town, even the old house in the Low Street, to which Lizzie had gone as a schoolgirl, were the same; but it was a new world that met her on every side, as the junior teacher at the Miss Murdies'.

The boarding-school was kept in an old-fashioned house of the most moderate dimensions, in a quiet street, beyond which lay the green ridge known as the Baron's Mount. The Miss Murdies' scholars consisted of all the better-class girls in the town and country round, who had been for the most part well grounded in plain, solid knowledge at the parish school, and were sent to finish or acquire elegant accomplishments at the Miss Murdies'. In addition, there were a few children—mostly the little daughters of Indian officers, and of some of

the county families, too exalted in rank, or too delicate in health to rough it with the rest of the childhood of the place. Those demure "auld-farrened," prematurely wise, small women began and ended their education under the dignified auspices of Miss Murdie. But the larger proportion of the town scholars, and of the more or less rustic specimens of female humanity who were weekly boarders, or who rode or drove into Logie every morning to be licked into shape, were nearly grown-up girls. In fact, some of the country maidens, who had awakened to a late ambition, or who had got some windfall of money left them, were buxom young women between twenty and thirty, who appeared doubly stupid and awkward, in contrast with the quicker-witted, lighter fingered and footed ordinary schoolgirls.

Thus the curriculum at the Miss Murdies' did not consist so much of the drudgery of imparting letters and teaching the young idea how to shoot, though a little of that fell to Lizzie's share, as of the responsibility of forming the manners, refining the tone, directing the studies and occupations, and generally polishing the unpolished, raw material of the youth of the generation. There was a great deal of very rudimentary instrumental music, including playing on the harp and guitar, upon which the Miss Murdies—indeed, the town—laid great stress as establishing the highly genteel character of the school. There was a considerable amount of time devoted to dancing and deportment all the year round. There were French and Italian classes not so largely attended. There were doses of English literature in the shape of select readings from Cowper, Pope, Addison, Robertson, interspersed with extracts from Blair's sermons by way of a theological element, for the mass of the pupils were too old and too well-trained already for the Shorter Catechism, as they were too old for grammar and spelling. All that was necessary in arithmetic was also supposed to be already mastered, so was geography, except in "the use of the globes." History was very feebly represented. Essays only existed in the form of real or imaginary "polite" letters, written to order, in flowing caligraphy, with much stately verbiage and floral embellishment. Science was nowhere; art had but a slender footing in a little stiff and laboured pencil-drawing, unless the neglected muse turned up again amongst the immense amount of fancy work in the

forms of tambour-work, flowering or "sprigging" on cotton or muslin, painting on satin, fruit pieces, &c.

Miss Murdie herself undertook to dispense the tiny doses of English literature, in sonorous nasal tones, and to expound the globes. When she found herself in a difficulty in working out a problem on longitude and latitude she calmly dropped the subject with the remark, "That is not for you, young ladies—that is a man's problem—we'll go on to the next." It was a system not unlike that pursued in a Dame's School where the dame was deaf, held in the Corp Wynd, of which Lizzie had received examples when the street was quiet, the weather hot, and the doors and windows stood open. A simple lass would be stumbling through a verse in a historical chapter of the Old Testament, and would be suddenly pulled up by a difficult Syrian name. After a dead pause she would wisely give notice of breakers ahead by shouting to her mistress, "a fickly (hard) word, mistress."

"Pass it over," called back the undaunted old woman. Then a bright idea would strike her as the passing over became too frequent a performance, and she would make an amendment on her suggestion, "Call the place Logie, or Embro, or any town you ken."

Miss Brougham—an all-accomplished lady, of uncertain age, from the capital (Edinburgh, not London)—undertook the whole of the harp and guitar business, and with the assistance of Lizzie, the pianoforte (it was always *forte* in those days), together with the French and Italian. In the two foreign languages Moshie became a kind of unsalaried judge of appeal; having once volunteered to fill the office, it was conferred upon him, like an honorary degree which did not imply any emolument. Miss Brougham was expected to introduce from Edinburgh all the latest fashions in fancy-work. It was she who executed the final telling stitches as well as the touching-up strokes in the drawings, and superintended the making up of the bell-ropes and hand-bags, like the mounting of the drawings. These were the credentials proudly carried home, and fondly cherished in after years as the incontrovertible evidence of a boarding-school education. Here Lizzie, who was neat-handed and could apply herself, was of great use.

Life at Miss Murdie's was not unpleasant, though it was not exciting—unless to the heads of the establishment, and,

perhaps, to the youngest schoolgirls. Miss Murdie regarded the school as the centre of the universe, with the rest of the world revolving round it, but that was merely a flaw of mental vision, not a moral error. She was as dull as ditch-water under her turban and spectacles, her pedantry and pomposity; but this, again, was more her misfortune than her fault, granted that there was a wearingly oppressive side to her solemn self-importance and superiority which was almost more trying than Miss Brougham's tendency to "nag." For Miss Brougham, when she was considerably overworked, was apt to become cantankerous. She was always touchy on the points of her age, her wig, and her family dignity—as the granddaughter of a lord provost of her native city, which was only second to that of Miss Murdie's, the descendant of Highland chiefs of renown, who might have been old Pictish kings, for what anybody knew to the contrary. But nobody could say that Miss Brougham, any more than Miss Murdie, did not mean well, and was not a thoroughly upright, industrious woman, which, after all, was saying a great deal.

Miss Ann did not count for much beside Miss Murdie and Miss Brougham. She was a little deformed woman whose under-size and deformity had deprived her of the advantages belonging to Miss Murdie's commanding stature and imposing carriage. Possibly Miss Ann's mind was affected by her person —not that it was in the least distorted or "thrawn," far from it. It was full of the milk of human kindness, but it was hopelessly insignificant and ordinary. She had been brought up amidst the same surroundings, and received the same advantages as those by which her sister profited; but somehow the boons in their consequences had not stuck to Miss Ann; they had slipped off her like an accidental adventitious robe which did not fit her, did not rightly belong to her, and in falling from her had left her just "Miss Ann," a creature who in any rank or circumstances would have been sure to gravitate into "a fine body," kindly regarded by all who were capable of kindly regard, much respected by none. But whether it proceeded from a lack of discrimination or from bad taste in Lizzie, she often turned to Miss Ann, who might have been descended from nobody in particular, and taught in a parish school alone, finding her unvarnished, unexacting, commonplace chat and small gossip a sensible relief after Miss Murdie's measured

periods, and Miss Brougham's rasping humours and airy graces.

Everybody, from Miss Murdie to the smallest child, knew Lizzie Lindesay, her entire history, which was both a gain and a loss. All were intelligently interested in her, which was certainly better than being idly curious about her as about a stranger; but the intelligent interest was the last straw calculated to destroy what vestige of privacy remained for her. This utter lack of privacy, with its corresponding lack of individuality in moral and intellectual training, was one of the broad distinctions between the Miss Murdies' "Siminary" and a modern school, and this was so even in the days of racy mother wit, not yet rubbed smooth and flat by culture.

In the crowded little house in the Low Street of Logie, when everybody shared her room, not to say with one other person, but, as a rule, with three or four other persons, retirement was out of the question. All the school was aware, not only that the auld Captain had died in the autumn, but, in addition, that Mrs. Lindesay, his widow, had not behaved quite so well as she might have done in going away from Logie even before the Martinmas term, thus throwing her step-daughter at once on her own resources.

Three-fourths of the bigger girls were well acquainted with the fact that Miss Lindesay, as she had to be called in Miss Murdie's hearing, had been "joked" with Adam Lauder. Some people said he had jilted her and she had got "a disappointment"; some that she had drawn back when she saw that he was also paying attention to Hay Melville. Either way, the report was fascinating to schoolgirls, and it was creditable to its object in showing that Miss Lindesay had admirers. Why should she not, with her pretty pink cheeks, her auburn turrets of curls, her pleasant words and obliging acts even when she was "dowiest"? The pity of it was that a disappointment in love, be it self-inflicted, does not tend to raise a young lady's spirits, particularly when her circumstances are altered and she has lost her father. It may even render her grave, staid, and old before her time.

Lady Sprott might be right in her dogma that no man would go a-wooing to the starched teachers of a school; that no "lauds," however they might hanker after the helpless victims, would dream of approaching the younger gaolers

who had to do with the bolts and bars and rigidly closed doors. But nowhere were forbidden love stories more relished, and the merits and demerits of prohibited "lauds" canvassed with greater ardour, than by the bevies of damsels breathing the thin and tolerably impoverished air of such a school as the Miss Murdies'. For there the fields of all but the most superficial slipshod knowledge—offered as a mental pasture-ground—were as barren as fields could well be.

Lizzie felt as if she could not heave a sigh without ears—sharp and long in their very friendliness and proprietorship in her—hearing the indulgence, and drawing their inferences from it; she could not steal away on Sabbath after the kirk was out to her father's grave; she could not meet Adam Lauder casually at the Cross and exchange the most matter-of-fact greeting with him; she could not get a note from Hay Melville, apologizing for not being able to find time to call on Lizzie at the Miss Murdies', without a youthful conclave, the more unhesitating because of their youthfulness, sitting on the incident and viewing it in every light. And each member of the conclave pursued her heroine with bright, searching eyes, and watched her as a cat watches a mouse, in that crammed, stuffy work-parlour, which was the general rallying ground of the establishment, where the tit-bits of gossip were nibbled under the very nose of Miss Murdie. Oh, how hotly Lizzie's cheeks often burned, facing that ordeal which was the result of being the last comer and the youngest teacher, the natural heroine of the school. It was a minor version of the plague of popularity, and the glare that surrounds a throne.

All such trials would have been more endurable if Lizzie had not been heart and home-sick. But, as she told herself, she shared the home-sickness with the simplest, most uncouth importation from the country at that date. This was a bashful being, as big as a ploughman and as shapeless as a sack of flour, who had grown up happily taking care of kye, sweeping floors, and making kale in the homely farmhouse of Sauchieden, till an inconsiderate uncle, who had made his fortune in Glasgow, left her father his heir. Then Chirsty Prendergast was sent into Logie to the Miss Murdies' to learn to spend the fortune becomingly.

In the mean time poor Chirsty was eating her heart out in

exile, and in being "like to fent" fifty times a day under the consciousness—which she was not too dull to entertain, though she was too good-natured to resent the knowledge—that she was, with reason, the butt of all the more thoughtless spirits at the Miss Murdies'. The authorities did their best to protect her, notwithstanding that Miss Murdie was apt to be oblivious in her severe pre-occupation, but poor Chirsty would have fared badly had it not been for Moshie and Miss Lindesay. Chirsty was like a cart-horse among the dancers, and must have been at the farthest end of the gamut from the *Marquises* and *Baronnes* who had been wont to tip-tap with their high heels over the polished floors of Versailles, but Moshie's courteous patience was endless. Lizzie made friends with the young woman on the ground of a common friend they had once possessed in Bonnie Jean. The two talked and cried over the tragedy of Jean's death, and how poor young Burn Foot still went hanging his head and pining for his "lass," till Chirsty suddenly transferred her allegiance to Lizzie, and attached herself to her teacher with a dog-like humility and devotion.

CHAPTER XLII.

A FRIEND IN ADVERSITY.—ADAM LAUDER'S ARREST.

MOSHIE was good to Lizzie; she could not have imagined how good her father's hereditary foe might be till he bent before her black frock, grave face, and altered position, as Adam Lauder had walked by her side in silence for a few short minutes. But Moshie did not content himself with this mute homage to misfortune. He was full of delicate unassuming efforts to be of use to her. He would not suffer any blame to fall on her when the girls had failed to practise their steps. He guarded her from intrusion when she was the teacher on duty, with a piece of fancy-work in her hand, in the dancing-class. He used to usher her, with marked respect, to the one chair among the benches, install her there, and leave her where she had a brief period of respite, a

breathing and thinking space to the subdued strains of Moshie's violin and the orderly balanced skipping and sliding of twenty or thirty pairs of feet.

Lizzie, who was honest and simple at heart as the simplest little girl in the room, ceased to see anything ridiculous when Moshie pointed his toe in his neat pump, gave a bound still light and graceful, and brought his heels together with the instantaneous effect of a flash of lightning, or bent his knees with a slow and stately motion, and inclined his back in harmony while he inducted a row of girls into the mystery of a profound and sweeping curtsey. Such acts were all in the day's work, and Moshie performed them coolly and quietly without wincing or blushing, as he did any other duty. After the lesson Moshie used to come up and speak a few friendly words, with deference far more marked than in the old days when she was his pupil, or when she met him on rather more equal terms in Mrs. Mally Corstorphine's parlour. But in the middle of the deference and ceremony, Moshie's keen southern face lit up with southern eagerness of satisfaction, when in answer to some cautious reference to the past and happily chosen reminiscence of their common friend, he won from Lizzie a faint reflection of her old lively appreciation of the humorous side of a question.

The depth of winter had come with its "dull season" at the Miss Murdies' school as in more vulgar quarters, its cold dark days, its ice on the window-panes and ewers every morning, its crippling chilblains to be seen to every evening. Then it was that Lizzie owed to Moshie not only her share in the ingenious portable heating apparatus for those rooms in the house which were without a fire, without even a fireplace, but a gracious suggestion from Miss Murdie that she (Lizzie) might avail herself of a little spare time to take a few lessons in French. Moshie was willing to give them to her, without fee or reward, like his services as a judge of appeal in a linguistic court. It would be an advantage to Lizzie if she could even pick up so much of that most elegant tongue as to help Miss Brougham with the beginners.

Lizzie twinkled away two tiny drops which gathered in the corners of her blue eyes as she thought of her old ambition to learn French, and her father's objection to the unnecessary expense. But the conditions were different, and

the auld Captain would have been the first man to authorize any advantage to his daughter in her career of teacher. Besides, Lizzie was still young, so that her ardour to improve herself and acquire what everybody else in her circle was pleased to possess, revived rapidly. She shook off the languor which had been weighing upon her, in spite of her efforts to do Miss Murdie credit. She turned with zest to a foreign alphabet, to lists of strange nouns and adjectives, with strange rules for their application, and to repeating by heart with incredible toil when the ear was the sole weapon she had to depend upon, her first fable on that "*Coq gratin*," which scraped diligently during many a year for the benefit of a generation of invaders of a new kingdom of literature.

Whether Moshie had a special talent, hidden under a bushel, for teaching his own language, he certainly taught it in an interesting and amusing manner to Lizzie. He took pains to make his lessons pleasant to Miss Lindesay, whom he would call "Miss Leezie"—a pronunciation of her Christian name not unlike its rendering in the ballad which has given a quaint, old-world charm to both name and surname.

Lizzie had never been better entertained in her life than when he pointed out to her the many Scotch words which had their equivalents in French, and explained how their meaning had changed from that of the original in the course of time. Thus *faché*, vexed, had changed into "fashed," bothered, and had farther lapsed into the commonest of idle Scotch protests, "I canna be fashed" (I cannot be roused out of my lazy apathy.) * In like manner his *tâcher*, to spot, was represented or misrepresented by her "tashed" (slightly worn and stripped of its first gloss), as she applied the word to her frocks and ribands.

Moshie reminded Lizzie of the early alliances between the Scotch and French which had lasted, off and on, from the days of the Bruce and from the era of the battle of Chevy Chase down to Jacobite times. It was these alliances, with whatever extravagant and fantastic deductions he had drawn from them, in the extravagant and fantastic period of youth, that had been his earliest attraction to Scotland, and Logie. He had made himself master of every branch of the subject

* Elizabeth Hamilton's 'Cottagers of Glenburnie.'

He caused Lizzie's eyes to sparkle with stories of families of Scotch descent through many generations from old soldiers of fortune, settled in what had been his part of France. He told how the old convents in his country had been the favourite schools for Scotch—especially Highland—maidens of rank and gentle birth, long after the days when Mary Stuart and her four noble "Maries" were reared in her mother's land. He described the comparatively recent traces of the banished Jacobites, still to be found in many more places than St. Germains-en-Laye. Why, the connection had been reckoned so strong, even in his day, that in the troubles of the revolution numerous refugees had come to Edinburgh. The poor Duchesse de Guiche, the Princess de Polignac's daughter, who had been almost like Madame Royale to Her Majesty the Queen, had died in Edinburgh.

Lizzie had to close her eyes and give herself a little shake before she could remember with a start that her father had regarded Moshie as his natural enemy, and that the auld Captain had fought against the French in many a bloody battle. Yet he, too, had been chivalrous in his desire to spare his beaten foe, and Moshie was noble in his response to the chivalry.

On a bleak afternoon in the beginning of the year, there was congregated in the Miss Murdies' low-roofed, ill-lit parlour, the usual youthful crowd full of suppressed energy and latent mischief. Some were crooking straight backs over work frames; others were blinding bright eyes over darning samplers or point stitches, or in picking up infinitesimally small glass beads on the finest of fine needles. After all the last operation was less useless trouble than that to which a great schoolman had once put himself, when he calculated how many ethereal creatures could dance on just such a sharp steel point.

Miss Murdie, Miss Ann, and Lizzie Lindesay were all present with their charges. Miss Brougham had hurried out before the four-o'clock tea, to get from Mr. Young's shop sundry skeins of silk, sampler worsted, and linen thread which were urgently wanted.

There was a lull in the ordinary hum, a kind of solemn silence, for Miss Murdie had just produced a strong impression on the assembly by dealing, in quick succession, a strict measure of discipline to two delinquents.

A girl, in venturing on what might otherwise have been considered a harmless remark to her next neighbour, had been heard to use the primitive phrase "awfu' bonnie"—of such antiquity is the application of the sublime superlative to ordinary things.

Miss Murdie never relaxed into needlework, unless in the utmost privacy, but always sat with her mittened hands in her lap when they were not holding a book, generally of as large dimensions as it was of improving solidity—historical novels were only fit for the frivolous atmosphere of a ball-room. At this moment she bent forward and fixed the offender with a stony glance from the great woman's slate-coloured eyes. "Miss Hetty Carstairs," the speaker said. Everybody was miss to Miss Murdie, from her elderly sister, "Miss Ann," to the youngest "weest Missie"—to the rest of the school world, of the aristocratic children, who sat about on footstools and worked the covers of other footstools, or played—the quietest of all the company—with what would now be regarded as priceless lilliputian sets of china cups and saucers, or with china dolls, which their small mistresses still called "china babies." "Miss Hetty Carstairs," repeated Miss Murdie, in her deep tones, "what was that word I heard you utter so glibly?"

"I beg your pardon, mem, but I said 'bonnie,'" answered the quaking Miss Hetty, with assumed innocence and manifest equivocation.

"Well, that is bad enough," said Miss Murdie dogmatically. "'Bonnie' is a broad Scots word" (Miss Murdie's pronunciation was not immaculate); "could you not have said 'beautiful,' or 'elegant'? But I heard you enunchiate another word, Miss Hetty Carstairs. I do not think I apprehended you wrongly. I can still trust my organs of hearing. You were guilty of saying 'awfu,' or 'awful.' Do you know, madam, there is nothing awful but the 'Day of Judgement'? To abuse the term is to commit profane swearing."

At this terrible accusation, Miss Hetty Carstairs shrank in her shoes and was so scandalized at the extent of her misdeed, that the farther punishment awarded to her, "You'll be so good as to repeat a psaulm—no shorter than six verses—to Miss Ann, before you enter your class to-morrow morning!" appeared light in proportion to the enormity of the offence.

Miss Murdie, put on the alert, looked round for farther prey, and pounced on poor Chirsty Prendergast. "Miss Chirsty Prendergast, are you aware that a collar is worn as an adornment to your person and a finish to your apparel? Is it your opinion that a siled collar is an adornment?"

Chirsty was speechless.

Two such hits subdued the audience for two minutes. Before the minutes were flown, Miss Brougham hurried in, still in her hat and mantle—a proceeding which was in itself an infringement of school rules. In addition, Miss Brougham was gasping for breath and unable either to restrain or contain herself: "Miss Murdie, what do you think I've seen?"

"Be caulm, Miss Brougham, be caulm," Miss Murdie enjoined her subordinate warningly, while every needle was arrested and every eye turned on the speaker—even the children left off dandling their china babies. Then Miss Murdie ventured so far as to show a little natural curiosity—"What have you seen, pray, to disturb your equanimity?"

"I have seen Mr. Adam Lauder——" Miss Brougham rushed to the *dénouement* of her tale, but was stopped imperiously.

"Miss Brougham!" exclaimed Miss Murdie, positively holding up her hands. "Are you altogether obleevious? Have you forgotten to whom, and before whom, you're speaking?"

In the mean time all the emphasis possible was lent to Miss Brougham's words by an electrified roomful of girls, hanging breathless on her speech. They only intermitted their hawk-like observation of the speaker, to dart inquisitive side-glances at Lizzie Lindesay, who had grown red and white in an instant, and trembled so that she could hardly conceal her agitation.

The fact was that the impropriety of mentioning a young man, and especially this young man, before the assembled scholars, was aggravated by a recent occurrence which had, as Miss Murdie would have put it, "disturbed the equanimity of the siminary," and caused considerable heartburning among the persons directly implicated in the affair. In spite of Miss Murdie's authoritative command that there should be no gossip, above all no whisper of the name of a young man heard in her parlour, the painful discovery had been made

that there had been more than one lively under-toned discussion of the private concerns of Mr. Adam Lauder, particularly in reference to sundry visits he had been observed to pay of late to Lady Sprott. The most awkward feature in the case was that Miss Ann, who dearly loved to hear the news of the town, was strongly suspected of having winked at the flagrant transgression which had been committed in her corner, in order to gather what crumbs of information she could secure to convey to her crony, Miss Stark. One consequence of this gross imprudence on Miss Ann's part was an open secret to the elder girls. She was, to the simple woman's affront and perturbation, in her sister's "black books." Miss Murdie was keeping Miss Ann at a distance, and only speaking to her stiffly and dryly, as the stronger spirit sometimes saw occasion to do.

In the face of this misadventure, Miss Brougham, the elder teacher, in whom Miss Murdie put implicit trust, came "fleein' in" with some foolish story about Mr. Adam Lauder, prepared to tell it right out before the girls!

"I cannot help it, Miss Murdie," cried Miss Brougham, driven to desperation, and pushing the leech-like curls of her wig on one side by an impatient movement of her right hand. "If you had seen what I saw, you would have come in and told it here."

"Oh! speak out, Miss Brougham," implored the reckless Miss Ann, "and do not keep us any longer on tenter-hooks."

Miss Murdie preserved a troubled silence.

"Well, I saw the officers of justice leading off Mr. Adam Lauder to the jail, and the whole town is neither to hold nor bind," protested Miss Brougham, almost in an accent of triumph at so excellent a vindication of her impulsiveness.

"Good heavens!" cried Miss Murdie, forgetting her reprobation of the most distant approach to profane swearing.

"Eh!" murmured all the girls, led by Miss Ann, in a simultaneous long-drawn sigh of delightfully sensational horror, which rendered them for the moment regardless of Miss Murdie's presence.

Lizzie Lindesay did not scream or fall; she was too intent on listening.

"What has he done?" Miss Murdie was sufficiently human to inquire.

"He's over head and ears in debt for one thing," Miss Brougham, not abusing her advantage, hastened to explain, "and they say his uncle, the Emperor—I mean Mr. Simon Lauder—" correcting herself scrupulously now that she was allowed to deliver her budget, "is rolling the whole business on his nephew's shoulders. He disowns all connection with the mills, and pretends they were Mr. Adam's sole concern from the first. The elder man only acted as a friend and adviser. Therefore the young man has had to break and rank as a bankrupt, for it seems the Lauder Mills never prospered. Then, about the fire. As far as I could gather—for, of course, ma'am, I could not tarry to make myself mistress of all the flying rumours—the insurance companies are making difficulties. Folk maintain that everything—I do not know what—is not right there."

"Enough, Miss Brougham," interposed Miss Murdie, recovering her presence of mind, and speaking with her usual dignity. "You have some excuse for being disordered and forgetting times and seasons when the whole of Logie is on the *qui vive* as you describe it, and you've just quitted the painful scene. At the same time, though the young man had dropped down dead it is no matter of ours. Young ladies, will you resume your tasks!"

"Oh, Miss Murdie," murmured Miss Ann.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A FRIEND IN JAIL.

SUCH a cage for such a bird! Lizzie could see and hear him even now, coming in light of heart and light of foot, in the bravery of his yellow buck-skins and green hunting-coat, with Lark and Heather bounding at his heels, humming jovially, in his manly voice:—

> "*Hey, Maggie; ho, Maggie;*
> *Hey, Maggie Lauder;*
> *She met a piper gaun to Fife*
> *Who speered her what they ca'd her.*"

And he was lying in Logie jail, shut up from his horses and dogs, and from the green fields—he who was so fond of an open-air life; shut out from his cronies—he who was of so social a nature—a hero yesterday, a beaten man to-day. And what if the darker hint were confirmed, if the suspicion grew and took definite shape that all was not right about the fire? People were frightened to speak, but it was hardly possible that among the crowd watching the burning of Lauder Mills, though the attention of the masses was distracted for the moment, all other eyes, save Lizzie's, had failed to see the strange fuel flung to feed the flames, and what hand had flung it. Was it that of the man who had appeared only the instant before working his hardest to put out the fire? Was it that of the Emperor, who, unobserved and unsuspected, might have been lurking about in the near neighbourhood, and gone straight home in time to receive the news as if it were news to him. Was the offender some person unknown?

More than that, might not somebody discover somehow that Lizzie had been among the few who had seen, with an appalled sense of what it signified, the black bannock hurled from the frameless window of the meal-mill? Could it ever come about that she would be called on to go into a public court and give evidence against Adam?

All Logie had not Lizzie's ground of distress and terror; and the older and wiser heads understood much better than the girl did, the distinctions even in a jail, especially the difference between the position of a man incarcerated for debt, however culpable he might have been in his way, and that of a man accused of crime. In spite of this and of the analogous fact that the more enlightened body of the public began by putting little weight on the darker shade cast on Adam Lauder's character, Miss Brougham had not exaggerated the effect which his arrest had produced.

It was not that the debtors' quarters were rarely occupied, why, they were seldom empty. Even Lizzie had known by name and reputation various unfortunate men of the better classes whose shabby exteriors, getting always shabbier and more disreputable-looking, were occasionally visible behind the two or three grated windows of the rooms set apart for their use during periods of months, nay years.

But Adam Lauder had represented the golden youth of

the place. No doubt he had been rapidly losing caste since the destruction of his mills. He had fallen on evil days and evil ways, until his very looks were undergoing a deterioration. His handsome, bluff manliness was growing coarse and swaggering, with touches, here of brazen defiance, there of wheedling deceit. Yet there continued enough of the old, gallant, glorious bearing in Adam to render the shock of his downfall as striking as it was unwelcome to partial witnesses.

"I would rather be whuppet than have that poor ruined laddie—for he'll do no good now—brought up before me," the tender-hearted Shirra was heard to declare.

There was another person who had once all but owned to a nearer interest in Adam, who took the climax of his defeat in her own peculiar fashion. Hay Melville sent in a message to the Miss Murdies' school parlour to ask Miss Lindesay to speak with her for a minute; and Miss Melville, of Balmayne, was too much of a personage in Logie for her messages not to carry law with them, even within Miss Murdie's precincts.

CHAPTER XLIV.

NEWS FROM OUTSIDE.

IT was getting dark on a rainy afternoon. The worn "bass," or straw-mat, for wiping the numerous feet that crossed the Miss Murdies' threshold, which lay just inside the front door standing half open, and revealing the passengers coming and going in the street without, was hardly a place for confidential conversation, but Hay would not come further. Yet in spite of her furred pelisse, cap, and muff, she looked twice as small and white as before. In fact she was bluer with cold than Lizzie Lindesay appeared, though she was in her house dress—her black merino frock and black silk apron, with her uncovered head, as she had come out to hear what her visitor had to say. It was not much.

"Do you know, we are going over to Edinburgh for a week

or two, Lizzie, and I could not leave without letting you know, and saying good-bye to you."

"That was kind of you," said Lizzie, with a little effort "I hope you will enjoy yourself."

"Yes, we are going," repeated Hay, half mechanically, "and we may not be back till March, if we do not stay all the time we are away in George Street. My mother thinks she would like to pay a visit to Amulree, in Perthshire, where some neighbours of ours are meaning to spend the first part of the spring. Mr. Oliphant has taken Steenie across to Edinburgh for a consultation, and the doctors have recommended Amulree for fine air, goat's milk, and a refuge from the east winds. It is very early in the year, but he needs a change."

"Is he worse, then?" inquired Lizzie, more sympathetically.

"No, I should not say worse in his bodily health, but he has never recovered that fearsome night. Oh! Lizzie, what things have happened—of course you've heard what befell yesterday?"

The question was put in a low tone, with an irrepressible tremulousness from cold or from some other cause in the voice. Then Hay pulled herself together and spoke with determination, without waiting for an answer to the question. "I could not stand it here. At the same time I'm thankful for a great deliverance. I wonder how Lady Sprott feels?" The last words were said with high disdain. "A worthy successor in a man's favour! Lizzie, you and I should feel greatly flattered to have come before my lady. But good-bye; I'll not keep you longer standing out in the cold."

The two had shaken hands, when Hay turned back with her old saucy laugh, though it might be a little forced. "Do you know another thing that has come to pass? Stenhouse is going to be married to a lassie young enough to be his granddaughter. You mind poor Laverocklaw was found dead in his bed at the end of harvest, and Stenhouse has been like a fish out of the water without his twin—not that they really were twins—all the autumn and winter. But the true reason of his marriage is the lack of his after-dinner nap. It seems he took a nap in his chair every afternoon, and Laverocklaw used to take a similar nap, nodding in the

chair opposite his brother. But Stenhouse could not fall asleep until Laverocklaw leant across and tickled his ear, as the fairies did Bottom the weaver's when the fool was transformed into a cuddie-ass. The bereft man has been robbed of his daily sleep and of his brother into the bargain, and he's like a bairn that has missed its hour in the cradle, so he's taking the lassie, a poor relation, to supply his need. You may think he could have hired a servant to play the part of tickler, just as servants fan you in the East. But Stenhouse has not been accustomed to Eastern tricks, and he considers servants should do harder work; he reserves this gentle service for his nearest kindred. Good-bye again, Lizzie."

The announcement of a deliverance for herself, an indignant measuring of her claims with those of Lady Sprott, a laughable story about a third person—that was Hay Melville's "moan" for Adam Lauder locked in the Logie jail; at least it was all she permitted to be heard.

Though the Emperor had played his nephew false with a deliberate, heartless falseness, all Adam's family did not forsake him. The first half-holiday after his arrest, when Lizzie went to the manse to take tea with the minister and his wife, she found they had visitors in the shape of the Rev. James Lauder and one of his daughters from the Berwickshire manse, to whom the Ochiltrees' hospitality had not failed in the Lauders' day of trouble.

Lizzie had not before seen Adam's father, a shy, careworn man, at all times of a very different type from his son and his brother. But she had met Janet Lauder when she had visited her brother at Lauder Mills to enjoy the advantages of whatever gaiety was taking place in the neighbourhood. Janet was a clumsy, homely-faced girl, simple, and rather stupid. Adam had been in natural attractiveness the flower of the flock to which he belonged; he had also been their idol, which perhaps accounted for some of his weaknesses and excused them. At least his worshippers remained faithful to him. His sister Janet displayed her condition of mind most plainly. If she had a somewhat dull intellect and unreasoning temper, there was no doubt that she had warm family affections. She was in a state of the deepest distress at the reverses which had overtaken her brother,

and she had neither the pride, the delicacy, nor the art to conceal her emotion, and to ignore what circumstance had brought her and her father to Logie, as the elderly man made a shift to do.

In the earlier stage of the girls' acquaintance, Janet, in spite of her simplicity, had shown herself inclined to be jealous of Lizzie as a flame of Adam's who might take the first place with him, and supersede his mother and sisters in his careless regard. Now, poor Janet, in her old-fashioned, turned and made-up travelling suit, with her honest, blowsy face rendered still blowsier by the amount of crying in which she had been indulging, flung herself upon Lizzie's friendship in the most barefaced manner, and clung to it as to a stay in the Lauders' strait. As for Mrs. Ochiltree, she was only too glad to share the exorbitant demands Janet made on her hostess's time and attention.

"Oh, Miss Lizzie, I'm sure you're sorry for him and us," broke out Janet, the moment she could draw Lizzie aside.

"I'm very sorry," said Lizzie, sincerely.

"And you do not believe any ill of poor Adam beyond what was so pardonable; just that he was thoughtless and carried away by being made his own master, and put in what appeared a fine position before he had served for it. That was the great mistake, my father says."

"I know I would not willingly believe any ill of Mr. Adam," murmured Lizzie, with a certain evasion which she was thankful to Janet Lauder for not taking up.

As a matter of fact, Janet was too full of her trouble, and too eager to tell her story to catch at an ambiguous phrase in return, even if she had possessed the wit to analyze it.

"Yet, if you will believe me, Uncle Simon, who has behaved so badly to Adam, was at the bottom of it all. It was he who had my brother bred to the paper-making business and put into the mills to serve Uncle Simon's purpose. For he has turned upon Adam—Uncle Simon has, and got rid of all the responsibility on his own account by hanging a mill-stone of debt round a young man's neck, till he is forced to break and be laid in jail as a bankrupt. There was a fine start in life to pretend to give to his nephew and heir! But between you and me, Miss Lizzie, I don't believe Uncle Simon will leave a farthing for them that come after

him to heir. He will spend it all on his grand schemes, and what he wishes people to think his successful ventures—only you'll see they'll last his day, he'll never suffer for them or come to want in his own person. Did you ever hear such a shame, Miss Lizzie?" cried Janet, fairly exhausted with echoing other people's opinions and censures.

Lizzie said it was very hard, and refrained from insinuating that Adam at the best must have lent himself to his uncle's machinations, that without the young man's consent he could not thus have been made a tool.

"You may guess what a state we were in when we heard that our Adam was in the jail," Janet Lauder resumed her lamentation. "We suspected—at least my father and mother suspected, for they did not say anything to us lassies—that something was amiss when there was no further word of the rebuilding of the mills, but we had not a notion that matters were desperate, or that Uncle Simon would behave as he has done. My mother took to her bed and has not been out of it since. My father says he is ashamed to show his face in the parish—a minister with his son in the jail! though it is for no worse offence than debt, and a great deal may be forgiven at Adam's age. My father had to come here to try what could be done, since Uncle Simon refused to see him the night we stopped in Edinburgh; and my mother sent me to tie my father's neckcloth, and keep up his heart, and to find out what comforts could be got for poor Adam, till he is granted a discharge from his creditors. Oh! Miss Lizzie, did we ever think it would come to this? It is not like the bonnie braw house at the mills, and the easy down sitting."

Lizzie pitied Janet, who had not a look or a word to spare for her companion's black frock and her changed world. The new-comer only remarked in passing, as it were:

"Oh! and so you've lost your father, the Captain, and gone into a school. Edie wrote something about it at the time. He was not a great letter-writer, few young men are; he was better engaged. And now to think of him in a debtor's prison for who can tell how long, since the insurance companies are making themselves very tiresome, and the creditors have taken it into their heads they've been misled. They are all angry and vowing vengeance, and they are in

the mind to deal with our Adam as the scapegoat. Oh! Miss Lizzie, what do you think we should do?"

Janet was not cognizant of any trial save her own. That nature is a rare one which can shed sympathy from the depth of its sorrow as well as from the height of its joy.

It was Mrs. Ochiltree who suggested that the girls should go out together. A little walk before tea would do them good. The Lauders were to leave the next day; in the mean time, Janet had to make some purchases in the shops, to which Mrs. Ochiltree could not accompany her. It naturally occurred to the invalid, without giving much consideration to the subject, that Lizzie Lindesay, who was a former acquaintance of the Lauders, would not object to take the matron's place, and so lend poor Janet the benefit of a young friend's companionship and countenance.

Lizzie did not dream of objecting. She had even a pensive satisfaction in advising her companion where she would find the best shops for the errands she was bent on. There she would get the cherry-brandy to mix with Adam's gruel if he had a cold. Here she could procure the pickled oysters and Stilton cheese which he had affected in his own house, setting the greater store on the luxuries because they seldom appeared on the frugal table in the Berwickshire manse. Yonder Janet might select a sandbag for his door where he complained of a draught. She ought to go to Mr. Young's for the plaid to spread over his counterpane and to serve as an additional overcoat when the spring east winds were severe.

"The jailer's wife has promised to take care of his provisions and look after him," said Janet, anxiously. "He says she is a fair cook and is decently tidy; but one cannot look for dainties in a jail," she went on, shaking her head, while she spoke with desperate matter-of-factness. "My mother will be so vexed if I fail in anything I can think of, when I'm here, to make poor Adam's lot less hard for the next three months. They say we cannot look for a discharge at the best under three months, and it may be six or more—and Adam was always used to so much riding and running about in pursuit of his sports. Isn't it cruel, Miss Lizzie, with Uncle Simon going at large, and as big a man as ever?"

At last Janet's shopping was ended. Then she suddenly proposed that Lizzie should go with her to the jail, that

Janet might ask to see her brother again. She had only seen him once in company with their father, before whom he could not be expected to speak freely, and the father and daughter were leaving too early next morning to admit of another visit then. "Oh, Miss Lizzie, you might come," implored Janet, without the least scruple. "My father might not be pleased if I went back alone, but if you were with me he would not find fault. I would not keep you five minutes, for we must not let Mrs. Ochiltree's tea stand."

"It is not for keeping me or the tea," stammered Lizzie, in awkwardness and pain at having to give a refusal. "But do you not think that Mr. Adam would not like me to see him there? Do you not think——"

Janet eagerly interrupted her. "Adam! Oh, no. I'm sure he would be very glad and grateful. He asked me if we had seen any of his acquaintances. He did not particularize you—he might mind that the school would be in. Oh, no, I'm sure he would not have the least objection—quite the contrary."

"I'm afraid it would not do," said Lizzie, with still greater embarrassment, for it would be difficult to convey to Janet that though Adam might have no objection, she, Lizzie, had sound reasons, which the world would endorse, for declining to pay the visit.

"Oh, very well, Miss Lindesay," said Janet, not only deeply hurt, but bitterly offended; and she could not restrain her anger any more than her sorrow. "Of course not, if you do not wish it. I would not take anybody against her will to cheer my poor brother by showing him she was vexed for his misfortune. I did not think the last time I was at Logie that I should have to prig for your company or anybody else's, on such an errand. I know now on whom I may rely, and who are fair-weather friends only. If it had just been for myself," went on Janet, melting into tears once more, though the couple were already attracting considerable attention as they walked along the street, "I should not have minded. But it would have been such a comfort at home, to my poor mother, and the rest, if I could have said that I had seen our Adam again and told him what I had been doing for him, in case the jailer's wife—I am sure I forget her name, my head is all in a swim—should play tricks

with his goods. I might have found out, too, whether his good spirits were not a mere pretence to impose upon my father."

CHAPTER XLV.

BEHIND IRON BARS.

LIZZIE'S soft heart gave way; she could not stand the mingled reproaches and pleadings any longer.

"Very well, Miss Lauder, I'll go with you if that is the only way for you to pay another visit to your brother," she said, reluctantly.

"That is right. Thank you, Miss Lizzie."

Janet clutched her advantage. At the same time she could not help adding: "But why did you not say 'yes' sooner? We've been losing our time."

In spite of their good points, there is little generosity or gratitude to be expected from the Janet Lauders of society. They are too narrow-minded and one-ideaed to see clearly. They are bent on gaining their ends, at whatever cost to others. Yet the seekers do not care to find themselves laid under a greater obligation than they can easily acknowledge. When their object is attained they are apt to turn round, and in their own minds lighten the debt by attributing selfish motives to the very persons who have rashly granted their petitions.

"I always knew Lizzie Lindesay had a fancy for Edie," Janet Lauder was telling herself. "If she showed him the cold shoulder now she would know she had lost every chance of him when he was on his feet again."

Under this unsuspected accusation of time-serving, Lizzie walked with Janet Lauder as fast as their feet could carry them up the High-gate to the jail. If the ordeal was to be gone through, the sooner it was surmounted the better. Neither of the girls was so familiar with the jail as to make her willing to linger on the threshold, or to be capable of doing anything save hang her head when the visitors craved

admittance to a prisoner. Lizzie especially had never been within iron bars, though she had lived within sight of them for the greater part of her life. Logie jail had always appeared to her like the Castle of Giant Despair—no one would willingly enter it except on a mission of mercy, and such jail visiting was less common seventy years ago than now. On any other errand every respectable man—above all, every respectable woman—shunned a common prison as he or she would shun a pestilence. Whether the present mission was one of mercy or of folly, Lizzie could hardly satisfy herself; she only knew that she could not bear to fail Janet Lauder at a sharp pinch.

The formalities of visiting at old Logie jail were wonderfully few and simple, even where a criminal was concerned. Of course there were but the slightest obstacles to visits to debtors, with the exception of such trifles as bolts and locks and a reasonable attention to hours—and even the last might be slighted for a consideration.

The two girls found ready enough entrance to their unusual destination, though the hearts of both recoiled as the huge key turned in the lock, the great nail-studded door was opened with a jarring creak by a warder, and the inhabitants of the free outer world had to step carefully across a permanent barrier, and submit to have the door locked behind them before they proceeded farther. But everything else was marked by the well-nigh obsequious civility which reckons that it will be well paid for, notwithstanding that it is understood to be an impecunious man who discharges the debt.

The jailer's wife, whom Lizzie knew by sight and reputation, was in instant attendance; and if there was a lurking smile about the corners of her mouth at the idea of Mr. Lauder's sweetheart coming out of the Miss Murdies' school, of all places, to see him, the matron could command her countenance in consideration of the genteel company she had to deal with. She was prepared to conduct the young ladies with the utmost politeness into the presence of the young gentleman.

In truth, though the lobbies and stairs were not distinguished by the white-washed cleanness of modern jails, this part of the building, and especially Adam's private quarters—his

sitting-room and bed-room—were hardly worse than they would have been found in an ordinary country inn, or in any save the best lodgings in Logie.

Lizzie opened her eyes, and felt as if she had been decoyed there under false pretences, when she got her first glimpse of the blazing fire, and an armchair drawn up before it, in which Adam sat lolling and snoozing. A newspaper was dropping from his knee, a red tea-tray, furnished with all the materials for a comfortable meal, stood ready on the table at his elbow. He had even got a cat instead of Lark, winking and rubbing its hairy coat against his legs. Why should it have been thought that a debtor, notably a debtor who had been in a good position, and might be supposed to have many influential friends still, was to be allowed to perish with cold, or starve with hunger, or want the jail cat if he cared for its company? Only the picture was very unlike the popular notion of a jail—the compulsory den of miserable men and women who had committed crimes of every shade and degree. The contrast startled Lizzie. The first impression she received was not of keen commiseration and reflected shame for hardship and disgrace. On the contrary, she had a lively and rather provoked sense that Mr. Adam Lauder was making himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit, and that she and Janet might have spared themselves the trouble of their visit.

But appearances are deceitful, and unquestionably it cost the prisoner a pang for Lizzie Lindesay to see him where he was. His colour rose to a deep red, and his manner was confused when he recognized Janet's companion, and said that he was proud to see her. It was extraordinarily kind and friendly of her to come with his sister, "for you see, Miss Lizzie," he added, with manifest bravado, "I'm at the end of my tether, tied by the leg, and down on my luck at last."

However, he soon recovered himself, and rattled on with his usual fluency, asking the news, as if he did not hear them every day from Mrs. Kennedy, the jailer's wife, if from nobody else, laughing loudly, and cracking not the most refined jokes over Stenhouse's marriage. He pressed the girls to stay and take tea with him.

"It will be something to say you have taken tea in a jail

—you may never have the same opportunity again," he had the coolness to remind them, with a roguish suggestiveness that was the next thing to putting his tongue in his cheek.

He scolded Janet for catering on his behalf. To hear poor Adam talk, a jail was the chosen abode of all the luxuries under the sun.

"Bless you! I'm faring like a prince," he maintained. "Not only is Mrs. Kennedy a jewel of a landlady, but you ladies' hearts are so tender that I'm overloaded with presents." He threw open his cupboard door, and pointed first to one jar and then to another. "The Shirra's lady sent me this little kit of the best butter with her compliments. The doctor's cousin wishes to know how I keep my health, and begs to offer me a supply of preserves. Mrs. Lyon's servant has just handed in a basket full of new-laid eggs. My shelves are running over like the man's in the paraphrase. Mrs. Kennedy does not know where to bestow my firkins of herrings, pigs' cheeks and black and white puddings. I'll be fed up, if I do not take care, till I'll not be fit to run a race when I get out. Oh! you do not know what you are refusing, you and Janet, Miss Lizzie, when you will not stay and have tea with me."

There was something of the gay, gallant nature of the man in thus making the best of things and declining to be worsted; but it was also plain that he was capable of enjoying being the cock of the walk even in jail, and relishing the pity of the impulsive woman-kind of Logie, which was lavished as much upon his downfall as on his manly merits. There were other signs of the real man beneath what had been the brave exterior, which grated upon Lizzie's perceptions. Without any encouragement, where she was concerned, he abused the Emperor, as roundly as Janet had attacked him. Adam was as noisy and vindictive as if he had never owed his uncle a favour, or never paid regard to his proposals. When the young man referred to the substituting of the nephew's name for the uncle's, with the consequent shifting of the responsibility; above all, when he touched on the fire, he betrayed a clumsy cunning under his candour. "How was I to refuse to be infeft in the mills when I was in the auld scoundrel's power, and when he went about it in a style that would have cheated auld Nick himself? I'm sure

nobody could say that I did not work like a horse, to put out the burning, that night at the mills," he said, with a sharp, side-long glance at Lizzie. "When was I off the premises? How could there be anything underhand when all Logie was looking on? You were there, Miss Lizzie, you can bear me witness. If it had not been for me, lives might have been lost, but I took good care it was only my own life I put in peril."

"Surely you would not have risked other lives," said Lizzie, in a low, piteous tone, feeling as if her tongue were cleaving to the roof of her mouth, while Adam blenched ever so little and stared with a strange questioning expression at his visitor.

"What is the use of speaking in that way, Adam?" interrupted his unsuspecting sister, impatiently. "Everybody knows you exerted yourself to the utmost of your power, and beyond it. Even the Edinburgh newspapers took notice how you distinguished yourself. At home we were so uplifted by the praise you received as almost to forget our regret for the loss of the mills. And now all the gratitude you get is the dishonest invention of the insurance companies, trumping up a story of the fire's not being a fair fire, to save themselves from paying the damage. Who would believe anything so ridiculous?"

"Well, it is for them to prove their vile insinuation," said Adam, shortly, and, as it sounded, a little sullenly, turning away his head.

As a change of subject, Adam Lauder said suddenly a moment afterwards: "Your friend, Miss Melville, and the rest of the Balmayne family have gone away from home, I believe?" His face darkened when he said it.

Lizzie acquiesced.

The cloud on Adam's face grew darker, but still he went no further on the topic he had started, though he talked loudly on other subjects, and by the time the girls went away he was as boisterous as he had been before. He bade Lizzie come back soon and see him again.

What was he thinking of? What did he take her for?

"I only came to keep your sister company, Mr. Adam," said Lizzie, quickly and gravely.

Even thick-headed Janet had to attempt an apology for

her brother, after the girls had parted from him at the door of his room. "You must make allowance for him, Miss Lizzie, shut up there and losing his head at the sight of a familiar face. Poor Edie! who was always so full of spirit and dash, and so much thought of—that we were all so proud of."

The half-squalid corridors and stairs were re-traversed, the heavy door unclosed and closed again with a bang, the key turned in the lock, and the visitors were standing in the street with heavy hearts. If Janet's was the sorer, Lizzie's was the sicker.

Lizzie had to pay a double penalty for the rashness of her unpremeditated call on a debtor under arrest. To begin with, she could not bring herself to mention the circumstance to Miss Murdie, though the offender had an uneasy feeling that the argus eyes of the school must have been on her all the time, and that her silence would in itself testify against her. But the first challenge she received was not from Miss Murdie.

Lizzie had been sent with a message to Lady Sprott, about Miss Sprott, who though under the tuition of Mr. Eben Brunton, for other branches, could not learn dancing from a man without an ear, and with two left legs; she had therefore to come to the Miss Murdies' and be in Moshie's class in the school. Lizzie found bedlam reigning in Lady Sprott's dining-room, which was also the children's schoolroom, under the mild "gleed" eyes of Mr. Eben, in his shabby dominie's black, and the sterner orbs of Mrs. Pollock. The latter was handicapped by a struggle to appease Sir Dauvit raging in her arms. Even the small baronet in his fine clothes had contrived to render himself so dirty and unfit to be seen that his aggrieved keeper might have been excused for adopting the adroit policy of a ready-witted mother in a similar plight.

This lady's youngest offspring was engaging himself to his heart's content among her cook's pots and pans, when rich relations from a distance, unfamiliar with the children of the family, called on the heads of the house and affably asked to see "the baby." The intrepid mother hurried out, intercepted the first servant she came across, and charged her—"Lassie, gang ower the street and borrow the baker's bairn; it's aye clean and weel-behaved."

Sir Dauvit's sisters, led by Miss Sprott, were executing a

war-dance round the centre table, and launching in all directions everything they could lay hold of in the shape of books, copies, a ruler, the top of an inkstand—the inky receptacle itself had only been saved from their clutches in time—somebody's reel and thimble.

"She's no' a bairn," cried the sorely-tried Mrs. Pollock, referring to the ringleader, Rachie; "she's an evil speerit."

Lady Sprott was trotting about perfectly unmoved. It was not Lizzie's entrance merely which cast a shade over her ladyship's self-satisfied full moon of a face. It was not that Lady Sprott was "black affronted" by the spectacle the room presented, or for that matter that she recognized it as anything either undesirable or uncommon. It was that she had a crow to pluck with Lizzie Lindesay, whose school business Lady Sprott despatched as quickly as possible. Then she came down on the unfortunate young lady, hardly waiting to take her aside for the purpose.

"So, Lizzie, you've been to see Mr. Adam Lauder, I hear. I wonder at you. It is a thing that I, a married woman, na' a bauronet's weedy, would not have taken it upon me to do, though he came to see me, of late, often enough—oftener than he was wanted, I'm sure," and her ladyship made a shift to toss her head, a motion which her short neck rendered very ineffective. "A young man in the jile—a dyvour wi' a waur chairge like to be brocht against him, I hear tell." Lady Sprott summed up her objections with increasing severity. "Young leddy, you werena' blate, and it's no even as gin he were ony concern of yours,"—she resumed the attack with renewed vigour, after stopping to take breath; "the whale town kens he lichtlied you for Hay Melville, who would not look the earth he's in now—no, though it was the jile instead of the Lauder Mills that were burning and a wag o' her finger could save him. Lizzie Lindesay, I'm mair than astonished, I'm downricht horrified at sic practices."

Lizzie had stood dumbfounded. She was so taken aback with sheer amazement that she could not stop her accuser till indignation, which was not without its compensating sense of the comicality of the situation, restored her presence of mind.

"I cannot tell what I have done, Lady Sprott, to warrant this speech in your own house, of all places," said Lizzie, preparing to walk out of it and shake the dust from her

skirts. "I do not know what makes you think you are my judge," continued the girl, in a voice shaking with justifiable anger.

But Lady Sprott hastened to stop her. Already her ladyship's pliable, weak nature was cowed, as such natures always are by a firm, wrathful front presented to them. It did not matter even that she was the dead Sir Dauvit's widow, and the living Sir Dauvit's mother, and Lizzie was no longer so much the auld Captain's daughter as a teacher at the Miss Murdies', if the girl rose tall like that, and looked at the aggressor with those flashing eyes, and addressed her in those vibrating tones. Lady Sprott might not like Lizzie the better for her self-defence. In fact, her ladyship, in the middle of her good-nature, might bear a secret grudge against the culprit from that day forth, as the vacillating and treacherous will resent, like a wrong done to themselves, steadfastness and fidelity on the part of their neighbours. But Lady Sprott gave way in an instant, and it was almost with a whimper that she remonstrated, "Eh! Lizzie, you shouldna be so hachty. It was only an auld friend seeking to give you gude advice. You are an orphan lass on your ain coat-tails." *

"Spare me from your good advice, then, in future, Lady Sprott," said Lizzie bitterly, "or else I cannot promise that you and I will continue friends."

CHAPTER XLVI.

MISS MURDIE LAYS DOWN THE LAW.

SUCH is the inconsistency of human nature, that before many weeks were over, Lady Sprott, as Lizzie heard, was gracing a tea-and-supper-party held in Mr. Adam Lauder's sitting-room in the jail, for the purpose of keeping up the

* Independent of others, equivalent to the slang phrase, "On your own hook." The word "coat" or "coats" was used in Scotland for a woman's skirt as well as for a man's coat. In a similar manner the word "tails" was employed indiscriminately for the termination either of a woman's skirt or of a man's coat.

occupant's spirits. But then her ladyship did not even have Mr. Lyon down upon her, for she was supported by several of the principal matrons in Logie, headed by the Shirra's lady, who was about as soft-hearted as her husband.

A few hours after Lizzie's first passage at arms, or "flytin," in Lady Sprott's vernacular, Miss Murdie's junior teacher was summoned to speak to her principal in that lady's "study," which was also her bedroom and Miss Ann's. The element of study was supplied by a small locked bookcase filled with a few worn classics, which neither of the sisters could read, that had been the property of their father in his college days. The Latin and Greek might be doubly shut up, still their very aroma lent a power to that room.

Miss Murdie was sitting as usual with her hands in her lap. Her turban and spectacles looked more judicial than ever. Lizzie was familiar with Mrs. Mally's hair-cap and her hawk's eye, but the girl had always had a friend in court where the former mistress of the Crown Inn was concerned. Lizzie had bearded Lady Sprott after her outrageous attack, but the culprit felt her knees shake and her eyelids flicker in the presence of the schoolmistress, against whom the young teacher was sensible she had transgressed.

"What's this I hear, Miss Lindesay?" demanded Miss Murdie in her deepest, most solemn, most awful voice, and then she proceeded to reckon up the items, much as Lady Sprott had reckoned them. "You're a young leddy, a school-teacher, yet you've been to visit a man"—pause—"a young man"—another pause—"in a jile!" verily Miss Murdie was mistress of the figure of speech known as climax.

"Oh, Miss Murdie, I'm very sorry," cried Lizzie, the full extent of her performance being thus brought home to her. "But it was in the town here, where everybody knows him and me; and I went with his sister, who was in great distress, and entreated me to bear her company."

"Miss Lindesay, the absence of the power of refusing improper requests has been the ruination of many an otherwise respectable character. The want of such a desirable—I may say indispensable—outcome of self-respect in a female is particularly to be deplored. Neither am I aware that your error is in any way lessened by the fact that it was committed in this town, of which your late father, Captain Mickle

Lindesay, was an esteemed inhabitant, and where his lady was ever regarded as a pattern of conjugal virtue."

Lizzie's eyes were brimming over.

"Oh! ma'am, I wish my father were here," she cried; "I dare say he would be angry with me. I see I've done wrong; but he would not refuse to take into consideration how I was tried; he would not decline to forgive me."

Miss Murdie was not stone, she was touched—but such a daring, unheard-of breach of social rules was not to be overlooked in a moment. "In my youth," she said, very stiffly, "such liberties were never heard of. No carefully brought up, delicate-minded female would have dreamed of going either with or without a man's sister, to so much as his private lodgings."

"But I would not have gone to a man's lodgings," Lizzie was driven in her desperation and mortification to interrupt Miss Murdie; "it was just because it was the jail. Oh, do you not see, ma'am? His sister was in trouble; I had known him in happier circumstances. He came to my father's house," urged Lizzie, in broken sentences.

"And pray, what is that to the purpose?" asked Miss Murdie, still in the most magisterial mood. "Your father's house is one place, and the jile is another, and you ought to have recollected that you were no longer in your father's house, with his honourable name and position to fall back upon. You ought to have considered the credit of my siminary and what were likely to be the feelings of the young leddies' parents before you gave occasion for clashes and lees." Miss Murdie was excited into forgetting her English. It seemed to Lizzie as she listened that her personality was slipping away from her. She was still Lizzie Lindesay, indeed, but so merged into Miss Murdie's teacher that her separate existence was in danger of being forgotten. However, this was not the time for such reflections. "I can only say what I have said already, Miss Murdie," she spoke, half humbly, half proudly, for she began to be goaded into resistance, "that I am very sorry for having done wrong, particularly as you seem to think it casts a reproach on the school. I did not see it in that light; I never thought; I never considered——"

"But you ought to have thought, you ought to have con-

sidered," insisted Miss Murdie—a proposition which admitted of no denial.

"And it is done," said Lizzie, hopelessly. "I have only to thank you for your kindness for taking me in when you did, ma'am, and to say that since—since I have been so unhappy as to fail in the trust you put in me, I'm ready to go when you like."

"Not so fast, Miss Lindesay, if you please,"—Miss Murdie stopped the speaker, for the lady neither wished to drive Lizzie into the world, nor to be deprived of her services. "You'll return to your duties, and let this be a lesson to you always to reflect before you act, to the end of your existence, and never to give way to foolish sentiments of pity, without fully weighing the consequences."

Lizzie could not help thinking that Miss Murdie would have liked to give her in addition a dozen verses of a psalm to learn, but the worthy woman refrained.

Poor little deformed Miss Ann, in her scoured silk and home-made head-dress, for she always dressed shabbily compared to her sister, was lying in wait for Lizzie outside the study door.

"You've got it over," she said, with much commiseration and a mixture of fear and congratulation, "and you'll not mind, will you now, Miss Lindesay? You'll not think it hard? It is Miss Murdie's part to keep us all in order. What should we do without her? Come into the pantry with me. I've masked a cup of tea and made a slice of buttered toast. It will not spoil your regular tea, which will not be ready for a couple of hours yet—a bite and a sup always comfort me when I've got into a scrape, and had to take a dressing for my pains. We all get into scrapes, and we've all to take dressings from the youngest to the auldest, now have we not, Miss Lindesay? I was telling wee Missie Beatoun that, to console her for having to go into a corner because she gave Missie Anster a slap yesterday. And oh Miss Lindesay, how did the young man look? What is he saying to being locked up? When is he to be brought before the Shirra? Was his poor sister fit to swerf, and were you anything overcome yourself—a tender young creature, and him your auld beau—that I should say such a word? It must have been a grand opportunity for Betty Kennedy!"

CHAPTER XLVII.

HAY MELVILLE AND STEENIE OLIPHANT CONSOLE EACH OTHER.

THE bleak spring winds from which Steenie Oliphant had fled were come and gone, so were Logie Market and the day of the craws at Burn Foot. Summer, with its Gardener's Walk, its new King's Birthday, its Preaching, its great yearly washings and bleachings of household linen and webs of "cloth" in the Cart Haugh, had arrived. Still Adam Lauder was a debtor in the town jail, with an unspoken charge looming always bigger and blacker in its very indefiniteness, threatening his name and fame. His creditors were inexorably cutting off their own noses to spite their faces. The insurance companies stood to their denial of any claims which the owner or tacksman of the Lauder Mills made on them. The Emperor washed his hands of his nephew's obligations, beyond proclaiming how much the rascal had cost his generous relative, and how disappointed the elder man had been by the idleness and misconduct of the ungrateful recipient of his bounty. But Simon Lauder no longer gulled Logie, either as to his own solid and wide-spread prosperity, or as to his disinterested devotion in the character of a kinsman. Public opinion and sympathy went so far with Adam; but sympathy could not repair a bankrupt's shattered fortunes, or clear his damaged reputation from an ugly suspicion of fraudulent and felonious practices, with the sword of justice suspended over his head.

Adam Lauder's family had got time to reconcile themselves in a manner to his reverse of fortune. The enthusiasm of the ladies of Logie had cooled a little to their favourite squire in his adversity, though they were gentle, illogical souls, who could only remember what a fine fellow he had been, and that he had come to grief.

In spite of his waning popularity, Adam still fared sumptuously—a fact which, together with his lack of exercise, was tending rather to increase than diminish his bodily presence. In place of pining and falling away in flesh, as a captive

with any regard to poetic propriety ought to have done, Adam was showing an inclination to rival the Emperor in portliness, earlier than he might otherwise have done. His hands were growing as white and soft as a woman's. All the healthy brown had vanished from his ruddiness of colouring; indeed, the last was acquiring a flushed and clouded look, which pointed to artificial sources that had nothing to do with rouge for its maintenance. Above all, the dash of impudence in the cock of the eyebrows, and of cunning in the leer of the eye, was taking an ominous resemblance to the air which had distinguished poor Jock Scott in his latter and worst days.

Jock was still alive, but little more, in his new home among strangers. He had been prostrated by an apoplectic attack, and was an utter and hopeless invalid. He was supported by what his sons could spare from their earnings, and by contributions from former friends, including his old laird. But Jock was still well off in one respect—he was closely waited upon by his faithful wife.

In Logie Kirkyard the green grass on Bonnie Jean's grave was thick and smooth, and "flowered" with gowans, which were only stirred by the wind. No stealthy feet any longer leaped the Kirkyard wall in the late gloaming or the early morning. No reckless figure threw itself on the long mound, with outstretched hands clutching at whatever they could find, crushing the stalks of the grass, and breaking the heads of the innocent gowans. No voice rose on the stillness with the bitter cry—"My love, that died for me."

But Jean's grave was not unvisited, and would not be, so long as Logie had its old Kirkyard. Reverent feet would stand at Jean's feet, and tender tongues would tell to future generations how a good and beautiful woman, in her sweet prime, had died in a moment, by a piteous mischance, shot dead by her lover, while she was seeking to save him from the tragic fate which befell herself.

The Melvilles, though they had prolonged their absence from Balmayne for a greater period than they had originally intended, came back at last for the summer. It was on the occasion of an encounter with Hay, as she and Lizzie happened to meet when they were both in the middle of the

High-gate, that Hay would have Lizzie to turn aside and take a walk with her by the Water Ends.

"You might come," Hay had urged. "We see each other so seldom now, and it is past school hours. I want to have a nice stroll and a good talk, as in the old days. You mind, Lizzie, what fine walks and 'cracks' we used to have when we were our own mistresses, and had nothing on our minds?"

Hay spoke with a certain tender regret of the past, which Lizzie could not resist, so the two girls resorted to one of the promenades of the town. The walk ran along by the Cart and the Haugh, which was the public washing-green, from the New Brig on the one hand, beyond what had been the Lindesays' garden door on the other. The blue sky and the white fleecy clouds were as deep a blue and as snowy a white as in former summers. The burn flowed clearly as ever, with here a tuft of dark "dockens" or silvery horse gowans, and there of marsh marigolds, breaking and brightening the tameness of the banks. In the Haugh, socially-inclined women were still bandying loud-tongued gossip as they shook and spread out over the short grass, sheets and blankets and webs of linen cloth from piled-up baskets. Other women, buxom and blowsy, with their petticoats "trigly" fastened round their knees, stood, as they were wont to stand, in neighbouring tubs half full of soiled clothes and cold water, and tramped the clothes with their bare feet, as Frenchwomen beat their linen with wooden flappers. Occasionally the busy women stopped, as of old, to hound away a dog pattering gingerly over the "green," or to call to children running perilously near the burn in their play, or squabbling and crying while they built houses round the one grand old tree—a landmark not only of the Haugh, but of Logie itself.

The scene was so like what it had always been, that Lizzie could almost fancy her life was unchanged. She had been dreaming, or the last year with its momentous events was blotted out. As the girls passed the garden doors, Lizzie half expected hers—no longer hers—to open, and the military figure of the auld Captain to stand in the gap. He would be calling on her to come in and help her mother with visitors, or he would be starting a confabulation with Mrs. Mally, whose hair-cap or "Tuscan" bonnet in the adjoining garden was high enough to reach above the boundary wall.

Were those the voices of Geordie and Mickle, or of the little lads of the Supervisor of Excise, who had taken the Lindesays' house, that were shouting to imaginary birds among the rows of peas, and the carrot and onion-beds, the nursery rhyme—

> "*Peas-weet, Peas-weet;*
> *Harried my nest and garred me greet*"?

Might not Adam Lauder turn down the side-path in his yellow buckskins and green coat, cracking his whip to Lark and Heather, and humming his blithe song—

> "*Hey, Maggie! ho, Maggie!*
> *Hey, Maggie Lauder*"?

What was to hinder Bonnie Jean from appearing, holding up her riding-skirt, entering the town on foot by the back way, as she sometimes did after she had disposed of her basket of butter and eggs or young chickens, and stabled her pony?

The idle fancy recalling what had been, but was no more, formed a dim, pathetic background, like that of a faded picture or piece of old tapestry, perishing in the using, to Hay's tale—for she had a tale to tell, which she told abruptly, yet not without feeling.

"I'm going to be married, Lizzie. I wanted to tell you first of all the Logie folk, just as I could not help running up to the Miss Murdies' with the news that we were going away in the spring. No, don't say again, 'It's kind;' it's no more than your due. It's the right of our old friendship—for we were friends, weren't we, Lizzie? And don't think I forget, whatever I do, or however it may appear to you."

"I'm not blaming you for a minute, Hay," said Lizzie, gravely. "I've no call to blame you. But you've not told me his name. Who is the happy man?" with a faint smile.

"You need not ask," answered Hay with a slight sharpness in her voice. "You can easily guess. Who should it be but Steenie Oliphant? It is the natural, and I believe the right, thing for him and me. It is an equal match; it pleases everybody—my folk and his folk. My father takes snuff and sneezes his satisfaction. My mother is neither to hold nor bind, deaving everybody about my providing. Burn Foot

has too much wit to show himself more than agreeable; but he is very agreeable. Between you and me he may be, for he has the best of it. Apart from my tocher, if anything is to tide poor Steenie over his freits and delicacy, it will be a woman to look after him. Without vanity," ended Hay with pardonable complacency, "I think, Lizzie, I'll cheer up both the men at Burn Foot."

"I think you will," Lizzie was able to reply cordially. She had not been altogether unprepared for this sequel. She had expected it in a way—only not so soon—within the one little year that had seen Jean Scott laid in her grave and Adam Lauder "clapped" in the jail! "But what of yourself, Hay?" Lizzie asked after a moment's pause. "What of you and Steenie Oliphant? You two are surely the principal persons to be considered in the matter. Do you care to go together, and, what is more, to spend the rest of your lives together? Marriage is a serious step, which there is no retracing," ended Lizzie, with the solemnity of a grandmother.

"Touts, Lizzie, do not speak so like Miss Murdie; one can see you have not lived with a schoolmistress for three-quarters of a year for nothing," protested Hay, impatiently. Then she gave one of her queer smiles. "Why, we are yielding gracefully to the clearer sight of our parents and guardians. Miss Murdie would approve of that beyond anything. We are agreeable, like Burn Foot, and as for Steenie, I have told you already, this marriage is the one thing to save him—body and mind—from wreck and ruin, from dying of a trifle any day, or from sinking into a half-cracked, wholly selfish state of invalidism. You do not praise me half enough for preventing such a catastrophe, for consenting to become a benefactress—a family and public benefactress—thus devoting myself to the general good. You do not know how poor Steenie has clung to me, more or less, ever since that awful night last summer, until I've learned to think it is my business to take care of him. I'm flattered, I suppose, as well as touched. Well, what would you have me to do?" she went on restlessly; "surely it is worth while to be of some use and to please somebody in this world? But, Lizzie, you must not think that we—either he or I—forget entirely," and Hay's clear voice faltered slightly.

It was Lizzie's turn to be troubled. Hay was evidently

anxious for her old companion's good opinion. Hay was softened in some respects. She must, as she said, be doing the best thing that was left for her to do, else it would not have had this effect upon her.

"We are going abroad for the next winter," Hay proceeded to explain. "The doctors think a winter, or maybe a couple of winters, in the South, at his age, will set Steenie up for the rest of his days. And of course the Grand Tour will be very improving for us both. And only think," she added with a twinkle of her hazel eyes and a roguish twist of her mouth, "what a splendid opportunity for Steenie's airing his fine French! How he will speak for the two of us! But don't you pity me if he takes to developing my musical ear, or cultivating my artistic taste? Oh, Lizzie, it is a treat to watch him playing his tunes, or showing his sketches, or spouting his verses, and waiting for what I have to say. I just nod my head and declare, 'that's grand. That beats Haydn, or Niel Gow, or Naismith, or Byron,' as the case may be. Then when I can stand it no longer, I jump up and cry it will do him harm if he goes on composing, which is true enough, and he must come out with me and see the shops if we are in the town, or the colts and the calves if we are down here. It answers capitally, I can tell you. He is looking well and strong for him."

"I am glad to hear it," said Lizzie a little absently, for she was thinking that, softened or not softened, Hay Melville was the old woman still. Lizzie was contrasting Bonnie Jean's reverent, whole-hearted admiration of her lover's achievements, with Hay's good-natured, half-mocking toleration. But if he was contented with the substitute there was no more to be said.

Lizzie was startled out of her reverie.

"What about Adam?" asked Hay, with one of her quick transitions, speaking in a dry curt tone.

"Adam?" echoed Lizzie, utterly taken aback and confused; "what Adam?"

"Listen to her!" cried Hay, with the liveliest impatience and irritation. "Does she pretend I've gone back to inquire about the first Adam in the Garden of Eden? No, it is about one of the latest of his descendants—the Adam that you and I had to deal with."

"You know," said Lizzie, with some indignation. "He is in the jail over there. But what is that to you any more than to me? What have you to do with him now?"

"You may say that," said Hay, knitting her smooth brows and looking on the ground; "but I want to hear if there is any prospect of his getting his discharge without more ado?"

"I cannot tell," said Lizzie, slowly and reluctantly. "There is no word that I hear. There is always the whisper of that something—that charge in the background—for which if he were set at liberty to-morrow he might be arrested the next day and worse come of it."

"That's nonsense," said Hay, with decision. "He fought like a lion to put out the fire—we all saw it. But I'm thankful that Steenie and me are going away. I could not bear to stay on here, and him—where he is. Of course it was all folly; it could never have come to anything," she added, hurriedly and vaguely. "It was one of the fits of clean daftness to which girls are liable. It is the women's way of sowing their wild oats. The patients or delinquents—which is it?—should be shut up or taken away for a change, as I was," with one of her scornful laughs. "My mother remembers when Lord Ramornie's sister was wild to engage herself to a penniless Polish Count. Instead she has been for many a year and day the crouse wife of the President of the Court of Session, with sons rising at the Scotch bar, and daughters the beauties of the Edinburgh assemblies. I dare say she thinks herself very well off."

"But will she never waste a thought on the Polish Count?" suggested Lizzie, dubiously.

"She will not have time," said Hay, briskly. "She has more to do attending to the duties and privileges of her position; you would not have her neglect them? Besides, he will have gone out of her knowledge ages since—back to Poland or to some big town where he is equally lost to her. He may be teaching languages, as Moshie teaches dancing, thriving and content, consoled by some other woman, a fitter match for him. Adam Lauder," she said his name boldly, without a tinge of colour coming into her white cheeks, "is bound to be out of jail before I come back. It stands to reason. His creditors will get tired of keeping him. An idle slander will die out and be forgotten. If it had been

possible to establish it, do you not think it would have been done directly? For my part," declared Hay, in an impartial tone, "I believe the young man has been his own worst enemy. He has only been thoughtless and fond of his play; and he had a roving eye, and was not too modest in looking high. He will go away to a new place, try again, and perhaps do better. Anyhow, he will make himself as comfortable as circumstances will permit, and he will be consoled—trust him for that. Adam is not hard to console," and the ghost of a sneer which had ceased to be bitter, curled the fine thin lips, "whether the fair consoler be my Lady Sprott or another. Mind, I do not think it will be her ladyship—that flea may stick in the wall. She has too great a regard, simple and silly as she is, for the safety of her jointure and the interests of young Sir Dauvit."

"And why should she not look after herself as other people look after themselves?" objected Lizzie, coldly. "She has more excuse than most young women, when she has her children as well as herself to think of."

"I'm sure I'm easy," said Hay, carelessly raising her eyebrows. Then something caused her, as it were, to lower her crest again, and to repeat, not without wistfulness, her former assertion, which her conduct seemed to contradict, that she and Steenie Oliphant had not forgotten the past, confirming it by a proof which caused Lizzie and Hay to part at last with more sympathy and kindly feeling than they might otherwise have felt. "Poor Steenie!" Hay had said, more earnestly, after a pause, "I hope I may be good to him. I think you forget, Lizzie, that we played together in our nurseries—a bonnie, wee laddie he was, greatly petted for a motherless bairn. Do you know where and how I found him yesterday? I had driven over with my mother to Burn Foot House. As you may guess, the two families are seldom four-and-twenty hours separate now-a-days. Steenie was out, and I chose to go myself and seek for him. I wandered about looking at everything of which I am to be mistress. At last, by chance, I took the road in the direction of the farmhouse, the way we went the night of the fire at Lauder Mills, where I never was before or since. I did not care to go as far as the farmhouse, and I did not think I should find Steenie there, where builders are pulling the Scotts' old place

down and erecting a new house for the new tenant. But about half-way there was a gap in the hedge on one side, and beyond there had been a footpath, nearly overgrown, leading to a rocky knowe, covered with broom brushes that had been left in the grass field. I went up there, and I saw Steenie before he saw me. He was lying with his hands clasped over his face, but I could hear the sobs that were rending his breast. Then I guessed that Jean Scott must have sometimes sat with him there when he chanced to foregather with her, going and coming through her father's fields."

"What did you do?" inquired Lizzie, softly.

"I just came quickly up and sat down beside him. I put my arm round his neck, and gave him a kiss, and we grat together for his Bonnie Jean."

"Oh, Hay! that was not heartless," cried Lizzie, the words escaping from her lips before she had time to consider all that they implied. "That was kind and generous of you. If Jean could have seen you she would have blessed you."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"NOBODY'S BODY."

THE time was drawing near for the annual holidays in the Miss Murdies' school. Lizzie was meditating a long flight with some searchings of spirit and considerable youthful exhilaration, to visit her stepmother. For it was a long flight in the days of wherries and coaches to travel from the east to the west of Scotland. It implied at least two days on the road, with a night's halt between. Lizzie would be quite a travelled lady when she returned. If she did not bring back the west country accent as an improvement on that of the east, she might pick up as many stories as would last her for the rest of her life, of provincial manners and customs. The stories would have all the raciness of novelty, and they were never likely to reach

the ears of those for whose benefit she would retail them, unless she became the story-teller.

In Glasgow the people made their punch with limes. At Kilmarnock every other man traded in nightcaps. Round about Dunlop toasted cheese was eaten to breakfast.

But Lizzie was not fated to acquire all this delightfully fresh experience. She had made her small purchases, she had done what she could to revive and improve her half-worn mourning so as not to do discredit to Mrs. Lindesay, and, for that matter, to Lizzie's father's memory, in the eyes of her stepmother's relatives and friends. The would-be explorer of strange regions had furnished herself from her scanty resources with presents—not so much for the aborigines, as for her kith and kin—the little boys who were her father's sons, her brothers, over the thought of whom she had been yearning ever since she parted from them and Mrs. Lindesay. Even Mrs. Lindesay—though Lizzie had not a drop of the elder woman's blood in her veins—bore the auld Captain's name, had been his cherished wife, and, as his widow, was recommended, almost with his dying breath to his daughter's dutiful care. Lizzie had thought of that many a time, though she could do no more than jealously guard her spare moments in order to employ them in manufacturing crape flowers and working open stitch in the broad hems of cambric weepers—part of the recognized panoply of a widow—as an offering at Mrs. Lindesay's shrine.

Lizzie's trunk was half-packed betimes, with her own modest possessions filling the smallest space possible in order to avoid the danger of such grievous disasters as the crushing of Mrs. Lindesay's crape flowers and weepers, and of the dainty little white pelisse with the black riband bows which his sister had made for Hill, after a pelisse of young Sir Dauvit's, or the breaking of the wooden horses and carts destined for Geordie and Mickle. Then just as Lizzie was excitedly studying the coach-bill and the almanac for the tides, there arrived one of Mrs. Lindesay's few-and-far-between letters, which she only wrote when she had some purpose to serve—some fancied gain and glory to boast of, some information to seek, or, as in the

present instance, some arrangement which had become inconvenient to set aside.

Comely Bank, Ayr.
7th August, 18—.

"DEAR LIZZIE,

"You know how delicate my health is. If I listened to Dr. Jardine here or to my good-sister, who I must say is most attentive and kind though she is a good-sister,* I would be seldomer than ever off my sofa. You may remember your poor father was never at rest in his mind when I could not lie down at least twice a day. Of course I've more to do now and a heavy burden on my mind, so I'm really very unfit to write letters. You may take it as a greater compliment than ever when you see my handwriting. I need not mention that I would not write if I had not something to say, and it is to tell you that you need not think of coming west this vacation. It would be a great waste of your money and clothes, not to speak of your time, which you ought to take care of for improving yourself. A girl in your circumstances should never lose a chance. Besides, the fact is, I've not room for you; my brother's house is to be full of company this summer. My good-sister has relations in London who are coming all the way down to visit her. And she has a cousin arriving from Dumfries whom she has bespoken my spare bed for. I do not feel at all equal to receiving her, and her presence may draw me into more of the dinners and suppers going on at my brother's than in my sad position I care for. But my other sisters have their own engagements and I do not like to be disobliging. So you see, Lizzie, you must put off your visit for another year, which will be all the same to you when the time comes. Indeed, when I think of it, I am not sure that you will not be far happier among all your own friends at Logie than among strangers. I do not know that you have a taking way with strangers, which is a great loss to a girl, no doubt. I do not mean to reflect, but you know you had a will of your own about acquiring prepossessing manners when you were growing up. However, unfortunately it is too late to speak of that

* Sister-in-law.

now. But whatever you have missed, I make no question that you have had the sense to win the good graces of some of the Miss Murdies' scholars, whose mothers will take pity on you, and have you here and there for a day at a time. Then there is the minister and Mrs. Ochiltree, and the Shirra and his lady, and the Balmayne family, none of them can well get off for less than two or three days. I declare you'll be having quite a gay time of it. I was frightened you might be setting out without waiting for further intimation—which it would always be wise for you to do when you propose to pay me a visit, or else I would not have tried to write to-day, as my poor head is like to split, so you must excuse me from saying any more at present. The dear lambs are all well. I'm sure Hill has grown half an inch within the last two months, and Mickle wonders if you would know him again in his coatie like his elder brother's. I got a great fear with Geordie's cutting his finger yesterday, but the bleeding was stemmed and no harm done. He came in so hungry an hour ago that he was willing to run off with the loon's piece* rather than wait for another.

"I remain,

"Your affectionate mother,

"ANNA LINDESAY."

Mickle to wonder if she, Lizzie, would know him, her own brother, her father's name-son, with the auld Captain's nose and mouth! To have it broadly stated that it would always be wiser to wait for express permission before she went to the house of a woman who signed herself Lizzie's "affectionate mother!" To be plainly told that she would be among strangers there, while the Miss Murdies' scholars' mothers might take pity on her, and her old acquaintances could not get off without undertaking a day or two of her company!

It was hard, and so was the mortification of having to announce to the Miss Murdies and Lizzie's other friends that her great expedition was knocked on the head, that Mrs. Lindesay could not receive her step-daughter for the holidays, to which all the school was looking forward as to

* The last slice of the loaf.

a welcome season of change. The prohibition was particularly awkward for a girl without a home, with no place to which she had a right to go. With what confidence could she count on her presence being without inconvenience to her remaining friends, when one who was in a manner bound to her, thus failed her without scruple or shame? But there was nothing else for it. Lizzie had to unpack her trunk, put away her little gifts as we must put away our dead out of our sight, till she could find an opportunity of sending anything that was unspoilt to its destination, without what, as she had learned, was the unacceptable addition of the donor in person. She had to swallow down the lump in her throat and stay the indignant throbbing of her heart in order to go and help some happy light-hearted girl in as great a haste as Lizzie had been, huddling together her possessions, ramming in her schoolgirl presents recklessly, in her haste to be gone, where she was as sure as that the sun shone in the sky above her—so sure that she never stopped to think of it or of her good fortune—that not only eager feet, but loving hearts would leap forth to meet and greet her.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THROWN UPON THE WORLD.

A MORE severe blow awaited Lizzie within the week, so severe that in place of a piteous lump in her throat and an angry thump of her heart, she grew cold with consternation. She forgot even to be sorry for others in her trouble for herself. The Miss Murdies had a younger sister who had made what was termed by courtesy an unfortunate marriage—that is, she had insisted on throwing herself away on an incorrigible scamp who had natuarlly been in perennial difficulties. She had borne him a goodly number of sons and daughters. She had lived with him in parisitical idleness, the liberal-minded couple preying on the earnings of the Miss Murdies, who would have eaten their hearts

sooner than confess the infliction. At this juncture the complacent wife had died, bequeathing her daughters as a pious legacy to her sisters, thus depriving them of any remote chance of retiring from the labours of their school into the rest of private life. It would have been hard to imagine Miss Murdie after she had laid down her sceptre or ferrule, still she might have been allowed the choice by those whom the single woman had done her best to prop up throughout their married life.

The Miss Murdies did not refuse the bequest, which was the reward of their long-suffering family pride and feminine soft-heartedness. Women rarely deny altogether such unwarrantable claims, though the acceptors of the obligations may be driven into ungraciousness in the very act of its acknowledgment.

The news of the Miss Murdies' loss and of the consequent considerable addition to their already crowded house, arrived just before the breaking up of the school, and the schoolmistress had forthwith to make fresh arrangements. The ladies had perforce to dismiss their junior teacher, and to trust that Babby Henderson, their eldest niece, might be able to fill Lizzie's place. Miss Ann owned with tears in her light blinking eyes that she feared she and her sister would find to their cost they had not made a good change. Their poor sister Henderson had not brought up Babby as her aunts could have wished. The younger girls were not a bit better, but it was of Babby Miss Ann was speaking. The last time Babby Henderson was at Logie, when there had been some word of her being trained as a teacher, she had given more trouble than her services were ever likely to be worth. It was a thought to find how she was to be got out of her bed in the morning, though she knew she was setting a bad example to the other girls. She held that she was demeaning herself when she heard any missie say her bit of the primer, though Babby's aunts, on whom she was willing to be dependent, had kept a school, or rather a "siminary," for the better part of their lives, and none would ever look up to Babby Henderson as Miss Murdie was looked up to. Babby was pert and saucy, and had been in the middle of a comball * of the scholars

* Conspiracy.

when they had been so far left to themselves as to play tricks with Miss Brougham's wig.

"'Deed, Lizzie Lindesay, we'll miss you," lamented poor Miss Ann, descending to familiarity in her vexation.

Miss Murdie in her pre-eminence could only look harassed as well as heavy. But she remembered to say to Lizzie that she, Miss Murdie, did not know of anything at present to suit the girl, but something would turn up sooner or later, and Lizzie had the whole vacations free to be on the outlook for another situation. They were so free that Lizzie did not know at that moment how she was to dispose of herself for the four weeks. As it turned out, the prospect was still wider and blanker.

Lizzie felt stunned, and tempted to sink under the unlooked-for blow. She had come from her father's house straight to the Miss Murdies'; she was leaving the Murdies with no possibility of remaining under their roof, and before her lay—the world. She was too much of a Logie girl, a home bird, to rise to the possibilities implied in the words. She had not only never tried her wings for a long flight, she had never craved to try them : such a craving was not one of the diseases of her generation. Lizzie was utterly inexperienced in life beyond the kindly familiar life of her native town. Life amongst total strangers was a sealed book to her. She had found sufficient spirit to look forward in a flutter of hope to paying a distant visit and spending a few weeks under the same roof which sheltered her little brothers. But to pay a visit to a person who, however indifferent and selfish, was bound to protect her visitor, and, as Lizzie had known her stepmother, would not do worse than let the girl alone—to pay a visit which had well-defined limits, from which she would return more content, perhaps, to the daily round of her ordinary duties, to known faces in many respects kinder than those she left behind, to early haunts through which she could have walked blindfold, was very different from going away by herself for good and all, not guessing what was to become of her.

There was no real lack of sense, reasonableness, and independence in Lizzie Lindesay, it was simply that she was shy and timid from inexperience. Her timidity did

not degenerate into panic. She did not suppose that anything very lamentable would happen to her. She did not lose faith in herself and her friends or in a higher Power to such an extent. She knew that when her position was understood she would have many doors open to her, for as long a period as she would consent to avail herself of them. Mr. and Mrs. Ochiltree were poor, and the Shirra and Mrs. Lamb were not much richer, with hardly fewer self-imposed burdens, but they would not hesitate in either case to add Lizzie to the list. The Balmayne family were busy with the marriage of their only daughter and heiress, who was going abroad later in the year, still temporary accommodation would be found for Hay's young friend. Why, the Miss Murdies would rather let her stay on and sleep on a "shakedown." Lady Sprott would not be left behind in such hospitality. Miss Chawrlotte Bowers and Miss Soph-y Pettigrew would contrive a niche for Lizzie if it were an absolute necessity.

To receive pity because of a misfortune which she could not have prevented was not intolerable, though it might be distasteful. Lizzie had a brave spirit, but she was free from the curse of a sour and savage pride. She had enough nobility in her nature to have consented, when there was nothing else for it, to take even as she would have given, had she been ordained the giver; she would never let it be said, even by her own lips, in her secret chamber, that with all Logie Town at her back, she feared being cast adrift and forsaken.

And as Miss Murdie had said something would turn up sooner or later, if Lizzie had patience, she had no good grounds, and she did not invent them, for dreading that the later would be too late for her. She could not fail when she was so willing to find the means of earning her bread honestly and honourably. Some parcel blind, parcel deaf, peevish old lady to be read to and walked with, worked for and entertained, would show herself. Some children to be cared for and taught their letters, or young people to be lugged forward in parish school English, Moshie's French, Miss Brougham's music, samplers, tambour work, and satin pieces, and Miss Murdie's elegant extracts, would trip across the stage. Gentlewomen's shops, like

Miss Katie Ochiltree's old shop, would afford openings for assistants. Country houses would ask for genteel house-keepers and even confidential ladies' maids. Though Lizzie was the auld Captain's daughter, she would not be too particular, if she could but feel equal to the duties of a place, and if they were duties, not shams or snares.

Lizzie's salary from the Miss Murdies had been small, in keeping with her subordinate rank as junior teacher, and her funds were impoverished by the preparation for her visit to Mrs. Lindesay, until they were little more than would have served to pay her travelling expenses to and from Ayr, while she shrank from touching the hundred pounds which her father had left her, the sole actual provision between her and destitution in sickness or age.

Yet it was not the terror of want that beset Lizzie, it was the pang of loneliness; of the two, the last, to a girl of her warm, clinging affections, was well-nigh worse than the first. She was nobody's body. She belonged to none, was essential to none. So long as her father lived, though she had not been first with him, and she had schooled herself into reasoning that it was selfish in her so much as to desire to rival his wife and his boys in his regard, she had been his lassie, whom he would never have disowned, for whom he would have stood up to the death. But she belonged to nobody now; though she had plenty of well-wishers, they did not specially want her, they could do very well without her; they were no more dependent on her than she had any right to claim their good offices. If she had only possessed somebody she could call her own, even though he or she were weaker than Lizzie's self, somebody to work and struggle for, it seemed to her it would have been infinitely better. It was the lack of near ties and close relationships which wrung Lizzie's gentle heart, and made her feel desolate and forlorn. In this light she was tempted to envy the most haggard, squalid creature she saw—Hughie, the scavenger, and Leerie-licht-the-lamp. For Hughie had a maiden sister who would have been good to the reprobate if he would have let her, and still looked after him in the best way she could manage. And Leerie had an orphan granddaughter. She was rude and ignorant, no doubt; still she thought in her uncouth way how to

make his home more comfortable, and when he returned to it she welcomed him back. Hughie and Leerie had their own folk if the pair chose to accept the tie, in whose faithful hearts the vagabonds held foremost places, who were keenly interested in their welfare, and would suffer in all their sufferings. As for Lizzie, who had thought so much of her father, she had lost him; while Mrs. Lindesay, in the name he had given her, and that of his sons, refused to have his daughter among them.

No blame attached to Lizzie in the matter. She was sufficiently sane to recognize that her being stripped of kindred was not necessarily a visitation of God for her special sins or a punishment of the guilt of idolatry—an explanation by which many worthy people, with great comfort to themselves, account for their neighbours' bereavements. Notwithstanding, it was by God's will, she appeared to herself in her morbid moods to be like Long Letham or the Coontess, who had made their beds and were doomed to lie on them. Lizzie had done no scandalous wrong to her fellows, had denied no sacred obligations which she was competent to fulfil, had rejected no human regard, but she too was in a sense an outcast, of consequence to nobody. Many looked upon her kindly, but not one would miss her really out of his or her life. She was an orphan in as dreary a phase of orphanhood as any, when one is no longer the child of tutors, and guardians, of the State and of the Kirk, but is supposed to be independent of protection and fit to take care of one's self.

Lizzie was an independent little soul of all save tender love and sympathy. She might be compelled to do without those also, but she was weak as water in contemplating the deprivation.

CHAPTER L.

THE PREACHINGS.

IN spite of the unlucky forwardness in packing of Lizzie and some of the bigger girls, there was still an interval of a week, busy with the winding-up of work, and distinguished by the recurrence of the annual Preachings, before the Miss Murdies' school was dispersed for the season.

"Diets" of well-attended public worship had been held on the Fast-day. A thinner congregation—as if the flesh were weak and the natural *man* rebellious against the number and length of the sermons, for the women remained staunch to the kirk—had assembled on the Saturday afternoon, and the Sacrament Sabbath was at hand.

An impressive sense, as of the gathering of a solemn assembly, pervaded the town in the earlier part of the day, which many of the attendant ministers were fond of calling, in their habit of adapting to their own use the rich poetic phraseology of the Old Testament, "the Great Day of the Feast." The town was crowded. Many country-people, desirous of being present at all the services, without the fatigue of journeying to and fro, availed themselves of the hospitality of friends, or even hired rooms for the day. In addition there were flocks of pedestrians already pouring in from all quarters and filling the Kirkyard. The participation in the celebration of the sacrament which still occurred only once a year in the parish kirk, was by no means confined to parishioners. It extended particularly among the elder members of the working-classes—to all who were within walking distance—and was regarded at the same time as a certificate of moral character and a precious spiritual exercise. To avail themselves of the privilege had become a passion, half religious, half social, among the descendants of the fervent or polemical reformers and Covenanters. But a growing change in the manners of the people had swept away, unless in remote districts, nearly every trace of the wild license which resulted in such excesses as those recorded in the 'Holy Fair.'

The subdued stillness of the Sacrament Sabbath exceeded the stillness of every other Sabbath, even with the throng of worshippers. No regiment had to march in from the next garrison town—as had sometimes happened in Scotch towns on similar occasions—to preserve the peace, which prevailed without any need for foreign intervention. The orderliness, on the whole, was wonderful, considering that the kirk was besieged long before the doors were open, and was stuffed to suffocation, while such masses of people waited their turn in the Kirkyard that suitable refreshments had to be provided for the souls without, as well as for those within. This took the irregular form of "tent preaching," which in its very irregularity was, if anything, more popular than the preaching from the pulpit itself.

Mr. Ochiltree, and men like him, in anticipation of the large demands that would be made on their resources, surrounded themselves with staffs of fellow-ministers. Even in the most lukewarm and moderate times, when other influences were lacking, *esprit de corps* caused the preachers to be selected generally from speakers noted for their fiery or sombre eloquence, no less than for their personal piety. Relays of these natural orators not only "served the Tables" in the kirk, but took each man his turn in addressing passionate appeals from the platform of the tent, to the great open-air congregation sitting or standing among the gravestones. There a host of serious, strongly-moved faces were upraised, with ear and eye hanging on inspiring words falling from living lips.

Stormy weather in such circumstances was anxiously deprecated, but when it came inopportunely, discomfort and risk were courageously faced by the help of "rauchens" and mantles. The ranks of the listening worshippers were not appreciably diminished. The precaution was always taken of having the sacrament, like the passover, celebrated at full moon, so that there might be the chance of light for the numerous wayfarers on rough roads.

On quiet summer days, when the windows of the kirk were perforce open for air, the double performance could be distinctly heard of preaching, praise, and prayer, within and without, the one sounding like a deep refrain, though never permitted to disturb or drown the other.

The explanation of the orderliness, rarely broken except in the subdued rush and crush to hear a favourite minister, lay in the fact that it was the most sacred rite of their religion, which a strongly religious and earnest-minded people were there to commemorate It was noteworthy how ordinary traits of shrewdness, humour, even folly, were kept under until the Merry Andrews became grave as judges, and Lady Sprott tolerably subdued. Individuals were transformed for the hour by the common character of elevated seriousness which distinguished the multitude.

It did not matter what harsh fanaticism, gloomy superstition, even base hypocrisy, might lurk in unknown quarters behind the outward stamp of a Christian company met to obey their Divine Master in remembering His sacrificial death, and in taking a fresh vow of allegiance to His cause. The aspect of the gathering was the same.

As for the Rev. John Ochiltree and his fellow-ministers, if they ever recognized the heavy responsibility of their office, the lofty importance of their functions, it was on this day. If ever men in plain Geneva gowns and bands—under the canopy of the open sky—in unadorned pulpits—before the homeliest of improvised communion-tables—surpassed in simple dignity, and the unworldliness of atmosphere which in one light hedges the divine, high priests and cardinals in the pomp and magnificence of their vestments and altars, it was on these Sacrament Sabbaths in such old-world kirks as that of Logie.

Lizzie Lindesay was there of course, taking part in the solemnities. It would have argued her to be an unbeliever or an evil-doer if she had been found elsewhere. She had been in her place in Logie Kirk at one of the Tables on the occasion of each of "the Preachings" ever since the girl of sixteen had been considered woman enough to understand and give in her adherence to holy mysteries, had been examined by her minister on the due amount of her knowledge and faith, and had received from him the warrant of admission into membership with a Christian Church.

But it was the first time that Lizzie had come alone, to "go forward" in her individual capacity and take the sacrament. Scotch Presbyterians, like the Jews at their passover, go up in families to eat the Lord's Supper. The

husband or father, the recognized head of the house, so long as he lives, applies to the minister or to one of the Elders for the "Tokens"*—answering to the number of the grown-up members of his family under his roof, for a Token must be tendered by each communicant to an Elder in waiting, in order to establish a right to approach the Sacred Tables. Those who intend to partake of the consecrated bread and wine, seat themselves, family by family, in double rows, before the Tables covered with the "clean white cloth." From husbands', fathers', brothers', mothers', sisters' hands, the bread and the wine delivered, first by the minister to the Elders, and next by the Elders to the congregation, pass down the rows.

It is an era in a man or a woman's life when he or she goes alone, it may be in the old place, it may be in a strange scene --after the younger members of the household have passed out into the world—to join in the rite which has hitherto had a markedly family, as well as religious, significance.

Lizzie Lindesay was a solitary figure to-day, though she was sitting in the Miss Murdies' pew below Miss Brougham and above the boarders. Lizzie heard Mr. Ochiltree deliver the sermon, always the most carefully prepared of the year. She heard him "fence the Tables"—that is, forbid their profanation by false professors, and men and women living in unrepented, unrelinquished sin. Then while the hymn was sung, during which the Elders—these servants of the Scotch sanctuary—bring in its vessels, she slipped out to bide her time. It was not for her—young and in health—to usurp the privileges of the sick and infirm, or of the mothers of families, who could not well be spared from their homes for many hours. Lizzie's strength would not fail, her absence would not cause disorder and mischief, she was not called upon to accompany those who could urge such incontrovertible pleas. She must let the groups of Tables in the centre of the church be filled and emptied and filled again, and "served" or spoken to in solemn strain by minister after minister, and waited on by pairs of Elders dispensing the "Elements," till it was fit for her to go forward, stealing up in her nervousness and timidity under the unusual sense of her responsibility and individuality, unsupported

* These were for many years small stamped pieces of lead.

and unaccompanied. She would find a seat at the end of a family group, or among single, "lone" men and women like herself. The necessity sent a fresh pang through Lizzie's already aching heart.

She might, if she had chosen, have sat or stood in the kirk through the long hours of a day in which services were multiplied, as many of her neighbours elected to do, finding zeal and ardour to carry them through the strain on mind and body. But Lizzie was shaken by all she had undergone. She was fain to get out for an interval to breathe the fresh air of a fine grey day—one of the pearly grey days of a Scotch summer—and to move her cramped limbs at will. She joined the open-air congregation for a space, and listened to the alternate fierce threatenings and tender beseechings of a "powerful" tent preacher. Minor notes swelled the strong symphony, the faint babble of little children on the edge of the congregation, the near song of a shilfa' in the ivy which covered the oldest part of the kirk, the more remote strain of a lark over an adjoining clover-field, and close at hand the drowsy hum of a bee.

Lizzie could not visit the auld Captain's grave before so many spectators, but she thought yearningly of the green turf which covered the mortal remains of her father and of Bonnie Jean. Were not the two happy to be at rest—the Captain old and worn with his battles and toils, as his daughter had seen him last? Jean had not been old, would never grow old in the imagination of the people and in the memory of her lover. She had won perpetual youth and earthly immortality. If she had lived she must have faded, and though Lizzie could never think of Jean apart from her goodness, she might have become in other respects commonplace, heavy, perplexed with unaccustomed duties and distracted by conflicting claims, blundering and working harm which would have grieved herself most of all. Now Jean was not only a saint of God, it was not merely that she had died for Steenie Oliphant, she was beyond change or failure here, or yonder. Oh! yes, it was well with Jean, as it should be.

Lizzie, slight of person, steady of head, and light of foot, succeeded in forcing her way back into the kirk, and there she prayed silently for a better frame of mind, in anticipa-

tion of what she was about to do—that she might be freed from sore regrets and haunting cares, that she might learn faith and patience. Then as she listened to homily after homily on the sufferings more than human of Him who was the God man, who had not where to lay His head, who was only not alone because God was with Him, who was content to become poor that many might be made rich, who ended His mighty work by bearing His people's sins and carrying their sorrows—pouring His soul forth unto death that His children might live for ever—she was lifted above her girlish terrors and womanly troubles into that serene region which lies round the footstool of God.

CHAPTER LI.

ADAM'S LETTER.

THE Thanksgiving Monday was over, and Lizzie was back for a couple of days into her work-a-day world, strengthened, no doubt, for she had eaten of the bread of heaven, but subject to inevitable reaction. The former sinking of heart, the chillness and stoniness of her comparative isolation to a young creature of her sympathetic nature, had returned. She was fighting with Giant Despair, a terrible single-handed combat for a girl, and yet one in which she must conquer in the end, if she would but remain true to herself and her Maker.

It was at this crisis of her history that a letter arrived for Lizzie, which was in itself an event. But event or not, school hours and rules were still in force, and the letter had to be put in Lizzie's pocket under a sharp fire of eyes, with no more than an agitated, half-incredulous sense on her part that she had seen the handwriting before, and was familiar with the big seal. She took advantage of the first moment when she was at liberty to satisfy her curiosity. This was when she was sent out by herself to execute a commission for Miss Murdie, and could take the road by the Barons' Mount without going out of her way. Lizzie forgot the

dazzling sun, the breeze that would flutter a sheet of paper in the most trying manner, the view to which everybody in Logie referred when they mentioned the hill, as she pulled out her letter, broke the solid wax which fastened it, looked at the date and superscription, and with hot red cheeks admitted the certainty that the epistle was from Adam Lauder, the first she had ever received from him.

For a moment Lizzie's hungry heart leaped up in eager, humble, grateful acknowledgment of one who in the middle of his own difficulties was still thinking of her and seeking after her.

A flood of old, tender associations melted her mood towards the writer, as she took the precaution of going out of the path along the crest of the little hill, descending half-a-dozen steps and standing still among the unconscious sheep that nibbled the grass on the Barons' Mount.

But as Lizzie went on reading, the words dancing before her eyes in the brisk breeze and the strong sunlight, her heart turned, her judgment reasserted itself and delivered a just sentence. She was forced to see the truth with open eyes, while a backward flow of pain and bitterness made her last state worse than her first.

The letter was like Adam on his lower side, which was fast gaining the upper hand of him. It was clearly a production which had served to divert some of the lagging hours of his enforced idleness. It had no other meaning in it. The substance of the letter was jocular and jaunty, without a single ring of earnestness in its careless sentences. It had no right reason for its existence, and bore but one stamp from the curtness of its commencement to the audacity of its conclusion. The writer began :—

"MY DEAR MISS LIZZIE,

"How are you getting on now that it is summer-time again? Do you ever think of a poor devil lying in jail, who cannot get a shot at the young rabbits or the cushie doos? I often wonder if your dull schoolroom is as hot as my parlour. I have little doubt that your auld hags of schoolmistresses are harder than my jailer, who is a very decent, civil man, when he is skilfully managed. Never mind. Better days will come, and we'll have daunders by

the burn and reels on the boards for all that has come and gone yet." So on to the end, when he asked her when she was coming to see him again?—an inquiry which Lizzie at once classed as nothing less than an insult—before he signed himself

"Your servant to command and ardent admirer,
"ADAM LAUDER."

Withal through the effrontery and absolute absence of comprehension, the coaxing, the compliments, and the recklessness, there was a wily wariness, as of one who still thought himself a prize in a matrimonial light—of such consequence that it behoved him in voluntarily addressing any young lady to be careful lest he should commit himself. He was bound to preserve a loophole by which he could avoid spoiling his prospects as a bachelor, with Lady Sprott or any other string to his bow. Lizzie Lindesay was a bonnie lassie, and his heart had always inclined towards her. She had taken his fancy more than any of the many girls he had known, with one exception. But Lizzie was only a teacher in a school since the death of the auld Captain. If he and she ever came together, and no doubt poor Lizzie would be proud and glad to get him, though they would make but a poor couple, he was not sure whether she was not over sharp in some things. She always had entertained confoundedly strait-laced notions in others, which were not likely to have been improved by her year's sojourn with beldames of she-dominies, like the auld women Murdies. He might, in spite of his misfortunes, and though he had lost that proud cruel hizzie, Hay Melville, make a far better match, and find a more complacent good-wife than poor Lizzie. Poor Lizzie understood not only every line before her, but what was written between the lines. As she crumpled up the stiff thick paper, gilt-edged, though it had come from a jail, in a hard ball in her hand, she said to herself with a rush of wrath and shame, what had she ever done that any man should so write to her? He would not have dared if her father had been alive; he would not have ventured if she had even been under the roof of her step-mother.

The Barons' Mount was a great place for flying kites, and as Lizzie roused herself to tear Adam Lauder's letter

to minute fragments and cast them to the winds, a boy ran along the road above her, clutching a long string and looking up exultingly at a kite sailing through the air and dragging him along at its heels.

Adam Lauder was no more a true man, gallant and loyal to the core, than that painted kite—whatever it might appear to it fond constructor—was a real green and gold dragon fit to guard the gardens of the Hesperides.

CHAPTER LII.

MOSHIE COMES TO THE RESCUE.

THERE were many matters of school business to be settled at the close of the term. One of these kept M. de Saye, not in the school parlour, which was at that hour full of parents and guardians instead of scholars, but in the long narrow garden where Lizzie Lindesay was at the same moment attending to a choice specimen of pillow-lace. This *chef d'œuvre* had to be delicately pulled out and gingerly hung on a gooseberry bush, and it was far too critical an operation to be intrusted to a servant.

Moshie—a quaint figure among the gilliflowers and sweet-williams, thyme and southern-wood—came up to Lizzie with his three-cornered hat in his hand and his respectful bow, and entered into conversation with her. He talked pleasantly, as he could talk, of the work in lace and embroidery he had seen his countrywomen engaged in—not only in the old days of ease, but for the refugees' support in their exile. As he expatiated on the sore straits, frequently the peril of life, which these girls and women, daintily bred, had surmounted triumphantly, and proceeded to dwell emphatically on their honourable struggles to earn daily bread, which he was careful to represent as equally successful, Lizzie guessed correctly the motive of the dissertation. Moshie knew—as who in Logie was long ignorant of the private affairs of his or her neighbour?—that she was leaving the Miss Murdies', and that she must probably seek to

maintain herself among strangers. He desired to comfort and encourage her by reminding her that she was not singular in her trouble, that there had been others, as young and tender as herself, who had been worse off, called to fight a harder battle, which they had fought and won.

"Yes, sir," said Lizzie, speaking out her thoughts with a farther droop of her head and quiver of her lips, as she stood there in her black frock, "but your countrywomen were not alone—at least, not often. There were husbands and wives; fathers, mothers, and daughters; brothers and sisters, working together and for each other. Women, as a rule, do not even care to save their lives alone, and if some one of your countrywomen was so unfortunate as to drift away by herself, there was a community in misfortune. I have heard you were like one family in your adversity."

She stopped a little awkwardly. She had just remembered that for some unexplained reason, Moshie's misfortunes had not ended with those of his country people—the most of whom had gone back, years ago, to enjoy their own again, while he had stayed on, a stranger in a strange land. He was at that moment in the very position she deplored for herself, except that he was a middle-aged man, which in her youthful eyes made all the difference in the world.

Nevertheless, Moshie saw the analogy as quickly as she did, and with the perception, a sudden light came into his bright, southern eyes, and a great longing into his voice.

"Oh! Miss Leezzie," he said, slowly and sorrowfully, like a man who resigns a treasure which might have been his, but, as it happens, is far beyond his reach; "if it had but been otherwise! But what will you? I am getting old. I am old enough already to be your father. I am poor—only a master of arms and of dancing. I am nobody, and you—you deserve all the world can give."

"Oh, no!" said Lizzie, touched and carried out of herself. "You are a brave honest gentleman, and you have been so good to me."

"Good! That is nothing," cried Moshie, with an expressive gesture. "If it had been as formerly, I could have shown——" He stopped himself and then went on hurriedly, "My young lady, you are afflicted, tired, faint; you will prosper and be happy again some day. But should

you not—if you would deign to make me a sign, if you could bring yourself to accept the little I have to offer, I should fly to your aid, I should be the proudest, the happiest of men. Oh! why, Miss Leezzie, you are crying; you are hiding your face. I am in despair to have offended you—I, who meant to help, and not to hurt."

"You have not offended me, monsieur," said Lizzie passionately. "It is only because you are too good, too generous. You are the best man I know; you are so wise and clever; you have borne so much and made the best of it, yet you speak so to a silly, discontented girl like me."

"Then you will trust me, *ma demoiselle?*" he cried, his olive face all afire, as he stooped down and took her hand. "You will come to me and see what I can do for you?"

"But, monsieur," exclaimed Lizzie, in agitation and perplexity, "I should only be a burden to you."

"Not a burden—a benediction, a treasure," he corrected her with fervour. "I could not have permitted the sacrifice, but that you have nobody left save me. You have many friends—yes, truly, worthy people, kind enough, who would willingly succour you, but they have all their own friends, more intimate, nearer—I have known it, I have felt it. You, too, love not to trouble—what you call *fash* them over much." Moshie became more and more incoherent and entangled among his English, French, and Scotch words, and his national idioms, the more excited he grew. "You would rather face the world and toil for bread—you who have never been out of Logie Town; you who have such a tender heart—the heart of *une jeune fille!* And you may give way, *mon Dieu!*—you may fall ill and be ready to perish, and none know in time to interpose."

"But, sir," interrupted Lizzie, not without a gleam of unconscious humour, "I thought you were talking of how heroically and successfully your countrywomen overcame the greatest dangers and difficulties?"

"Yes, yes—when they had their people with them, as you reminded me." He turned the tables upon her adroitly. "At present I have no people. If I had possessed them I should have done better, without doubt. You also, alas! have none. Let us be people to each other, Miss Leezzie. Let us be fathers and husbands, daughters and wives in

one—in two. When I did speak of poverty, I meant it not literally. It was according to your deserts, it was as a gentleman, not as a man, not as a master of dancing. I was poor once, when my excellent friend and yours, Madame Mally, was as an angel of goodness to me. But all that is finished. I have been making my little savings," explained Moshie with innocent pride; "I have sufficient to furnish one small *étage*, such as we should want. My classes for the fencing and the dancing are larger than they ever were before. I have thought, also, of giving lessons in the French and Italian languages ever since my old comrade de la Colline returned to France; but, as I told you, I had no people, no *ménage* to support—I was lazy, without spirit—an old donkey."

He did not look even like an old war-horse while he spoke. The strength and daring of his youth seemed to have returned to him. "Now, I can all!" he exclaimed, pressing his two palms together. "I have been proposed many pupils in Edinburgh itself if I arrange my classes on certain days, take the coach and cross the Ferry. Ah! well, Leezzie, when I have you to work for I take the coach, I sail to the capital," ended Moshie exultantly, throwing back his head and squaring his shoulders.

Lizzie stood aghast at the force of the torrent she had called forth. This last suggestion struck her most of all. It was, indeed, a shining proof of devotion. For she knew that, like many foreigners, he detested sailing. On the few occasions, when he had been forced to go on the sea during the years he had stayed at Logie, he had lamented the obligation without the slightest concealment. He had proclaimed afterwards with lively grimaces of dislike and disgust, which had provoked the derisive laughter of his audiences, the disastrous result of his voyages. "I was sick—sick as one dog." Yet here was Moshie, with head erect, smilingly undertaking in glad confidence to make the dreaded passage once a week at least, and count it as nothing for her sake. Could love and unselfishness go farther?

She could not let this pass. She could not hear more without interposing. She said solemnly, with fresh tears in her eyes, "No, monsieur, you will not need. I shall

work too. I have done it, and you can show me how to do it better—if I am to take you at your word. But it is not right," she broke out in renewed distress. "It is just that you are sorry for me. I ought not to take advantage of your pity. It is mean of me."

Moshie put his hand on his heart, and struggled for words. "I suppose I am sorry for you. Who would not be sorry, my poor young lady? But I shall be yet more sorry for myself if, after what has passed, you reject the humble offer of my heart and life. I pity you! Yes, but I also love and adore your courage, your patience, your sweetness, ever since they have been tried. Have you not guessed it—seen it—all these months?"

Lizzie blushed and shrank from these fine protestations, though she was certain of their sincerity. "Then we must work together," she resumed, with bashful hesitation.

"Never," exclaimed Moshie, indignantly. "What! a great weather-beaten *scaramouche* like me permit my wife, my best pupil, a little Meess like you, to fatigue your brains and exhaust your strength, and grow meagre and white as Miss Melville, in working for yourself and me, when I can work for both? What is this that you think of me, my young lady? What would monsieur, your father, the old Captain, who fought in the wars against my nation, have thought of me if he could have imagined that I should act to his daughter like a *bourgeois* coward and brute?"

Lizzie was half frightened, half dazzled. "Don't be angry, sir," she said, nervously holding out her hand.

He took it as if it had been the hand of a queen, bending low and touching it with his lips before he kissed her cheek.

It was well that the Miss Murdies' largest pear-tree stretched its wide arms between the couple and the windows of the house, though for that matter, in the course of the afternoon, full information of what was going to happen was given in the politest of ceremonious applications made to the head of the school, whom Moshie conceived to be the representative of Miss Lindesay's natural guardians.

Before sunset all Logie knew that Lizzie Lindesay was going to be married to Moshie de Saye before the Miss

Murdies' school took up again. The news might penetrate even the thick walls of a jail by midnight.

Lizzie herself could hardly believe what had come about, it was so sudden and strange, long after the town, making a great gulp, had swallowed the morsel and was preparing to digest it. When the first shock and sense of incongruity—not unmingled with amusement—were got over, the tidings, oddly as it may sound to-day, did not create any very great sensation or rouse any vehement objection. The attitude towards the marriage question of that world of seventy or eighty years ago, in an old-fashioned little town like Logie, differed to a considerable extent from the attitude of the modern world.

When marriage was all but a *sine qua non*, a large latitude of choice and compelling circumstances had to be granted. If a girl must marry unreservedly, and did not accomplish a desirable match, it followed as a matter of course that she had to marry less well, indifferently, even badly. Let anybody take the trouble to examine the family records and parish registers of the date mentioned, and he or she will be rewarded by the discovery of the most extraordinary discrepancy in the marriages even in one family. The fact is still more conspicuous when the field of choice had been circumscribed as in Logie. Again, one is forced to own that a gentlewoman earning her living lost caste with our mothers and grandmothers, and what was of more consequence, with our fathers and grandfathers, more lamentably than with ourselves. However loyal and friendly her circle might be, it was not merely the Adam Lauders and Lady Sprotts who regarded the girl as compromised and undergoing a sure process of deterioration. Even men and women, as liberal-minded as Moshie, and with as much common sense as Hay Melville, contemplated the prospect with horror or commiseration, according to the respective natures of the spectators. The exceptions to this public judgment were made in favour of mature gentlewomen, serving the public, and not serving private masters and mistresses, in fact, potent mistresses in their own departments; such gentlewomen as Mrs. Mally, Miss Katie Ochiltree, Miss Murdie.

On the other hand, while Lizzie had descended the social

ladder from the step which belonged to the auld Captain's daughter, and entitled her to cards for the Race and Hunt balls, to the considerably lower step occupied by the Miss Murdies' junior teacher, whom Miss Chawrlotte Bowers and Miss Soph-y Pettigrew patronized, Moshie, in the long years of his connection with Logie, had stamped his impression on the town. He had not only won respect and esteem in his own person, he had raised the calling of a dancing-master by the accident of his holding it. He had given it something of the dignity of a fine art.

Lizzie Lindesay, in the eyes of her townspeople, was not doing such a "daft-like thing" as the act looked on the first blush. She was not really demeaning herself or throwing herself away on an old bridegroom, for Moshie was not more than middle-aged—a fine, hale man for his years. Even had it been otherwise, "better an old man's dearie than a young man's drudge," was a Scotch proverb in good repute, and Lizzie had seen an example of its truth, for there had been a greater disparity between the auld Captain and Mrs. Lindesay, and nobody could have ventured to say that they were not "an extraordinarily happy couple." Moshie was a gentleman by birth and breeding, and in the midst of his misfortunes he had always conducted himself as such. He was a thrifty, ingenious creature, frugal in meat and drink. Depend upon it, he had laid by a penny before he proposed to marry, for he was strictly honourable in his dealings and a man of principle, though his enemies might call him a fighting, frog-eating, French dancing-master. No doubt he was aware that he ought to make a small provision for the young widow and the possible family he might leave behind him. Reckoning up Lizzie's chances, if she remained a single woman with none belonging to her on whom she could establish a claim when she grew old and infirm, unless her little half-brothers who had gone away with their mother to be reared in the West Country among her kindred, apart from their sister, perhaps she was acting wisely in taking the wind when it blew in her barn-door. Better that than to go through the wood and be left without even a crooked stick at e'en. In addition to the much-prized dignity of matronhood, Lizzie would have a good deal more to look to as Madame or Mrs. de Saye, whichever she liked

to call herself, or even as Moshie's widow, than she had as a poor young lady, a teacher in a school, whose opportunities of marriage had been indefinitely lessened. For Lizzie Lindesay had been rash in her independence when she proceeded immediately on her father's death to do something for herself. She might have tried a round of visiting among her friends as had been suggested. If she had managed well and made herself obliging and useful, which was natural to Lizzie without any particular reason for it, the round might have lasted for years, during which something, there was no saying of what, might have happened.

Lizzie, while she was still startled and shaken by what had befallen her, met with no violent opposition in her course. She did not see or hear Adam Lauder behaving like a dog in a manger, becoming purple with rage, springing to his feet and stamping and swearing like a trooper for full five minutes in the retirement of the jail.

Even Mrs. Lindesay did not lift up a loud dissentient voice in the distance. She did bemoan the "come down" to her poor Mickle's daughter—Mickle who had spent his life fighting his country's natural enemy. She did hint that Lizzie had always been rather lowlifed and eccentric in her tastes. And she, Mrs. Lindesay, besought Lizzie anxiously not to let word of her marriage—at least with respect to the trade of her intended husband—spread as far west as Ayr. But the fact was the stepmother felt too much relieved by the thought of having Lizzie fairly off her hands for good and all, to forbid the marriage. She even went so far as to own that it was a comfort to her to have Lizzie settled in the world, instead of teaching in a school, liable to be cast adrift and thrown on her friends any day. Considering her recent widowhood, Mrs. Lindesay wrote that she could not be expected to be present at the wedding. It would be bad luck to the happy couple. Neither would Lizzie think of going to Ayr after she had been told that Mrs. Lindesay's best bedroom was occupied; above all, when Lizzie took it into account that the house of mourning was not a place for courting, it would be absolutely unseemly. Mrs. Lindesay added it was not the custom now-a-days for a great show and rejoicing to be got up at a marriage. It was more fashionable to be private.

The lady and gentleman, with a couple of friends to keep the bride and bridegroom in countenance, travelled to Edinburgh or Glasgow and were married in an hotel or in the house of the minister who performed the ceremony, if they preferred the latter alternative. It saved a great deal of trouble and waste of money. Lizzie knew her stepmother's narrow income and the calls which the dear children made upon it, so that she could not look for much of a present from Mrs. Lindesay. But she sent a pair of plated bedroom candlesticks, which she believed Lizzie would value all the more because they had belonged to her own mother. Of course, till Lizzie married, she could have had no use for anything in the shape of plate. A fork and spoon were not expected from the teachers, though the girls in boarding-schools were requested to provide them.

Miss Murdie, like Balmayne in the matter of his daughter's engagement to Steenie Oliphant, was agreeable in a stately way, which contrasted with Miss Ann's fussy bustle and pleasure. Miss Murdie did not contemplate changing her state, and her regard for Moshie was entirely of a platonic character. Still it grated on her sense of fitness that a gentleman who had been honoured with the friendship of ladies of experience and discretion, could desire or even accept the companionship of a flighty young female like Lizzie Lindesay—well enough in her way, but it was the unpurpose-like, unsatisfactory way of a girl. However, Miss Murdie, with a slight sniff, hoped that Lizzie would prove an exemplary partner to Moshie, and immediately bestowed on her, in spite of the exactions of the Henderson tribe, a more generous gift than that vouchsafed by Mrs. Lindesay. Miss Ann's clumsy, friendly fingers were already itching to be busy with an offering of her own. Miss Brougham was put in her blandest mood by an inspiriting sense, as she arranged the curls of her "front," that her time might be coming after all, though dating by years she might almost have been Lizzie's mother. The schoolgirls prepared to rush to their several homes and clamour for contributions to Lizzie's trousseau and her future house, as if Moshie in his high breeding and the auld Captain's daughter were about to perpetrate a penny wedding.

Chirsty Prendergast, before she heard of what was in the wind, when she only knew that her Miss Lizzie Lindesay was not going to pay a far-away visit to her grand relations in Ayr, had come to Lizzie with an eager modest entreaty. Would she spend the whole or part of her vacations with the Prendergasts at their farmhouse of Sauchieden, newly fitted up and embellished as an early issue of the late Glasgow baillie's money.

"I know it is not half gude enough for you," pleaded Chirsty, with her dog-like eyes, "but my mither will be that uplifted—we'll all be so proud and blithe to make of you, if you'll only let us. Oh! Miss Lizzie, say you'll do us the favour."

And Lizzie, with the chill at her heart warmed a little by Chirsty's urgency, and by the shy pleasure she showed on the first symptom of Lizzie's yielding, had consented to go out for a week to the Prendergasts. Then when fortune turned her wheel, Chirsty put-in another breathless plea. "Oh! Miss Lizzie, you'll no' let your marriage mak' ony odds? You'll no let it part us a'thegither? I know Moshie is a fine gentleman, and I'm frichted out o' my wits afore him, though he's so gentle and mak's sic allowance like yersel'. But you'll let me come and see you in your ain hoose, whiles, and bring you a floor, and the white turkey's eggs—I aye thocht I would keep them for you—and you'll come out for a day if you can spare nae mair, just to say you've paid us a visit—as you agreed—afore you're a married leddy."

"I'll come out and stay till you're tired of me, Chirsty," said Lizzie, gratefully. Then she thought if it did not give the Prendergasts too much trouble, and if Moshie were content, she might be married quietly from the friendly farmhouse rather than from a strange hotel. She would ask Chirsty to be Lizzie's "best maid," which the bride knew the young woman would like of all things.

Moshie bowed to Lizzie's behests, but when the project was broached to the Rev. John Ochiltree, he put his foot on it without further parley.

"Let your best maid be whom you like, Lizzie; Chirsty Prendergast, a fine douce lassie, or any other; but it shall not be said you were married out of Logie Town and my

house. Mrs. Ochiltree not able for it! Trust her or any woman to be equal to a wedding."

"But have you forgotten, sir," said Lizzie, anxiously, "that M. de Saye is a Roman Catholic, though he goes to your kirk because there is none of his own persuasion between this and Edinburgh? The Presbytery or the Kirk Session might object. Some folk are saying already that it is a terrible thing for me to marry a Papist."

"A fig for their uncharitableness," said the minister stoutly; "I'll take the Presbytery and the Kirk Session into my own hand. I tell you what, Lizzie, I wish all my kirk members were as good Christians as Moshie. I'll just mention that right and left, and I would like to see who will contradict me. No, your father's daughter, the girl who stood by all that was left of poor Jean Scott to the last, on yon miserable ending to the King's Birthday, shall pay me—her minister—the compliment of letting me marry her, to as proper a gentleman as ever breathed, in the drawing-room of my manse. Then I'll write to a worthy friend, of your future husband's ancient creed, with whom I have some acquaintance, and you'll cross to the city of Edinburgh and be buckled a second time in his chapel there, just to make sure against mistakes—not in Scotland here, for our marriage laws are if anything a thought too broad, but it is erring on the safe side, my dear—in case you should ever think of taking a step over the Channel to France with your good-man. There's no saying. Oh, by the bye, Miss Lizzie, what are all the Scotch lads saying to being cut out by a Frenchman? There's Miss Melville, too, on the point of deserting the ranks of the young ladies, though she's not turning her back on the country, no, nor on the county, in the matter of her choice. Sirs, I'm vexed for the young sparks having to stand such a double loss."

"They'll survive it," Lizzie exerted herself to respond in the old vein. For the minister whose tongue had been tied, where jokes were concerned, to Lizzie for some time, was now primed with a store of well-seasoned gallant banter. Not only the minister, the Shirra, all the Merry Andrews were on the alert to make stock out of the occasion. Lizzie could not go up and down the quiet streets in those days without having to encounter a heavy fire of

good-humoured wit, kindly ridicule, and extravagant compliment.

In the background, Logie's floating capital of thirty pounds was being seriously disturbed by the drain made upon it to supply the tea-trays, tea-caddies, work-boxes, knife-boxes, silver fruit-knives, and thimbles, which were laid at the feet of the auld Captain's daughter.

None knew better than Hay Melville the force of circumstances. She had already lost Lizzie as a constant companion and familiar friend—when it come to that, Hay no longer stood in need of such an adjunct when she was going to be married herself, going to take up a married woman's duties and responsibilities, not the least of which was to look after Steenie Oliphant and cheer him with her lively society. Hay stated emphatically that she was not at all surprised at what Lizzie Lindesay was going to do—Hay thought it was the very best thing Lizzie could do in her position. Moshie was unexceptionable in his personal character. He was, though past his youth—Hay had a habit of speaking as if she herself were ages past that foolish period of existence—one of the finest men she knew. She hoped he would be spared long enough to impart his finished grace of manner and bearing not merely to her children, but to her grandchildren. Hay was given to anticipate—she forestalled the young American matron by insisting on addressing Steenie in the first week of their honeymoon as "father." It was a time-honoured practice, she explained to the astonished recipient of the title, and to whoever liked to listen. She had been accustomed to hear her mother apply the term to her father. Hay was determined to keep up the good old custom, particularly as it tended to produce proper reverence on the part of wives. Certainly Steenie was not likely to miss entertainment with Hay by his side.

When the two girls met, Hay suddenly stopped in her congratulations to demand, "Was I a witch in my fortune-telling yon market-night at Mrs. Mally's, Lizzie, do you remember? I gave myself to Steenie Oliphant and you to Moshie, and now the prophecy is fulfilled!"

The former friends looked at each other for an instant in silence before they changed the subject. Both recognized that they and everything else in the world had changed

since that night, though it was not two years ago. Both had a quick sense that their fates in life had then hung in the balance, and humanly speaking, a straw either way would have brought them to a totally different conclusion.

"Eh! Lizzie Lindesay, I warned you of the pass you would be brocht to when you were sae left to yourself as to gang and help to keep a schule," Lady Sprott delivered her verdict. She added pensively, "Cauld's the hoose without a man. It's no for me to wed a second time, but I'm glad even of a mak'-believe like Mr. Eben, though he's only Sir Dauvit's governor, and a blate, wishy-washy, whether-or-no, stickit minister o' a chield. I own an auld dancing-maister is better than naebody. But speaking o' that, you maun let me aff from calling on you, Lizzie, though I wuss you weel. The late Sir Dauvit's weedy, and the present Sir Dauvit's mither, cannot weel visit with the like of Moshie and you."

"Do just as you please, my lady. Never mind us," said Lizzie, hastily. Then her momentary irritation subsided, and was changed into keen amusement. For she thought on the one hand of Raoul de Saye, and on the other of the late Sir Dauvit, the last time Lizzie had seen the drunken blackguard after he had been brawling in the public streets, when he was hunted out of the town by all the ragamuffins in Logie.

Another comical element in the situation was that in spite of the unnecessary candour of Lady Sprott's apology, Lizzie was thoroughly convinced curiosity, if nothing else, would make her ladyship one of Madame de Saye's first visitors.

CHAPTER LIII.

MRS. MALLY'S TESTAMENT.

It cannot be denied that Lizzie had accepted Moshie a good deal on the spur of the moment, under the pressure of wounded feelings and the dread of what was to become of her, together with her gratitude for his disinterested

devotion. When she was fully sensible of what she had done, she felt, in spite of her genuine respect and liking for Moshie, a considerable amount of doubt and apprehension. It rendered her disturbed and restless, shy and timid, with her plighted bridegroom. But the alteration in her manner did not seem to trouble him; perhaps it suited his French notions. He appeared certain that he could win her tender affection and make her happy after she was his wife.

Then an event happened which somewhat changed the position of affairs, and administered a new kind of shock to Lizzie. The melancholy news reached Logie of the death of Mrs. Mally Corstorphine, just as she had concluded her business in the West Indian island over which Governor Lowrie had presided, and was about to start on her long journey homewards. The full particulars did not arrive at her native town for many a month. They were brought back eventually by Merrin, who had waited on her mistress faithfully to the last, and had finally been passed, helpless, but uninjured, from hand to hand until she came once more, with much thankfulness, in sight of the old steeple of Logie Kirk, and the Crown Inn. Merrin's account of Mrs. Mally's fatal illness was that it had been different from her former attacks. It had been short and sharp. Until she was struck down she had been full of spirit and activity, establishing her claims in adverse circumstances. She had been eager to wind up her business successfully and to set out immediately, as if with a strong longing to be at home again, which was not destined to be fulfilled. When she had accomplished what would justify her journey and prevent much scandalous misappropriation of property and waste of time and labour for those who should come after her, she was ready for the road. She had been greatly pleased with the result of her exertions, and had looked as if she were able for double the fatigue she had already undergone. She was then "as gallant a woman," the sorrowing Merrin declared, "as Mrs. Mally was wont to be in her younger days, fit to cope with all the glib-tongued lawyers and black-a-vised dons that ever were born."

But in a few hours Mrs. Mally was seized with yellow fever, and she foresaw instantly that there was little

likelihood of her recovery. She said not another word of Scotland and Logie, where she herself was concerned. In the brief time that remained to her, her entire concern was to avoid giving more trouble than she could help, so that she was "as patient as a lamb," according to Merrin's description, and in completing the necessary arrangements for her servant should she be left alone. Then Mrs. Mally turned her face to the wall. Once she had muttered, "Heaven is owre a', and puir Lowrie will no lie his lane amang frem'd folk," and so she had died.

But in the mean time nothing of this was known; Logie simply heard that Mrs. Mally was gone, and it was as if a pillar of strength had fallen, causing general regret and some sincere mourning among the townspeople. Inevitably there was also a revival of the excitement which had been felt during the earlier illness of the dead woman, with regard to the disposal of her worldly goods.

The necessary power was given for the production of the instructions which Mrs. Mally had left behind her, and the reading of her will. The last was in the careful hands of the canny man of business out of Logie, whom she had employed to draw it up. Mr. Tamson came to the town for the purpose with as great state and importance as a man naturally meek and modest and unlike the Emperor could assume for the occasion. He cited a long list of persons who were forthwith impressed, not without reason, by a similar consciousness to Mr. Tamson's that the eyes of the world of Logie were upon them. The motley gathering was appointed to meet the lawyer in Mrs. Mally's old domain of the Crown Inn, in her former sitting-room, which had been reserved for her use, and was now re-opened and set in order that it might be the scene of the last ceremony in which she had a voice and could be said to play a part.

It was the same place, and yet not the same. For most of the valuable articles of foreign produce, traces of the late Governor, had been put away. The old-fashioned flowers were gone, so were the descendants of the original paroquets and Java sparrows. But Mrs. Mally's closed desk was there in its old corner; and opposite it her spinning-wheel, still with flax on the rock.

Among the heterogeneous company assembled was the innkeeper, who had lost the trick of his predecessors in appearing still more the master of his house than the servant of his customers, together with several more of Mrs. Mally's distant relations and one or two of her familiar friends.

The Melvilles of Balmayne figured among the company. Balmayne looked cross, because he was honestly vexed by the death of his remote kinswoman and life-long friendly acquaintance. Mrs. Melville was in the deepest mourning which Jenny Stark could get up on a short notice. The lady of Balmayne was composing her mobile face into the desirable degree of sorrow—she was ready to bury it in her handkerchief, according to the extent to which Mrs. Mally had proved her cousinly sentiments, and her title to be grieved for by so distinguished a mourner. Hay was also of the party, appearing very much as usual, a little graver perhaps, but she was mostly grave in the outer woman now-a-days, even when her nimble tongue was uttering all manner of quips and cranks.

Various servants who belonged to the Crown Inn, or had belonged to it in the days of the former landlady, ranged themselves befittingly in the background. So did some very humble persons—poor relations of the lower class, to whom Mrs. Mally had once alluded when she was making tea for the Emperor. These stalwart sons and daughters of ploughmen, though they were invited to be present with the rest of the party, entered sheepishly, stumbling in their hob-nailed shoes and market boots, clean corduroys and best shawls, as if the wearers were intruders there.

A little apart from the others stood and sat Moshie and Lizzie Lindesay, already closely associated together. Both were unaffectedly touched by the well-known room as it was presented afresh to their eyes. Indeed Lizzie broke down and sobbed outright when she crossed the threshold which she had trodden so often. She afforded Moshie, who was as entirely unabashed as he was free from awkwardness in his character of elderly lover, the best excuse for hanging over her chair and seeking to comfort her with an assiduity which showed a happy mixture of the feelings of the father and the bridegroom.

The large circle was wound up by the representatives of the three learned faculties, Mrs. Mally's clergyman, the Rev. John Ochiltree, her physician, Dr. Hepburn, and her lawyer, the chief actor to-day.

It was not only over Mrs. Mally's kindred and friends that a dim shadow of her potent presence hung, subduing them more or less, as she seemed to be looking down on them, herself invisible, from her old seat by the hearth, from behind her desk or her wheel. The very lawyer presiding over the performance, who might be supposed hardened to such influences, was sensibly affected by this lingering atmosphere of Mrs. Mally. Mr. Tamson, recalling his last interview with the mistress of the Crown Inn on the same spot, and the disinterested recommendation which she had given him with strange self-forgetfulness and the dryest humour to study the scene and improve his knowledge of human nature, could not resist glancing over his shoulder with the eeriest sensation. He half expected to see a ghostly version of Mrs. Mally's hair-cap towering about the other heads. He was haunted by her Roman nose, keen gray eyes, shrewd mouth, and the Oliver Cromwell wart, bearing its tuft of bristling hair, all lit up by what are commonly supposed opposing considerations—a proud vindication of poetic justice and a lively experience of derisive glee.

But no vestige of Mrs. Mally either in the body or the spirit, whether dominated by feelings proper or improper, interfered with the announcement of her final wishes.

The will began by a number of minute provisions and bequests. The peculiar property and furniture of the inn which had not been already handed over to the innkeeper, were secured to him. There was a liberal legacy to the poor of Logie. An ample annuity to the still absent Merrin began from that day. In fact there was a scrupulous remembrance of all who could have made any claim on her spirit of fairness or feeling of friendship. In this category came the year or couple of years' wages to old servants, and the judiciously planned bequests to the working-people who had a "drap o' blude" in common with the last of the main branch of the Corstorphines of the Crown Inn. There was a methodical distribution of

the plate, jewels, and costly curiosities with which Governor Lowrie had from time to time provided himself and endowed his sister. His snuff-box went to Mr. Melville, his gold-headed cane to the Rev. John Ochiltree, his punch-bowl to Dr. Hepburn, his watch to M. Raoul de Saye, his seals and razors to the blushing reader of the deed. Mrs. Melville had the late Governor's massive silver salver and his exquisitely-wrought chessmen. Hay had her share of the rubies and pearls, while there was an equal share, along with Mrs. Mally's watch, to Lizzie Lindesay.

If Mrs. Melville's plastic face had, in spite of herself, waxed a little longer while her handkerchief had still remained in abeyance, it was simply because of the large, promiscuous slices, which this, to her, uncalled-for and eccentric generosity on the part of the testator, cut in Mrs. Mally's possessions. It was from no distinct dread of the ultimate result, yet the very next intimation was calculated to vex her righteous soul more seriously—a lump of invested money amounting to several thousands was recklessly presented "to my friend M. Raoul de Saye, because of the respect and regard in which I have held him ever since I knew him."

Moshie raised his head in evident surprise, and bent forward as if to disclaim the favour in the light of something beyond his deserts, to which he had no title.

Mrs. Melville gave a convulsive gasp, Hay raised her eyebrows, even Balmayne frowned slightly. Unquestionably Mrs. Mally might deal with her own as she liked, and Moshie was all very well; but nobody could be expected to hear unmoved of good British money going to a foreigner—a dancing-master fellow.

Worse was to follow with respect to the Melvilles—for to do the humbler portion of the company justice, they acted as if they thought they had received all and more than all that could have been looked for, as if Mrs. Mally had behaved handsomely to them, and they had no reason to complain. They listened stolidly in anticipation of the disposal of the principal part of the dead woman's fortune, consisting, as she had always said, of the large farm of St. Kennet's, in addition to her West Indian property.

For Mr. Tamson now proceeded to read what was to

become of this the bulk of Mrs. Mally's goods, in the choicest legal phraseology, with an increased solemnity of manner in keeping with the greater importance of the legacy.

The farm and the West Indian property were left for the sole use and behoof of Miss Elizabeth Lindesay, only daughter of the late Captain Michael Lindesay, of Logie. "And I desire to make known to all whom it may concern," Mrs. Mally went on to say by the mouth of her lawyer, "that I bestow the gift not only because of the affection I bear her, but because of her kindness to my dear son, Louis Beaugardin, otherwise known as Lewis Corstorphine."

Lizzie's tingling ears could not take in the words relating to her, far less could her mind receive their meaning. Moshie looked positively aghast.

Mrs. Melville dropped her handkerchief, and grew deadly pale with baulked ambition and avarice, and with a keen sense of wasted gracious condescension, including innumerable *petits soins*.

She had demeaned herself to allow, even to uphold, her husband's relationship with the mistress of the Crown Inn for long years. She had thrown away her precious leisure; she had lavished her choicest dainties; she had submitted to scanty gratitude and downright snubs, and what was the Lady of Balmayne's reward? To be outwitted and laughed at by that masculine-tempered, cold-blooded, crafty woman in her grave.

Mr. Melville's frown grew portentous. Hay's dress gave a decided rustle of dissatisfaction, while she put up her lip in an impulse of amazed indignation.

There was a moment's awful pause, for the reading of the will was over. Then Mr. Tamson made a virtue of necessity, and took it upon him to break the silence. He raised his voice independently, and ventured to congratulate the chief legatee. He was drawn two ways. He might be blamed for having connived at Mrs. Mally's independent act, and for having refrained, as a point of professional honour, from giving private information which might have led to its prevention. He might also lose the patronage of the lucky heiress of St. Kennet's, Miss Lizzie Lindesay.

Mr. Tamson's nervous voice recalled the Melvilles—who

were the people most aggrieved—to what was required of them by Mrs. Mally's froward and unjustifiable will. The other distant connections could not look back on favours bestowed freely, nay, pressed on the favoured person. These poor people, whatever extravagant credulous dreams might occasionally have darted across their stupid minds, were bound to acknowledge that upon the whole they were more solidly benefited than they had dared calmly to hope for. It was different with the Melvilles. There had been no obligation on the Melvilles to spend their strength upon Mrs. Mally; nevertheless they had done it, and for naught. Strange to say it was Balmayne, so backward in ordinary circumstances, who spoke the first word, as he got up to go, which was a sign for the dispersion of the smaller fry, taking place with an almost indecorous tumultuous speed in order that each might carry the news of how he had fared individually, and what had been the general "upshot" of the will, all over the town. Mr. Melville gave himself a shake, as if to recover his balance, like a man of sense and business—a reasonable man, who would disdain to fret like a child or bear malice after the fashion of a woman.

"I am a man of few words," he said, gruffly; "but I suppose I must wish you joy of your fine inheritance, Miss Lindesay. Good day to you, Mr. Tamson; good day to you all," and he tramped out of the room.

Mrs. Melville was in haste to follow her husband.

"You are in great luck, Lizzie," she said, with a smile that was spasmodic as yet. "But I think your friend, Mrs. Mally, need not have been guilty of the deceit of pretending that she made you her heiress on account of anything you did for her son. Why, you must have been a mere child when that wretched man died! You yourself best know whether you had reason to expect what has come to light to-day. I can only say I trust not, for, if it was otherwise, I must say there has been a want of openness; but I will leave you to your own reflections. I must overtake Mr. Melville."

"Want of openness!" Mrs. Melville relieved her mind as she swiftly descended the stairs and shook off the dust of the Crown Inn from her skirts then and for ever. "I call it fair treachery in Lizzie Lindesay after the manner

in which she was received at Balmayne, and the way in which you, my poor dear Hay, were allowed to run about with her. I have been shocked to think of it, and ashamed to face Burn Foot on the subject, ever since I heard of her intended marriage with the bowing and scraping old scarecrow of a French dancing-master. I dare say it is all in the air now, though he too has played his cards well and lined his nest pretty comfortably from Mrs. Mally's pickings. It was positively wicked of her after all I did for her, and what she had known of Frenchmen."

Hay had not gone at her mother's heels as Mrs. Melville supposed. The young lady tarried a few minutes behind. At first she said with a hot face, speaking apart to her quondam friend, "You have been too rash, Lizzie; you ought not to have been in such a hurry; you know you might have waited for this," and was passing Lizzie with a mocking half-curtsey. Then Hay's better nature reasserted itself. She turned back, held out her hand, and said quickly in the same undertone, "What a 'near-begaun,' close-fisted little wretch you must think me, Lizzie, I who have so much of my own to be so angry at Mrs. Mally's money going past me. But do we ever have so much that we should not like to have a little more? However, I will say this, that since it is not to be mine, I think I would rather that you had it than anybody else, which, you will allow, is granting a good deal under the circumstances."

The minister and the doctor with much greater spontaneousness and cordiality wished Lizzie joy before they also quitted the scene.

Lizzie, still dazed and confounded, was left with nobody save Moshie and Mr. Tamson. At first Moshie did little to help her. Though he had lived so long in Scotland, he began by showing himself lamentably ignorant of law and reason to the extent of betraying a horrified conviction that a wrong had been done. He followed up the erroneous conception by an excited and still more infatuated inquiry whether redress could not be made? "For my dear friend Madame Mally's kind intentions towards myself," he declared, "I can only say they are like her, as I have always found her. I did think of refusing the

gift with the profoundest respect and gratitude as what was not demanded and as far too much of an obligation. But I think again. No, I will take it humbly with my best thanks, and let my foolish pride go. It is of infinitely more consequence that another person should be enabled to do the right thing as she will wish to do it. I know it assuredly, my dear friend," he said to the bewildered Lizzie, whose hand he took and clasped, "so there need not be the least scruple or objection on the part of Mr. and Madame Melville. As for our benefactress—I have pleasure in calling her so"—remarked Moshie, in a slightly lofty parenthesis, "she who has quitted us, alas! she would not have been offended if she had known all, for we have had regard to her benevolent wishes—we have suffered her to endow us magnificently, while we shall be rid of the frightful burden of having deprived others of their rights," he ended with an air of relief.

It was Mr. Tamson's duty, and he did not find it easy to prove to Moshie that there were no rights in the case —a conclusion which Lizzie never attempted to deny. The firmer and more unassailable the ground which even so meek a man as Mr. Tamson insisted on occupying, the blacker instead of the brighter grew the olive face of the prospective bridegroom of the heiress of St. Kennet's. When the man of business took his departure in his turn, he did not know whether to think Moshie the most accomplished of deceivers or else a harebrained enthusiast.

Lizzie had been staying with the Prendergasts when the news of Miss Mally's death arrived, and when she was summoned to be present at the reading of the will, which concerned her so nearly, she had come into the town with Chirsty, driven by Chirsty's father, bodkin fashion, in his brand-new gig. He had deposited the girls at the Crown Inn, and gone to do his wife's errands at the shops she patronized. Chirsty was at that moment waiting in another room till the business was settled. Already some of the servants had conveyed to her the wonderful intelligence that her Miss Lizzie Lindesay had succeeded to a great part of Mrs. Mally's fortune. Unable to contain herself any longer, now that the lawyer was gone, the young woman burst into the room, believing that Moshie, with

whom she was getting more at ease, who was always so patient and considerate with everybody, would forgive the intrusion.

"Oh! is it true, Miss Lizzie?" she cried. "I'm that glad and proud I'm fit to greet. Moshie will not need to dance another step unless for his pleasure. You'll be a rich leddy and gentleman, and can do what you like. Let me run up to the Miss Murdies' and be the first to tell them."

But when Chirsty saw the troubled, disconsolate faces before her, the bounding heart slackened in its gallop and began to quake. She was persuaded either that the grand news was a great mistake, or else there was some grievous mischance in the background.

Then Chirsty did what a more accomplished, more artificial person might have failed to do, she retired as precipitately as she had entered, without waiting for an answer to her question, leaving the couple in whom she was so interested to their "twa-handed crack" over their difficulty, whatever it might be.

Moshie took a quick turn through the room and came back and stood by Lizzie's side again. "Life is changed," he said in an altered, almost a harsh, voice. "You have heard what your friend, Miss Melville, said. You have been too rash, my young lady. For me, I will not be the person to hold you to a contract out of date, supplanted. On the contrary I tear it, I scatter its fragments to the winds," with an appropriate gesture of his hands—long and fine, granted they were a little claw-like; "you are free, Miss Leezzie."

"Have you tired of me, sir?" she asked timidly, and at the same time with a shade of bitterness in her tone, for she had been all the while tempted to believe, in spite of his protestations, that she had drawn forth his proposal by unwittingly working on his pity. Now, it darted across her mind that Moshie, not being calculating and grasping, seeing that she was well provided for, might think he had done enough in the past—he might even be glad of an excuse to be rid of his bargain.

"Tired!" said Moshie slowly, with the ghost of a smile on his pale lips. "Ah! well, that is not the word. But

I have the felicity to be ready, mademoiselle, to resign every pretension to your hand, when your welfare and happiness claim the resignation. The alliance was never equal; it is less so now than ever, when the necessity for it has ceased. I am glad, for your sake. I bow to your good fortune. Comprehend, I take upon myself all the blame, if there is any blame, cast on the breaking off——"

"Oh, stop stop!" cried Lizzie, piteously, for she had looked into his eyes and seen their utter hopelessness. She had recognized how the glad light and the happy, joyous importance of the last few weeks had quite died out of his face. Though he held himself up bravely, it was a drooping, beaten man whose youth lay behind him, whose country was abandoned, who was as friendless as herself, that was thus cutting loose by his own act the solitary tie he had knitted in his lifetime of exile. And this man had pressed on her his best in the darkest hour of her adversity. "What have I done that you should give me up when I want you more than ever?" protested Lizzie. "Besides, I think *you* want me, monsieur, really me—young, ignorant, silly as I am, and, indeed, I will serve you if you will let me. Do you suppose I am richer in such friends as you are, than when you proposed to shelter and cherish me in the Miss Murdies' garden? Even Mrs. Mally could not come back to me, she could only send me her money—I do not despise it; oh! no, no! I thank and bless her for it, if you will take it and me," cried Lizzie. She did not mind in the least that in so saying she was offering herself with the wealth which had just come to her to an elderly, broken-down man. If he had been in the flower of youth and prosperity she might have thought twice and been stayed by such a consideration, but it was not so in this case.

"You are generous, my little one," said Moshie, wistfully, descending several steps from his high horse and wavering a little. "But, no;" he remounted his steed with hasty steps, as if he distrusted his resolution; "I cannot profit by your generosity. It would be taking advantage of you and abusing your youth and innocence, as if I were a rogue and villain; I, who though I have had my misfortunes, have been able hitherto to call myself an honest man, and

to challenge the whole world to give me the lie," ended Moshie, with something like tragic despair.

But a wilful woman would have her way. "Before you refuse me, sir," she appealed to him, "answer to yourself, in your inmost heart, what is money worth in comparison with a friend like you?" and she clasped her hands as if Moshie's manner justified her pleading. "I know this is not what you bargained for. You were to give all and receive nothing. Yes, yes, that is the truth in plain words. You cannot contradict it. But now it is I who make the bargain; it is my turn to-day; and if I bid you accept what has not been mine an hour, something that I cannot rightly use by myself, something that Mrs. Mally would have liked you of all men to share, do you call it fair of you to say 'No'? I would have taken everything—everything freely from you. It is not like your justice, it is not like your nobility, monsieur, to decline my petition."

These words staggered him, and ultimately overcame his determination. He was not too old and stiff to kneel with high-bred grace as he kissed her hands and her hair, while Lizzie was shocked that he should go down on his knees to her, and bent towards him, imploring him to rise.

There in Mrs. Mally's room, where as some had thought she might have been that morning, "one mute shadow watching all," in the room where her son Lewis had played when a boy, where it is possible an earlier, more luckless troth had been plighted, another and a happier compact was sealed between a French gentleman and a Logie lassie.

To the credit of Logie, it applauded Lizzie for her fidelity to her pledge. Such a *contretemps* as an unexpected accession to worldly goods must have happened occasionally with regard to one or other of the principals in these freely-formed marriages in the beginning of the century, and perhaps not all were so loyal to their word as Lizzie proved. But, not a magnate of the town, Shirra or minister, interfered ineffectually to prevent the fulfilment of her engagement. Logie supported her in her constancy, maintaining stoutly that she was acting like an honourable woman, and like the auld Captain's daughter.

Lizzie did not see Adam Lauder gnash his teeth or hear

him curse his ill-luck when he heard of what he called her "windfa'." But it was a great relief to her, and to more than her, when his release came about, before either of the two marriages, celebrated respectively at Balmayne and the Manse, which were a nine days' talk in Logie. Adam was not to languish as a debtor until a horrible apprehension of Lizzie's was fulfilled—that he should in course of time deteriorate into one of the grim, mendacious men who were in the habit of slinging old stockings from the jail windows for the purpose of catching stray halfpence. The Insurance Companies were still inexorable. The Emperor continued to wash his hands of his nephew's responsibilities. But the creditors had wearied of the bootless revenge of keeping a gentleman in idleness in addition to what he had already cost them. When he was at liberty Adam left Logie precipitately, as if it were as much a boon for him to get out of sight and sound of the town, as it was to some of his old acquaintances to learn that he was gone.

The very day on which Lizzie was married, as had been planned by the Rev. John Ochiltree, with Chirsty Prendergast waiting upon her, the proudest and most devoted of "best maids," while the minister's eldest son acted as "best man" to Moshie, the post, travelling slowly in those benighted times, brought a letter from Mrs. Lindesay. The lady announced that she was coming as soon as she could be spared from her family engagements to take Lizzie back with her to the West Country. "For of course, Lizzie," the letter went on to say, "you will go no further in that daft-like marriage you had made up your mind to—it would be a crying shame—were it only on your dear brothers' account. You owe it to them and to me that we should be the gainers by your fine legacy. In fact I do not know what Mrs. Mally was thinking of. I fancy she must have gone doited before she made that will. For it must have been Mickle who took pity on her ne'er-do-weel son, and if anybody was to be rewarded for it, surely Mickle's sons ought to have come before his daughter."

Lizzie sent Moshie the letter, for according to an old Scotch "freit" which Chirsty jealously guarded from any

danger of being broken, Lizzie was on no account to encounter her bridegroom on her wedding morning till the two met to be married in the Manse drawing-room.

"Ah, well, madame, you will come too late," said Moshie, making a low bow and addressing an impalpable being with stern politeness. "The little one was right. She has need of me still."

CHAPTER LIV.

AN IDYLLIC HONEYMOON.—GREEN GASCONS.

MOSHIE and Lizzie had been married three months. They had not deferred the wedding a day. The marriage settlements had been written by Mr. Tamson, who, being a plain man, did much of his work with his own hands. As he did not represent a great firm of lawyers, with a dozen clerks to share his shortcomings, he was able to draw up the document before the time originally fixed for the ceremony. The couple had not even put off the event in order to procure a more sumptuous trousseau for Lizzie, better befitting the lady of St. Kennet's than the junior teacher in the Miss Murdies' school.

Moshie, though a Frenchman, cared little in general for toilets; if he had a tender liking for anything it was for the simple, girlish frocks in which his best pupil, his "little Meess," had originally beamed brightly upon him in the Town Hall and at Mrs. Mally's.

But M. and Madame de Saye did not occupy the tiny flat of four rooms which, in their united prudence, they had first talked of for a home. There was no fit house on St. Kennet's; neither did Moshie propose to risk Lizzie's fortune in amateur farming; so that the pair were under no obligation to quit Logie. They took a pleasant, roomy house in a large garden on the outskirts. House and garden alone appeared to present an ample field for Moshie's energies. Though he had given up his classes, there was no fear of his being idle and suffering from the horrors of *ennui*. He was the busiest, and perhaps that was one

reason why he showed himself the most contented of men. The terraces and trellises, summer-houses and tool-houses, he projected and executed were a wonder to behold. So were the "presses" or cupboards, chiffoniers, screens, brackets, &c., he fitted up. There never had been anything seen in Logie like the drawing-room kennel he provided for Mignonne. He grafted fruit-trees, he set flowers after processes of his own, which were as striking as they were successful. It was seldom that he had leisure now for looking over the papers in his bureau, the litter of which had vexed the tidy soul of Merrin of the Crown Inn.

As for Lizzie, it must have been a delight to those who loved her to see how she blossomed and flourished, like one of Moshie's plants, partly reared and long kept in the stunting depressing shade, at last brought out and established in the full kindly light and warmth of the sun. Lizzie had never since the death of her mother, when she was a very little girl, known anything like the loving confidence and sympathy, the ceaseless care, the indulgence, and petting which she had lived to receive. She could not have imagined treatment equal to the chivalrous courtesy, the endless consideration which was Moshie's way with all women, above all with those nearly related to him. Lizzie had been accustomed to regard her father, the auld Captain, with justice, as a true man, a faithful friend to women. She had often marvelled, a little indignantly and sorrowfully, at his long-suffering goodness, where a delicate female's exactions and airs and the teasing dependence of little children were in question. But there was a wide difference between his gruff masterfulness, however subdued, and Moshie's gracious, gentle rule, which at the same time nobody contested, because of its very graciousness and gentleness, and the something intangible in it which said law and order were law and order still, however generously wielded, and must be implicitly obeyed.

Lizzie had never been so much of a girl—paradoxical as it may sound—so fearless and light-hearted as after she was a wife. She turned back as it were and fulfilled the experience she had missed, while no one was so charmed as Moshie to listen to her light foot tripping about the house, to distinguish the ring of her laughter, to be called and

coaxed from his serious duties to inspect some triumph of her housekeeping skill, some pretty maidenly device which, until she was a matron, she had not had the power to put into practice. Nobody would have noticed it if she had.

It was Lizzie herself who said Moshie had two Mignonnes playing games and tricks together, competing for his favour and capering to meet him after the shortest absence. She had actually to put force on herself, she who had been a quiet, almost demure girl, to remember her father's maxims and to behave in a manner worthy of the Madame, in whom Moshie had such faith and trust, that he gave her *carte blanche* to do as she pleased, and never found fault with her conduct, though it might not be altogether suited to his somewhat stately ideas. She was on her mettle when she went with her husband to sup at the Miss Murdies' or the Shirra's—nay, or at Balmayne; for Mrs. Melville was far too wise a woman of the world, too jealous with regard to her own popularity and character for sense and spirit, to keep up a feud with the de Sayes. But when Lizzie carried away Moshie to drink tea with Chirsty Prendergast and with the gudewife and gudeman of Sauchieden, the young wife "got out her horns." She wanted more than the obligation of a reflected dignity to tame her. She talked and laughed and kept the others talking and laughing till they were weary. Moshie would shake his head a little, but it was so benign and gratified a shake that it was like a challenge to further achievements in the same line. In order to preserve her balance, Lizzie needed either some heavier burden to bear, or a little child in her arms to convert her later wilder girlhood into sweet womanhood—ever thoughtful in its blitheness.

Lizzie went on with her French lessons *viva voce*, till she could chatter as fast in French as in Scotch to Moshie. For she said his Scotch education had been far too long neglected, and it was for her to take it under her particular care. It might be as part of this Scotch education that Moshie read Froissart in the evening to Lizzie, and pointed out what sworn allies the couple's respective nations had been. Then Lizzie would go out into the lobby and look up wistfully at her father's despatch-box, which she had hung beside Moshie's sword. On Moshie's birthday, and

on the anniversaries of some of the auld Captain's battles, she hung laurel wreaths impartially over both.

She played Jacobite airs on her piano till Moshie could accompany them on his violin, and she sang to him all the songs about the King over the water, which recalled St. Germains-en-Laye. But there was no song Moshie liked so well as that ballad on Lizzie's namesake, where her name was pronounced as the French tongue spoke it. He seemed to derive a mysterious pride and pleasure, just tinged with pensiveness, in entering into the triumph of the Highland chief who had started under a cloud, when he announced—certainly with more boisterous emphasis than Moshie would have employed in similar circumstances—

"Oh, Leezzie, lass, ye maun ken little
Gin sae be ye think that o' me."

Moshie would dwell on the situation and put pondering, pertinent questions. Was it that the Demoiselle Leezzie could not see for herself? Did her chevalier labour under the necessity of proclaiming his order? Was it that she could not love him while she believed him of "*laigh degree*"? But that was not satisfactory. That was not love which laughs at rank and profession, youth and age, beauty and ugliness. Mr. Kennet Mackenzie might be happy in one sense that he had the privilege of laying his chieftainship, his lands and castles in the north, at the feet of Miss Leezzie Lindesay—but in another he was not happy—oh! not at all, for he had to stoop to buy her dear friendship and willing consent to his suit, which ought to have been won without purchase.

There were only two instances in which Moshie preserved a sensitive, pained reserve in return for his wife's happy frankness. In the course of Lizzie's intercourse with him she said to him, once with joyous conviction, "Surely, there are no husbands like French husbands," and he felt bound to qualify the statement.

"There are good husbands and wives everywhere, the good God be praised for it; but I think, my dear, they are commoner here than anywhere else. My mother was a good woman, and my father thought he had never seen a woman like her from the first time he met her a young girl

fresh from her convent. We were of our province, we de Sayes, and I believe the last of us did our best in our generation, and that our people would not have risen up and cast us out. But what would you have? We had to fight for our class and our King and Queen. Our King was an honest gentleman, and our beautiful, persecuted Queen ought to have led us on to victory instead of defeat. They were martyrs, and so were multitudes of innocent victims who paid the penalty for the sins of their fathers and brothers. But I dare not stop there, Leezzie," and Moshie's dark face grew stern. "Power, without limit, wielded by tyrants—idleness, luxury, love of pleasure, cruel indifference to the sufferings of the poor and miserable—bring all the vices and crimes with final destruction in their train. They ate us through as a canker, they made some of us demons. Others saw to what everything was tending, and fought against it, to the renunciation of their birthright and their fraternization with the down-trodden, maddened *canaille*—all in vain we were doomed, bad and good alike. We had brought ruin upon us, and we paid the debt with what courage and faith were left us."

Lizzie never liked to tempt Moshie into these discussions, which were full of pain and sorrow to him, and left him discomposed and saddened for hours afterwards. But it was a different matter, and one of real regret to her, that her husband remained equally reticent on details which could not have had any political significance, but must have been of purely personal interest. She would fain have had him talk of his early days under his father's roof; she craved for minute descriptions of the life led in the grey pepper-box chateau. She had long looked at the engraving of the chateau from a respectful distance in the Crown Inn. She had the opportunity of regarding it near at hand, when by her own doing it had the place of honour above the drawing-room chimney-piece in her own and her husband's house. Moshie was openness itself on the first hard struggles of himself and his compatriots in exile. He could be brought to talk, though with more reluctance, and less freedom, on various episodes of his escape and of the terrible and tragic scenes of the Revolution which preceded the abandonment of his country, and were public property.

But he always put her off when she questioned him on what one would have thought would have cost him less to recall. "Softly, softly, my child; at some future day I may give you the narrative, the illustrations—not yet! Even then they will sound like travellers' tales, I fear. This I will say, in that tower were my dear mother's rooms, which should have been yours, if the chateau had been mine to-day. But as it is not, and so far as I can see never will be, why should we trouble—what you call *fash*—ourselves about a castle in Spain, perhaps wander and get lost and break our hearts among its desolate rooms? No, no, rest tranquil. We are very happy, my second and best *Mignonne*, as we are—is it not so?"

As a matter of fact, Lizzie knew little more of her husband's family than that they had been people of the southern province of Gascony. His father and mother were, of course, long dead, and Moshie himself had been an only child.

It was in the late autumn, one of those open, moist days which fox-hunters, farmers, and gardeners love. The scent is strong, the furrows in the field are soft and pliable as rich loam should be. The subtle odour of decayed leaves is anything save unwelcome to the man who meditates on leaf mould and a fine show of vegetables and flowers in his beds and borders during the ensuing year. The sun sets in a red fog, through which the yellow, russet, and crimson-streaked leaves on bush and hedgerow are dimly visible through webs of gossamer.

Moshie, like all far-seeing, energetic gardeners, was making haste before the frost came on, delving, raking, and top-dressing his domain.

In the mean time the young laird and lady of Burn Foot, together with the very last of the swallows, were availing themselves of the final instalment of milder weather to take their flight southwards, leaving the river bank and the fir-wood, with its craws, far behind them. The crouse, jaunty old laird remained in solitary possession, well content that Steenie was safe and in good keeping, while his father counted on favourable accounts in every letter which should reach him.

Moshie was taking immense care of some gooseberry

plants which he had got in exchange for specimens of another variety from one of the many amateur gardeners in Logie. Lizzie had been dubious of the wisdom of the exchange, and puzzled by her head gardener's excitement over this individual gooseberry—a little dark green, hairy berry—not to be compared in her mind to the yellow sulphur, or coarser red, till all at once she remembered that the berries she had been inclined to undervalue were known in the horticultural nomenclature of Logie as "Green Gascons." The moment the name came to the tip of her tongue, Madame Lizzie ratted and turned tail in the most shamefully unblushing fashion. She exalted the Green Gascons to the skies, and sang the praises of their sweetness of flavour till Moshie's eyes first sparkled and then grew a little dim in their grateful acknowledgment.

Lizzie, in her smartest London-smoke-seeded silk pelisse and new Leghorn hat, was bound for a calling expedition in the town, from which Moshie had begged off. He had the very good reason that gentlemen never dreamt of wasting any portion of their abundance of leisure in making calls along with their wives, or, for that matter, without them, in Logie. Moshie, indeed, would have sacrificed himself cheerfully if Lizzie had desired it; but Lizzie did not desire it, would never, indeed, if she had known, have gone against his inclinations. She only interrupted him at this moment to remind him that if he worked too long and over-heated himself, the "green" weather might contain more risk than the hardest frost. She also wished to show off that Leghorn of hers, and asked him his candid opinion of it when it was worn with her smartest pelisse.

Whereupon Moshie made the prettiest compliments conceivable to the blooming young face smiling up in his. He kissed her hand as he had done among the Miss Murdies' sweet-williams and southernwood, and tied one of her sandals which had come undone, while she put up her foot on his bent knee for the purpose.

CHAPTER LV.

MOSHIE TAKES AN EVENING STROLL WITH MR. AD-AM.

LIZZIE did not stay long over her calls, and when she came back, though the sun was down and a rising moon had taken its place, Moshie was only finishing his operations. She went straight to him, not heeding that she stepped through bed and border. Was it to scold him for not attending to her warning? or was it to draw forth another gallant compliment? It could hardly be, for all the roses were gone from Lizzie's cheeks, her blue eyes were clouded with anxiety and alarm, and her lips were trembling in an effort to keep them still.

"What is this that has happened, *ma mie?*" cried her husband, the moment he saw the face, every line of which he had learned to interpret, and he threw down his last Green Gascon so recklessly that he snapped it across and trampled it underfoot as he hurried to his wife. "But no, you are fatigued, chilled; tell me nothing. Let us go; let us enter and wait till you are rested and refreshed." Moshie would not hear a word till he had led her into the house and seated her in her own little chair in the cosiest corner of the hearth, where a bright fire was already burning, lighting up with the blithest "blinks" the pretty home-like room. He removed the Leghorn hat as softly as if it had been a child's head he was touching, and urged her to say what she would consent to swallow of her home-brewed wine, chocolate, or tea, before she exerted herself to speak.

But Lizzie would taste nothing, while she clung to her husband's hand, and gasped with dry lips, "It is Adam Lauder."

Moshie was an old acquaintance of Mr. Ad-am's. In addition he knew all that there was to tell about him and Lizzie, every syllable. It was not that Lizzie had boasted to her husband as some women are said to boast of their conquests—when it came to that there was nothing to boast of. But in the strange delight of the intimately assured relation,

"*Half husband, I ween, and half daddy,*"

in which Moshie stood to her, Lizzie, in retrospect, poured forth the confidences that at the time had been confined to her own breast, because she had not possessed mother or sister or true friend to whom she could breathe them.

Moshie had listened always with the same tender half-humorous interest. He had heard the history of the "pig-dog" with the fancied likeness to Lark, which had remained among Lizzie's belongings. He had declared pleasantly that he did not see why she should not keep the *gage d'amitié*, particularly when he had not been able to give her any *gages d'amour* worth speaking of. He had found a corner and constructed a bracket for Lark's effigy. Sometimes Lizzie would contemplate it and speculate how many girls Adam might have fancied and run after since she had last seen him, and whether he had happened to present to one of them, as a peculiarly choice trophy, her teapot, supposing it had survived the wreck of his fortunes? Well, she should never want it now, so that the unknown girl who had succeeded her in Adam's light liking was heartily welcome both to it and to the teapot. Lizzie had generally ended with the magnanimous hope that he would "range himself"—in Moshie's phrase—find his true fate and be as happy as she was.

"What is it that there is about Mr. Ad-am, little one?" inquired Moshie, soothingly, and without a single painful *arrière pensée*.

"Raoul, it is dreadful. Adam Lauder has been in Logie, hanging about the Star Tavern since Wednesday, and this is Saturday. He has been at home doing nothing ever since he got his discharge from his creditors. I suppose he has grown tired and come back here to try what amusement he can find. But oh! they say that word will come from Edinburgh by the coach to-night to issue a warrant for his apprehension. He will be put in the jail again on Monday morning, charged with setting his mills on fire, and if he is not cleared he will be banished for life at the very least."

"That would be frightful if it were true," said Moshie, incredulously. "But without doubt it is a false accusation if it is not a sorry jest. He will clear himself. It will be

all right presently, if you will not cry and tremble so, my poor frightened pigeon of a wife."

"No, it will not," said Lizzie desperately. "Come close, Raoul; stoop down till I can whisper in your ear. It *is* true. I have known it all the time, for more than a year now. I could not tell you: for it was not my secret, you know. I was at the fire, and I saw something combustible thrown upon the flames when they were sinking down, which made them leap up again with renewed fury."

"But there was a great crowd, my child," Moshie naturally objected. "If nobody else saw this remarkable occurrence, surely you mistake; you deceive yourself. Your nerves have received a shock; you are dreaming, Leezzie."

"I think other people in the crowd must have seen it too," persisted Lizzie, unable to take courage from his words. "But they were terrified to speak out at the time, and are only coming forward with their tale now. Mind, I cannot tell if it was Adam who threw that cake of tar or turpentine, or if it was that horrid uncle of his lurking about in the neighbourhood while he pretended to be out of the way. But I am certain Adam knew of the act and connived at it; and now that there is confirmation of the accusation starting up, people remember that Adam Lauder was very strange in his manner all the evening, at the party at Burn Foot, on the night of the fire. I remember that also; and when attention was called to the light in the sky, he started up, and before a word was said to that effect, cried out that it was his mills which were on fire. Oh! what is to become of him, Raoul?" Lizzie wrung her hands. "And what am I to do? I have never breathed a word of what I have told you just now to any living mortal save yourself, though it has been a sore secret to have in my breast; but they say everybody who was at the party that night is to be summoned and examined. Hay Oliphant will have to leave her man at Montpellier, if Steenie Oliphant is allowed to stay behind because of his delicate health. She must come over and give evidence. And if they cross-question me and get a guess that I ken more than I say, I will not be able to keep back the truth any longer. You are wise and you have seen trouble, can you not help us?"

"*Miséricorde!* if you are right, why does not the unhappy fellow flee while there is yet time?" protested Moshie quickly.

"I do not know," answered Lizzie from her depth of depression; "some people think he has no idea what is coming upon him. Even if he had it is too late, for though the warrant is not out against him yet, and he will not be taken up the morn's morn (to-morrow morning) because it is the Lord's day, the Shirra's officers have their eyes upon him and will not let him out of their sight till he is laid in the jail—not as a debtor this time, but as a criminal detected in the act. Oh! poor miserable Adam! It was dishonest and wicked of him, I know all that very well, but I cannot think of it now. I can only think of him as he came first to Logie, and of his sister Janet who stood up for him, and his poor father and mother."

"Hush! permit me to think," said Moshie excitedly. "Something must be done to avert this catastrophe, which will not rebuild the mills. Twenty-four hours of grace make a point in our favour. The word of a gentleman! we should have thought much of such a point, and made our own of it, across the Channel, when I was young. Proceed, Leezzie, let me get every crumb of information you have gathered."

"There was not much more," said Lizzie, looking wistfully in his face, and resting her clasped hands on his shoulder as he stooped over her. "I heard the tale first from Lady Sprott, and I thought it might be just one of her stories—with which she runs away before she has had time to listen to half that has been said. I knew Adam Lauder was in the town, for I had been amazed to get a glimpse of him going into the Star Tavern, and between you and me, Raoul, I am not sure that he was altogether sober. I could not rest; I went to the Shirra's; I was sure Mrs. Lamb would know the best and the worst, for Adam was an old favourite of hers. She could not keep the secret to herself—she told me everything without pressing. The Shirra is neither to haud nor bind, he is so distressed, but of course he cannot move, and his voice is not to be heard in the matter. His wife says it is his private opinion, from the information he has received, that a trial would go

hard with Adam. His only chance is to escape between this and Monday morning. But how is he to get away, when even a hint of what is in the wind may make him betray himself? It is very likely he is without money, and his steps are dogged."

"Never mind!" said Moshie, defiantly. "Worse forts have been scaled, and worse riddles read. Leave it to me, my Leezzie. Good! I think I can foil law and justice though I have been a peaceful citizen these many years. Bah! I have not been *suspect*, condemned, a fugitive for nothing. With more than twenty-four hours to spare, I should be a fool and a donkey if I were beaten. We shall have our Sunday dinner, my wife, and invite Mr. Ad-am to take the luck of the pot with us. What so natural, so proper? No person will dream that it is anything save a becoming act of hospitality on our part. I shall bring Mr. Ad-am home myself in the eye of the public, if you will, before the congregation coming out of the afternoon church, to which you can go. We stroll, we saunter at ease with our hearts as light as feathers, to the gate of this house."

"But I do not understand," said Lizzie in perplexity. "I do not see what good that will do save to bring suspicion on us."

"Hold! listen, once more. We have to dine in the bosom of the family, to talk over old stories, to do honour to your tea-table, to spend the evening, and sup. Our guest may remain over the night, who knows? since we have a spare bed for a friend. All the time the officers of justice do not walk to and fro like sentinels, but dodge about like thieves in the road without. Listen again, my child. That road Mr. Ad-am never re-enters, for the very good reason that he has gone by another road an age before. He has passed out by the back way, wearing, not my coat and hat—no, that would be too outrageous—but other clothes which I shall procure for him before the shutting of the shops this Saturday evening. I accompany him in my house coat, as I might go to study the weather in the garden, till he is quite clear of the town. I lend him the necessary money. It is to us a brass farthing, for happily we are rich, my Leezzie, we can help a friend in misfortune without a thought. Behold, he will be stupid

indeed—and a man is not usually stupid when a prison is behind him—if he does not get to the Ferry, cross the abominable sea, and find another ship and put another more detestable sea—the grand ocean this time—between him and his pursuers."

"Raoul, you are the best and cleverest——"

"*Chut!* Do not give me my reward till I have done my duties and won my spurs," protested Moshie, gaily, his spirits having risen illimitably with the exciting exigencies of the situation.

The scheme was entered upon on the lines Moshie had planned. Only Lizzie in a quiver of anxiety and alarm, with her heart pulsing in her throat, could not face the whole population of Logie in order to worship with them, in the solemn peace and rest of the day, in the parish kirk which Moshie was wont to attend with her.

According to universal custom there was only one servant—whose "Sabbath in" it happened to be—at home, and she was the elderly cook engaged with the dinner in the kitchen. Her mistress could volunteer, without difficulty, to open the front door and admit the rare visitor who should turn up at such a season.

It was a dim, foggy afternoon, not unlike that of the preceding day. Lizzie sat watching for what was to happen, so stirred by it that she had to get up and move about the room and the house sometimes, to calm her nerves and preserve her self-control.

At last the front gate creaked on its hinges, and, peeping out, Lizzie could spy the two figures she expected, her husband's long and lean, Adam Lauder's burlier than when she had first made his acquaintance. His gait was steady, if slow and heavy for Adam. He was certainly free from the effects of intoxicating drink to day, for which she was thankful; while the mottled texture and burnt-in colour of his face, with the eyes at once fiery and vaporous, betrayed what his habits had become. His wife—if he ever got a wife, of which probably he had not the smallest doubt—would not have all her sorrows to seek in one day. His dress, too, was more carelessly worn than it had been formerly. The blue coat with the gilt buttons, the buff vest, the kerseymere trousers, the shoes with the large

knot of riband on each instep, were still good of their kind—probably the heavily-burdened, sharply-tried inmates of the Berwickshire manse could not bear that these should fail—but both dress and wearer had acquired another air from that of the dashing hunting-coat and buckskins of old on the old Adam Lauder.

There was a great contrast between the personalities of the two men before Lizzie. Adam's swaggering, beginning to slouch a little, and just a trifle untidy and shaky. Moshie's in the faithful version of the old uniform, quaint, scrupulously dainty, in keeping with the straight back, the long legs—the least thing in the world spindle-shanked—the clear-cut, hale, brown face, and bright, dark eyes, on which years told with so small a result.

The gentlemen did not come into the house at once. They lingered in the garden, walking here and there, along the innumerable "cats' walks," which were among the *chefs d'œuvre* of Moshie's gardening. He, the master of the house, could tread these narrow paths as lightly and with as much freedom as Lizzie could follow them. But Adam Lauder's bulk took a ponderous aspect, filling the minute space, and looking ludicrously overbalanced, and inclined to topple over on the slender footing.

Lizzie continued narrowly inspecting the two men, and she seemed to catch glimpses, as the saunterers turned and re-turned—walking, of course, not abreast, but the one in front of the other—of shades of doggedness, crestfallenness, scaredness, coming and going, and at last settling down on Adam's face. She supposed rightly that Moshie was cautiously and in the most delicate manner conveying to the companion whose face was hidden from him, the real nature of the position in which he stood, and the only loophole of escape that remained open to him.

Lizzie's eyes wandered restlessly farther afield, their glance darting through the surrounding shrubs and trees as far as the gate where Moshie and his guest had lately entered. Her heart stood still for a second, a little cry rose to her lips. Another pair of men were pausing for a moment in the high road without, and staring through the bars of the gate. No native of Logie could fail to identify another native. Was not the thick snub nose, scenting its

prey from afar, the nose of Nicky Bryson? Was not the high shoulder forming a background to the nose the shoulder of Dunky Cairns? And did not every child in the town know that Nicky Bryson and Dunky Cairns were the two Shirra officers of Logie?

It was a subdued man on his best behaviour who at last entered the house with Moshie, hailed Lizzie for the first time as Madame de Saye, and at Moshie's bidding led her to the dining-room, and put her at the head of the table opposite the master of the house, while the visitor took his appointed place at her right hand.

Adam Lauder glanced round him as in a dream at the handsome room, the well-appointed table, glittering with crystal and silver, and at the host who never appeared so dignified and gracious as when he dispensed his hospitality. At last Adam took stock of Lizzie, the mistress of all, and he was forced to own to himself with a gulp of envy and chagrin that he had never seen Lizzie look better. She had recovered all the pretty plumpness and sweet fresh rosiness which she had lost in her season of deepest mourning. She was charmingly dressed, to Adam's regretful mind, in a pea-bloom Norwich crêpe, which set off her fairness. She appeared younger than ever in the badge of matronhood—which all young wives wore then, and were as happy and proud to wear it as they were to cherish their wedding-rings. Lizzie's version of the ancient curch was a little lace cap, the light caul of which added an additional half-inch of height to her stature, while its airy borders framed the whole contour of her face from the broad white forehead to the slight peak of the chin. The somewhat severe frame was broken in upon and relieved by the butterfly bow nestling among the auburn curls.

Poor Adam coughed over his soup to stifle what was akin to a groan, and was thankful when Moshie drank wine with him in order to hide his disorder.

Madame de Saye was not at all confused—at least not so far as Adam could see. She seemed perfectly at ease on her promotion. Her casual remarks to her husband, in which she addressed him by his outlandish Christian name—as if a man of Moshie's years had not long outlived the familiarity of a Christian name!—breathed a thoroughly

good understanding between them. Her sole concern was that of any other conscientious young hostess, to render her guest as comfortable as possible.

Indeed, both Lizzie and Moshie were sorry from the bottom of their hearts for the scapegrace who ran a risk of atoning heavily for his delinquencies. Husband and wife did their utmost to reassure him, and render his last hours in Logie—the very last he was ever likely to spend there—happier than he had any right to find them. Under the generous treatment, the mercurial temperament of Adam brightened up considerably, and Richard was himself again in spite of what had come and gone.

By the time the little party repaired to the drawing-room, they had only a few more minutes to spend together. The dusk had fallen. The Shirra officers in the road would be off their guard, satisfied that Mr. Adam Lauder had stayed to dinner with his former friends. If to dinner, why not to supper? Nicky and Dunky might with easy minds resort to Lucky Finlay's, the nearest public-house, and have a gill to refresh them, before they returned to their post and tracked their victim back to his quarters in the town.

CHAPTER LVI.

A HOUSE WITHOUT ITS MASTER.

Moshie left the drawing-room to take such precautions as were relegated to the last moment. Lizzie and Adam stood on the hearthrug alone in the gloaming.

"This is a very nice place you have got," said Adam, clearing his throat and speaking in a tone which was just a shade patronizing, while he took it upon him to stir the fire that did not need stirring. 'Will you allow me to say that I'm glad you're so well set down and to all appearance so—so comfortable." He could not bring himself to say happy, it went so against the grain with him—whatever it might do with Lizzie.

"Thank you," said Lizzie, quickly.

"We must take what fortune sends us," went on Adam, with an attempt at philosophy. "I've heard that a lass may go farther and fare worse than thole an auld man, especially if he's as brisk and fine a body as Moshie."

"I do not know what you mean by an auld man and a body," said Lizzie, firing up, for Adam's tone was so self-conscious and full of a lack-a-daisical "well, I dare say—after all—you're well quit of me—if you could only be brought to see it." It was infinitely provoking. "I would not wish my husband to be an hour younger, unless that we might have a longer life to spend together. As it is, if I'm destined to survive him here, I hope, I pray it may be but for a short time. He is younger in heart, nobler in spirit than any man I ever knew."

Adam stared. "Well done!" he exclaimed, after a moment's pause, not flinching as at an implied rebuke, rather with an ostentatious note of admiration. "It is no more than you should say, for it is plain that he is a good man to you, and he is doing me a right good turn. No, I would never have looked for such a cold-blooded admission as some women in your shoon do not hesitate to make—that an auld man's 'brass' will buy a young wife or widow a new 'pan.' Forby the brass happens to be yours, not Moshie's. Eh! Lizzie, woman, let me say, once for all," broke out Adam, with a mixture of passion and bitterness, "that if this windfa' of yours had but come a wee sooner, it would have made a hantle odds to you and me."

"I can never be too deeply thankful it did not," cried Lizzie, springing up from the seat she had taken. "I would have you know, sir, that though I had the whole world to choose from, I would not have another man than mine, not though he were King of Britain."

"Well—a—well, it's all right if you're pleased," said Adam, with the ghost of a sneer. "We'll not be so unmannerly as to hint at soor plooms."

Moshie came in at this moment, and hurried out Adam to pull on the coat and cap provided for him. When he came back, Lizzie was still fuming at his incorrigible self-conceit; she could hardly cool down and soften in time to bid him a friendly good-bye. Yet the bluster, hardening

into insolence in which he had indulged at the last, might be, in part, a mask for very different feelings.

In the mean time he was observing with would-be carelessness, that it was far too early in the year for "guisin'," * and reminding her how he had once led a party of "guisards" to the auld Captain's door on Hogmanay.

How well Lizzie remembered it! Because of Adam Lauder, who had been got up as a stage sailor, and had rollicked, the "cock" of a humbler company, the whole band had been admitted into the drawing-room. They had nearly frightened little Hill out of his wits, though Geordie and Mickle and the maid-servants had enjoyed the uproar and scuffle. As for her, she had excused Adam's boisterous gambols because of what she had been pleased to consider their spirit and fun. She wondered at her old self to-night, and asked herself, with a shade of severity, where could have been the charm which had seemed to hang about Adam? Why, he was so foolish and reckless at this very moment as to go away, for ever, in the act of whistling—on the Sabbath night, of all nights—

"Hey! Maggie, Ho! Maggie!
Hey! Maggie Lauder!"

But Lizzie was wrong as well as unfair both to herself and him. The glory might be departed, or it might be draggled and smirched beyond recognition, but it had existed—that perennial glory of young manhood in its strength.

Peggy in the kitchen was busy washing up her dishes, somewhat resentful in her sturdy, Presbyterian Sabbatarianism that she had dishes to wash, especially an extra set, on the "Sawbath-day." She could barely hear the opening of the side-door which Moshie was wont to use when he went with Mignonne for a stroll in his grounds. It would be hardly possible for her, in the clatter she was making, to distinguish the additional click of the back gate; even if she did so, there was no reason why Moshie should not prolong his stroll, with or without a friend.

Except for the sounds in the kitchen, a dead silence fell

* Masquerading once common in Scotland during the last or first nights of a year.

on the house, only broken by the pattering feet of Mignonne. She had been left behind and was restless without her master. She kept trying whether the mat at the drawing-room door or the mat at the foot of the stairs was the most desirable spot on which she could court oblivion under the circumstances.

If Lizzie was not restless like Mignonne, she was nervous She tried to read her evening chapter. She took out a volume of Blair from the bookcase and endeavoured to make herself mistress of the contents of the first sermon that turned up, as a compensation for having missed Mr. Ochiltree's afternoon discourse, but she could not fix her attention. She kept telling herself that this evening of disturbance and trepidation was very unlike an ordinary Sunday evening in its peace and quietness. She kept stealing to the window, as if somebody was listening to her footsteps, and peering through the darkness to see what it was impossible for her any longer to discern. She was in search of quite familiar, common-place figures which had only been invested with attributes of terror within the last twenty-four hours. It was Nicky Bryson in his shabby coat with the red neck and cuffs, and Dunky Cairns in his patched grey trousers, whom she longed yet dreaded to distinguish through the bushes. Were the men still hovering before the front gate, or was their absence an alarming sign that they had somehow or other penetrated the trick which was being played upon them, had caught the scent, and were in hot pursuit? Lizzie would fain have pulled up the window to reconnoitre, but she felt as if she dared not, with unsuspecting Peggy in the background.

After a miserable hour it was a relief to hear the side-door open, though Lizzie knew by the very manner in which the latch was lifted that the new-comer was not her husband. It was only Nelly, the housemaid, coming back with her "neighbour," a younger fellow-servant, from the privilege of "their Sawbath out." The two girls came in with a certain hurry and excitement, immediately followed by loud talking below stairs, which seemed to resound through the silence of the upper regions. Lizzie in the emergency crept as far as the banisters.

"Losh, Peggy!" Nelly was saying, "what for is Nicky

Bryson and Dunky Cairns hanging about oor muckle gate?"

"Hoo suld I ken!" answered Peggy disdainfully, for she was still a little out of temper. "The road outside of the gate is no oors. It's free to ony idle men that like to stand there."

"But I tell you they've stude and gane back, and fore there, this half-hour and mair," persisted Nelly.

"And hoo do you come to ken that?" counter-questioned Peggy, at once searchingly and sardonically.

"Weel—" said the rash Nelly, not so glibly as she had spoken before, and then paused.

"Weel?" echoed Peggy, with a marked increase of mocking sarcasm.

"I'll tell you, Peggy," interposed a more youthful and artless voice. "Me and Nelly were coming from oor Auntie's—Auntie Ailie is auntie to baith o' us, ye ken."

"Never mind your Auntie," said Peggy, peremptorily, checking a digression.

"I'm no minding," protested the unsophisticated speaker. "The lauds that ludge at Auntie's were gien us a convoy."

"I daursay!" exclaimed the unsympathetic Peggy, who was on the wrong side of forty.

"It hadna chappet eight," hurried on the brow-beaten narrator, instinctively taking the defensive cue, "and it was a fine nicht; we stood too."

"I daursay!" chimed in Peggy again, like a chorus.

"We were a geyan while crackin', but the men afore us were longer, and when we came up to them it was the Shirra offishers."

"And when I speered what they were wantin' at oor gate," broke in Nelly, who had by this time recovered her equanimity, and did not wish to be deprived of all the *éclat* of telling the story, "Dunky leuch and swore they were just looking after ony gentry Moshie micht be keeping company wi'. Then I up and vowed he would get his trouble for his pains, since there was neither gentle nor simple keeping company wi' the maister, the day."

"You were wrang there, lass," Peggy condescended to correct her. "We hae had company sin' you gaed out.

We hae had Mr. Awdam Lauther, that was wont to be in the paper-mills that were brunt doon, dining wi' us."

"Oh! but he was naebody," said Nelly lightly. "The gentry Dunky meant but to be foreign gentry, you ken they travel up frae the coast whiles, sea-farin chields wi' rings in their lugs, no speakin' a word o' civilized English that a decent man or woman can understand, and dealing in smuggled gudes. There's nae great harm in the creatures. The maister comes from foreign parts hissel', and can parley-voo wi' them, and the mistress is fain to gie them bite and soup. But that is no to keep company wi' smugglers whom offishers can tak up, on the Sawbath day. My birse was up and I would hae said mair to Dunky, gin it were na that ane o' the lauds wha convoyed us was his gude sister's son. Is Mr. Awdam Lauther gane for the nicht, or am I to lay his plate at supper?"

"Weel, I dinna richt ken," admitted Peggy, in a tone made up of uncertainty and annoyance at the uncertainty; "I didna hear the front door open. The mistress seemed to tak' a second thocht after Mr. Lauther cam, and left the gentlemen, and telled me to mak' doon the spare bed, in case the veesiter suld bide the nicht. He may be 'bidin' for onything that I can say to the contrary. He and the maister 'bode so long stravaigin among the floors and busses afore denner that I thocht the fish would be biled to rags and the tawties clean spiled. I did think I heard the maister gang oot for a turn again after denner. But if sae, he didna tak' the beast Meenen wi' him. It has been wanderin' up and doon and scartin at the basses, for a' the world like an evil speerit. I canno' thole to hear till't. It is as gin some ill were gaun' to happen to the hoose."

"Hoots! no; naething o' the kind," said Nelly, whose turn it was to be derisive. "Meenen, for as wise as she is, is aye like that when the maister leaves her ahint and the hoose is quiet. I was wonderin' whether I michtna just slip out and tell Nicky and Dunky that there's nae company here but Mr. Awdam Lauther, and he's gaun' to 'bide the nicht. It would let the honest men—no' that young nane o' them—hame to their warm beds!"

"I would like to see you try," cried Peggy, more irate than ever. "A fell-like thing for a lass to tak' tidings

oot o' her maister's hoose to a pair o' impident, meddlin' Shirra offishers. It's as like as no they're drawin' a score afore your nose. They'll no score me. Ay, Nelly Gallowa', I see through you, ye glaiket tawpie. Gin it werna for Dunky Cairns's Hairry, as glaiket as yoursel, it's no you that would fash your thoomb whither twa honest men, no that young, were keepit out o' their warm beds or no."

The altercation came to a sudden end with the silence more apparent, because of the strife of tongues which had preceded it. The little French clock over the chimney-piece tinkled its warning. Mrs. Mally's watch at Lizzie's belt ticked as if it had been a death-watch. Mignonne would not be coaxed to her couch, but continued her uneasy perambulations and expressions of discontent with her improvised quarters.

The family kept early hours, and presently Nelly came in with the supper-tray, and cast an inquiring and somewhat puzzled glance at her mistress, still sitting alone.

Lizzie tried to meet the glance carelessly, as she said, "We'll want nothing more for the night, Nelly; you may all go to bed. Tell Peggy your master will see that the doors are fastened."

Another interval and Lizzie heard the servants retiring for the night, and was sensible of a certain relief in being freed from their scrutiny and from the dread of Nelly, in her ignorance, slipping out as she had proposed, and making some malapropos communication to Dunky Cairns.

Then the reaction set in. The leaden minutes dragged like hours. The solitude of the night grew always more oppressive and appalling. Every feature of the case became magnified and distorted. Lizzie did not know and had hardly considered what risk and blame might be incurred by her husband in promoting the escape of a suspected criminal. She made amends for the heedlessness now. She pictured to herself betrayal—an encounter—a struggle—in which Raoul de Saye would not suffer his guest and old acquaintance to stand alone. She told herself, if nothing worse came of it there would be the vexation and affront of having brought himself within the iron grip of the law, of being mixed up, as an aider and abettor, with the offender in a disgraceful offence. This

was hard, happening to a man of Moshie's years, a foreigner who during his long term of exile had vindicated his right to be adopted as a native of the country by leading an honourable, industrious, and blameless life. He had piqued himself on this consciousness as the only thing left for him to pique himself upon. It was she, his foolish, selfish wife, who had led him into the entanglement, and set him on to play the prominent part he was taking in Adam Lauder's deliverance. In order that Adam might not reap the well-deserved harvest of his folly and crime, Moshie, the essence of patient courage and self-forgetfulness, who was worth a hundred strapping, flashy Adams, must suffer. Lizzie's husband, a hero in contrast to Adam, who had proved himself a scamp, was to be the sacrifice. Oh! what should she do if he, the perfect gentleman, were taken up and laid in jail with his companion? What would become of her if there had been a scuffle and Raoul had been struck down—hurt—slain—if that were the cause of the delay? At this utmost pitch of distress, the door softly opened and Moshie entered, splashed with mud from his long night walk, but looking radiant.

True enough both of his *Mignonnes* fell upon him and overwhelmed him with caresses. The canine *Mignonne* was the more discreet of the two, for by long training she confined herself to silent demonstrations, wagging her tufted tail and grovelling at his feet. But Lizzie wept aloud in her joy, as she clung to his breast.

"Softly, softly, Leezzie. He is over the hills and far away, like Marlbrook gone to the wars. That trouble is past."

"Oh! it was not Adam, what did he signify?" panted Lizzie, inconsequently. "It was you, Raoul. Oh, I am so glad you have come back to me. When I thought of your danger, and that I tempted you into it, I was like to go out of my wits."

"Danger! You dream, little one. You weave a romance out of the commonest material. What danger was there in a walk with a comrade on an autumn night along a quiet country road? *Ma foi*, I have known danger, and it has a more formidable face, a little more formidable. What there is to complain of is that you had to be left so

long alone to work yourself into a panic—you and this silly dog, who always thinks that I have gone off with other dogs when she has to stay at home in comfortable quarters, the ass's head of a beast! at the season when she reckons that I ought to avail myself of her amiable society. Fie, fie then, thou distrustful old woman of a Mignonne."

"I am not another distrustful old woman, Raoul," said Lizzie, beginning to laugh through her tears, "nor have I an ass's head, I hope, for your sake. But you were away an age, and it was all my fault. What was Adam Lauder to you? And he did not deserve that a hair of your head should be hurt for him."

"An age! just three hours by the clock, my dear friend," calculated Moshie, briskly. "Ah, well, it is a good thing to be missed, but one must keep within the bounds of reason. Your fault, did you say? Pardon. Do you think I could have left an old acquaintance—a comrade in misfortune—to walk blindfold into the lion's mouth if I had known, if it were in my power to prevent it, even though you had not spoken? You did quite right to come to me, and I have not failed you, that is all. Deserts? To the four winds with deserts! What should any of us have, we poor people, if we only had our deserts? Besides, there may be two opinions on the point. It is not all the world that would prefer the hairs of my head, which will soon have more than a suspicion of gray among their black, to another chance of liberty for Mr. Ad-am. But I repeat it is good when the wife of a man, one dear little woman, puts the high, extravagant price on his head. I should have turned back sooner, Leezzie, but I did think if any friends or foes of the poor boy overtook him and addressed him, they would penetrate his disguise in the twinkling of an eye, while, see you, so long as I was with him I could give the answer and distract the attention. Now he is beyond their reach."

"I'm sure I hope so," said Lizzie, with the least little *moue* of impatience, while she bustled about to arrange to her better satisfaction the supper which she had not so much as looked at till Moshie could share it with her.

"The weather is fine; there will be no storm at the

Ferry, where he will arrive before the morning. Let us be thankful for it," said Moshie, quite seriously. "He will not begin by having to climb the waves, high as the mountains." Moshie spoke as if Adam were to swim the passage, as Leander swam the Hellespont. "In Edinburgh there are, as in all the large towns, the hiding-places—till he got the coach, the ship, he is assured of it. He makes his best adieux. He tells us both we shall hear of him again if he prosper. Why not? He is young; he has had the lesson. With all our hearts we wish him *bon voyage*—is it not so, Leezzie?"

"*Bon voyage!*" echoed Lizzie, catching up her husband's hand and kissing it before he could stop her.

Adam Lauder got away scot free, though a warrant was out against him the following day, and in course of time, when he failed to appear to answer the charge of wilful fire-raising, the sentence of outlawry was pronounced against him in the public court.

But if rumour gathered enough of the truth to associate Moshie with Adam in baulking the law of its due, no step was taken with regard to the Frenchman's share in the affair, not even a tongue wagged in his condemnation. Logie was tender to sinners like Adam, and something of the old pity which his earlier arrest had aroused was revived by the climax to his ruin. Only Nicky Bryson and Dunky Cairns grumbled a little at the misadventure. The Shirra officers had watched and better watched at Moshie's front gate, as they declared, catching hoasts which would last the winter, and all the time the swankie, who had taken French leave by the back gate, was walking calmly on the road to the Ferry. It was a geyan French-like pliskie to play the toon's offishers, begging Moshie's pardon.

In course of time word filtered back to Logie that Adam Lauder, who like "MacRimmon" in the old Highland lament, would return no more, either to Logie or Scotland, after having had to overcome the bitter hardships and sore struggles of one of the pioneers among the Scotch settlers in a distant colony, was doing fairly well. He had even sent home for a wife; and a woman was found courageous and devoted enough to undertake the long voyage out to him. She had been a girl in his father's parish, whom he

had known from childhood. She had thus figured first, probably, in respect to time, of the innumerable belles to this incorrigible beau. Married and settled, compelled to work his hardest, with little time left for play, it might be that Adam had learned his lesson.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE STRANGERS.

ANOTHER year, and the busy season of "hairst" was again past. The harvest moon had given place to the hunter's. Autumn was once more descending with silver rimes, bestowing ruddy gold touches on the apples and pears in the Logie gardens. Young Burn Foot and his lively partner were preparing to spend their second winter in the south, which it was trusted would turn the scale in favour of Steenie's improved health. Old Burn Foot—the laird had to submit to be called old, though his wig never changed its colour, and he made a gallant fight with his rheumatism—was not so lonely as he had been during the former year. There were a nurse and a baby installed in the Burn Foot nurseries. Mr. Oliphant had seen his heir—the heir of Balmayne also, in the second generation. The grandfather valued the privilege, and was content to divide with Mrs. Melville the dignity and entertainment of presiding over the bundle of cambric, lace, and cachemere equally related to both magnates. That bundle had a mind of its own, and, strange to say, it hankered after a third magnate, the least demonstrative of its grand-parents. Canny Andrew Melville had not a word to say in answer to the morsel's advances, before which the elderly man rather shrank abashed, yet in the depths of his heart he felt flattered by this preference on the part of his remoter progeny.

Then there happened one of the most remarkable and rousing events long remembered in Logie. It had been paralleled on a larger scale a good many years before by just such another extraordinary occurrence which took place in the neighbourhood of a small town in the south

of England. The story runs with regard to the historical precedent, that a notably shrewd lady, when kneeling at her prayers in church, chanced to glance up, when she saw through a side window—as if in answer to her ardent petitions—two post-chaises, the postillions wearing white cockades, with white banners and white ribands fluttering in every direction, and the chaises driving at a rapid pace along the adjoining country road. She knew in an instant that a government had fallen, a usurping dynasty passed away, and that these were the exultant messengers come to summon the king to enjoy his own again.

No government or dynasty had crumbled into dust where the affair at Logie was concerned. Indeed, Logie, though it took a keen interest in public business, had comparatively little to do with imperial governments and national dynasties.

But sure enough a post-chaise, minus the white cockades and white flags, dashed up to the Crown Inn, and from it alighted three elderly gentlemen, whom Mrs. Mally's successor described as "outlandish customers," since they wore clothes of a peculiar cut. One of the gentlemen was wrapped in a cloak like the mysterious "Stranger" in Kotzebue's play. Another wore an old-fashioned riding-coat and long boots. The third had his hair powdered under a small cocked hat in a style that had hardly been seen in the town for a whole generation. These gentlemen, without tarrying for refreshments, inquired for a countryman of their own by their mouthpiece—he of the cloak, who spoke in more broken English, with greater convulsive labour of articulation, than the rawest *emigré* or prisoner of war at the nearest depôt had been wont to display. This speaker asked, with such method as his halting words would permit, for M. de Saye, and was directed to Moshie's house on the outskirts.

The three new-comers walked abreast, somewhat after the fashion of a deputation, up the High-gate past the Cross, where the weekly corn-market was in the act of being held, and along the Cart-gate, attracting in full measure the attention and speculation which Logie was in the habit of bestowing liberally on unknown and conspicuous visitors.

Madame de Saye was sitting before her work-table in her

drawing-room, when she was told that three "black-a-vised" gentlemen, speaking queer English, were "speerin" for the master of the house.

Unfortunately Moshie was out, but he had gone no further than the Miss Murdies' school, where he had been summoned to act as arbiter in a dispute into which Miss Murdie's last French teacher had presumed to enter with the principal of the establishment. Moshie, who was the soul of courtesy and helpfulness, had hurried to lend his aid in order to keep the peace.

Lizzie sent down—indeed she was ready to run down herself—to invite the gentlemen, whom she judged to be countrymen of Moshie's, turned up by some accident, to enter the house and to be welcome to the best it contained, while they waited for him. She had risen, and was putting aside her work when they were shown into the room. But Lizzie, though accustomed to French politeness, was not prepared for the depth of the visitors' bows, the waves of the hats which the gentlemen held in their hands, the repressed excitement, together with the elaborate ceremony of the leader's address.

"We intrude on Madame without the introduction—the presentation. We beg a thousand pardons, but it is necessary—absolutely, that we see M. de Saye—as he is known here. We bring news of the first importance. We have the honour to be of Gascony, of Pont-de-Saye, the very humble servants of Madame," with a repetition of the profound reverences and the flourishes of the hats.

"Of Gascony?" cried Lizzie in delight, forgetting to relieve the agonized struggles for speech of the gallant speaker by using his French language. "Oh! how pleased my husband will be to see you. Of course you know that he is from Gascony. I am glad also for his sake; perhaps you are old friends of his?"

"Friends! *Mais non,*" exclaimed the representative of the others, with a lively gesture of deprecation, which his companions with their eager eyes fixed on his face copied exactly.

"We presume not to appropriate the title, though Monsieur may of his goodwill accord it to us. Permit me to name *my* friends," with an emphasis on the pronoun, "who

are at Madame's as they are at Monsieur's service. This," indicating the stoutly-built wearer of the riding-coat and long boots, "is Maître Jean Legros, the steward on the estate. This," pointing to the wearer of the powder and the cocked hat when it was on his head, "is the mayor of the town; and me, Madame, me," expanding his cloak and letting it drop again like a bird fluttering its wings, "I have the felicity to be the notary of the family."

Still Lizzie did not see why the gentlemen should object to be termed Moshie's friends. She begged them to be seated, and found they would on no consideration take chairs before she resumed hers. She rang for refreshments. In her desire to be kind to old acquaintances—at least, of Moshie's, who had apparently taken incredible trouble to seek him out—she would willingly have complied with the gracious old custom still lingering in Logie, by which a hostess herself waited on her cherished guests and offered them with her own hands the bread and wine.

But the faintest approach to this last action reduced the strangers to such a state of despair, that Lizzie stopped short in genuine dismay, and submitted instead, as in a dream, to be waited on by the notary with the reverence which she would have judged due to a princess. Verily Gascony was a remote province, and Pont de Saye must be the most obscure of its towns, when the revolution had done so little to alter the manners of its natives.

Flurried in her turn, Lizzie was frightened to air her French to Moshie's compatriots, and the conversation in English could only continue of the baldest character.

"Monsieur has been compelled to remain a long time in Scotland—in this town," the notary had suggested with a grimace of unspeakable regret. "He has been reduced to straits," and here there was another vehement grimace.

"I do not know what you call straits," said Lizzie in a puzzled way. "He taught dancing and fencing for many years, and he was very successful. As long as I can remember he had a number of scholars. He had no rival as a teacher," she finished, with mild satisfaction.

CHAPTER LVIII.

"HE STOOD THE BRAVEST GENTLEMAN THAT WAS AMONG THEM A'."

The fact which Lizzie stated was so familiar to her and to everybody in Logie; she had been so accustomed to hear Moshie treat it with the greatest coolness as a matter of course, that she had forgotten how it might strike a stranger. It broke upon her with a shock, for no grimace which had gone before it was to be mentioned in the same breath with the shrug of grief, shame, well-nigh consternation that greeted her information.

"*Un Maître de danse*," cried the notary, relapsing with a rush into his mother tongue, and flinging up his arms in the direction of the heavens to which he appealed.

"*Un Maître de danse! Notre jeune Comte, sacrebleu!*" groaned the mayor, now following fully the drift of the dialogue.

"*Un Maître de danse! miséricorde!*" wound up the bailiff.

"And Madame speaks of the success—of the number of the pupils who witnessed the infamy—as if that lessened it," the notary took up his parable again.

Then the electrified Lizzie, who was pricking her ears with all her might, could easily understand the principal speaker when he went on loftily in his fluent French. He declared it did not signify. He reminded his companions how this marquis and that duke had been forced to convert themselves into farmers, chemists, teachers of fortification, of drawing during the *Terreur;* how Egalité Orleans's son had been a teacher of languages in Switzerland.

"What would happen when Raoul came back?" Lizzie asked herself breathlessly, her heart beating wildly. Then she debated whether she ought not to retire and leave him to have a private interview with his countrymen. She settled, at last, that she would only remain long enough to see them meet.

It was enough. Raoul de Saye stood in the doorway of his wife's room, and put his hand before his eyes like one dazzled when he saw whom it held.

"At last you are here, my friends," using the very term which the former retainers, returned with a bound to their allegiance, and bent on not failing in any of the little ancient decorums, had deprecated. "The cousin has made reparation."

"Monsieur le Comte," said the notary, "I have the honour to tell you that monsieur your cousin is dead, without surviving children or nearer kindred, and you are the heir. Justice has vindicated herself. We are here to be the first to tell you."

While Moshie tarried with the messengers of good tidings, Lizzie was divided between fear and doubt, pride and joy, beyond expression. Fear at a change of fortune, for which she was not prepared, of which she had not dreamt, and for which she might well be unfit, while she had been the happiest of the happy as she was. Doubt tinged with mortification that her Raoul, to whom she had confided every thought of her heart, had kept back this great thing from her. Pride and joy, not for herself but for another—a true wife's highest pride and sweetest joy, in which she went entirely out of herself and forgot all her small questionings and objections, to be glad for her husband's exaltation with a humble, generous, large-hearted gladness.

"Leezzie, my Leezzie Lindesay!" said Raoul, looking the simple, high-bred gentleman he had always looked, nothing more, nothing less, whether pointing his toes in an *entre-chat*, or carving a bone left from his dinner. But his eyes were sparkling and his breast heaving with the news he had heard. "It is the Chevalier Kennet Mackenzie, the chieftain of high degree, who is at length permitted to lay his rank, his castle, his all at your feet."

"But I am not like the old Leezzie," stammered the present Lizzie, hanging back a little and looking at him with her wistful blue eyes. "I am a poor soldier's instead of 'a proud earl's daughter,' an old teacher of the Miss Murdies'. How am I to behave like a great lady so as to please and not affront you? How will your countrymen look when they know all about me?"

"They will look as I do upon my wife, my Countess, who might have been a queen with no loss to her subjects."

She shook her head.

"That is nonsense," she said, in her straightforward Scotch fashion. "But why was I not told, Raoul? Did you think I could not keep a secret? Was this one too great to be confided to me?"

"*Parbleu!* no, but it was so incredible. It would have sounded empty gasconading, and if you had cared about it then, it might have been a tremendous disappointment. When Pont-de-Saye was confiscated, it was bought by one whom I had the calamity to call my cousin. He vowed it was in my interest, but not a penny of the rents did I ever receive. Bah! When I knew him, traitor, *scélérat*, I would not have taken a penny from such as he. At the restoration I was well assured he would not be disturbed in his possessions, and it remains without saying that he would not resign it on any terms till he was compelled. Good! He has been compelled. Death has been the judge who has loosed his hands. But till now, what will you? I could not go back to Gascony a beggar, to bandy words and accept charity from that *roturier*, that wrong-doer. Better a thousand times to work for my bread honestly as I did work, to live and die here, unthought-of, uncared-for.

A shade of the old pain and mortification had come over the face which had been so lit up an instant before.

Lizzie could not bear to see the change, and reproached herself for it.

"I 'think shame,'" she cried, with swift, passionate remorse, "for finding fault with this happy day which you have lived—as you well deserve—to see. And all the time I am glad for you, Raoul, my husband, whatever may befall me. None can wish you joy at getting back your own that you had lost, as I wish you."

"I believe it, my wife," he said, as he held her in his arms.

It would be impossible to describe the sensation created in Logie by the news of Moshie's original rank and state, with their restoration. The announcement that he had been a king in place of a nobleman all the time would hardly have made a greater impression. It was a romance in high life for their private property.

"Preserve us a'," cried the Shirra. "Very like the man was the governor of a province according to the old Roman law, and held courts on his own authority, and I mind it was with a grudge that some of us granted him the Town Hall! What is the world coming to?"

Hay Oliphant alighted from the Burn Foot carriage on the first stage of her journey, and burst in upon Madame la Comtesse with the pressing inquiry, "Is it true, Lizzie? I am dying to hear;" followed by the equally emphatic and candid assertion; "Well, if he had been a real live Scotch earl lying *perdu* all this time, as we read in daft-like songs and stories, in order to make you a real live Scotch countess, I would have just died of spite and envy. But I think I can survive a French title, and I invite myself and Steenie to Moshie's place, in the spring, on our way home. We'll bring back word of your grandeur. Mind, you'll be much obliged to us, for unless we go and see with our own eyes and hear with our own ears, like the Queen of Sheba on her travels, how fine it all is, nobody here will be a bit the wiser; and what is the bravery worth if the sound of it does not reach Logie? Ah! we'll not be sorry to meet and speak of Logie and Logie folk, on French land, Lizzie; and only think how Steenie will enlighten the natives on the proper use of their reflective verbs."

"Sae you're a leddy like me, Lizzie!" exclaimed Lady Sprott, half incredulously. "You hae been in luck, you hae pussed your fortune to some purpose. For you've payed naething to speak o' for your rise in the world. Moshie's that canny, butter wouldna melt in his mou'. But maybe," continued her ladyship, with renewed spirit at seeing a chance that the ways of Providence would prove less unequal than she had feared, "he'll craw mair crouse on his ain midden-head. Gin he dinna, and you're no forced to eat puddock-pies, it sounds ower gude to last."

"Oh, my ain Miss Lizzie, madam, my leddy Countess," gasped Chirsty Prendergast, "I hae lived to hear you ca'ed sae, and I dinna ken whether I'm standin on my head or my heels for fair upliftedness. Only you'll gang far awa, and I'll never see your face again."

"But you *will* see me again, Chirsty," insisted Lizzie;

"you'll cross the sea and land among a nation of Moshies, for my sake."

"Gin they were a' like Moshie," admitted Chirsty, recovering her breath, "there would be little to fear."

A bright thought came to the amazed, well-nigh outraged, and abashed town. The townsfolk would pay Moshie a parting mark of respect and esteem to clear off their debts. If people had ever failed him in not seeing through the obscurity in which misfortune had shrouded his proud claims, an obscurity which he had not chosen to clear up by the light of a farthing candle, the natives of Logie would atone for it now, and vindicate themselves in the eyes of M. le Comte's respectable compatriots who had come so far to reinstate him in his old dignities and privileges. The public mark of respect took the shape of a dinner, at which the Count de Saye graciously consented to be the guest of the evening, on one proviso: he was to supply the funds for a contemporaneous supper to the poor, so that even Long Letham and the Coontess might have cause to rejoice.

Moshie also induced the representatives of the once numerous satellites of his house to accompany him to the banquet. These worthy gentlemen from France, so lately Republican, themselves not unaffected by the subversive wave which had deluged their country, were at this moment on their own defence before the strangers, perfidious or otherwise, who had known the Gascons' young count in his adversity, and consented—mention it not in Gascony!—to his humbling himself to become their instructor in the polite art of dancing. The pseudo retainers were—not without reference to some of the better feelings of human nature—bent on not abating at this moment one jot of the almost obsequious deference which had been extorted by the most arrogant of Moshie's ancestors.

The Shirra, in the singleness of his heart, was fain to make up for any lack of discrimination of which he had been guilty, and at the same time to gratify his genial spirit by fraternizing with his French brother of the law, though he was not even an *avocat*, far less a *juge de paix*, and to compare notes with him on codes Roman and Germanic. But the Scotchman found himself kept at

arm's length by the punctilious Gascon. The Shirra was *M. le Comte's* entertainer and associate, he was not on the same level with the notary of the de Saye family.

"The deil take the man with his humming and hawing!" The Shirra nearly lost his temper at being thus met. "I thought we could please ourselves with our company out of the court, and I'm sure we're all friends in Logie Town. I would not give Moshie, Count or no Count, for a dozen of his family notaries."

At the crowded dinner in the dining-room of the Crown Inn, the Count de Saye sat at the right hand of the chairman, the Shirra, while the Rev. John Ochiltree was the croupier. The whole dinner-goers of Logie were present, together with a plentiful sprinkling of the neighbouring gentry, headed by Balmayne and Burn Foot. Could Mrs. Mally but have looked down on the company and the object of the meeting!

The Shirra proposed the toast of the evening, a bumper toast to M. le Comte de Saye, who had so long lived among them as a worthy and respected townsman of Logie. But though the toast was drunk with acclamation, with three times three, and Highland honours, the speaker's usual eloquence was a good deal hampered. He had drunk Moshie's health as the dancing-master on the annual occasion of the dancing-school ball, with more freedom and effect than he could now drink the count's health. The Shirra had an uneasy consciousness that it might be unbecoming to allude to the nature of Moshie's occupation, however honourably he had discharged it, during his stay in Logie. It might be a reflection alike on him and on them—on him for having stooped to the light trade, on them for having permitted it. "Gude Lord," the exercised Shirra had complained beforehand to a crony outside, "to think that we suffered a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, I'm not misdoubting, whose forefather may have been ennobled by the great Chairles himself, to fend for himself by letting our bairns see how to turn out their taes! Of course the Apostle Paul was a tent-maker, but anything is permitted to an Apostle. Besides, tent-making is not only more manful than—tailoring—say, it has a kind of remote Eastern picturesqueness about it in connection with primi-

tive desert life among the pawtriarchs. There's a great odds between it and louping and dancing. Oh, yes! I'm aware, for we have it on record that King Dauvit danced on a solemn occasion. But that was in his Royal person, and as a religious act. Neither was that like showing a parcel of lads and lasses their steps, no that I mean to undervalue an elegant accomplishment. But we are apt to treat dancing-masters as we treat hangmen—necessary functionaries, by whose services we are willing to profit, for all that the puir chields are to be zealously shunned or impidently laughed at."

But when Moshie rose to return thanks, the difficulty vanished. *He* was quite at his ease. He had nothing to withhold, nothing to gloss over. He thanked the town of Logie cordially for its support of him in his capacity as a teacher, as well as for its magnificent demonstration to-day. He declared earnestly that he had found satisfaction—aye, and consolation—in conveying to the best of his ability to the youth of that town what he knew of one of the most graceful of the arts. He even went out of his way to deliver a little practical oration on the value of dancing as an aid to manners and morals, to which his fellow-Gascons listened with imperturbable faces. He would always remember with gratitude the most profound, his stay in Scotland and in Logie, together with the goodness of the Logie people towards him. He just touched on his earliest friend in the place and his veneration for her memory, in terms that brought tears to the Shirra's eyes. Moshie ended with a delicate allusion to another and a still nearer and dearer tie which connected him with the town, and would prevent his ever forgetting it. He was sure that little as he had done to deserve their kindness, his entertainers were too generous to grudge him that precious bond between them.

All who understood the delicate allusion were ready to cry "Na, na, you are well worthy of a good wife and a young wife and a bonnie wife, and we give her to you, and let her and you go with the town's best blessing on your heads. Proud and pleased are we, as we may well be, that you Countess, since you are a Count, has sprung from Logie."

But the unspoken words were taken out of the mouths of the enthusiastic listeners by the minister, whose duty it was to drink the health of Madame the Countess.

Another cause than that which had fettered the Shirra's tongue stopped the flow of flowery compliments with which the reverend gentleman would in other circumstances have given the name of a fair lady as a toast. The good man's heart was too full. He thought of the auld Captain lying cold in his grave in the kirkyard yonder, unaffected by his daughter's great fortunes, of Mrs. Mally, to whom the girl had been almost as dear, at her rest in another hemisphere. He remembered how he had once wished that Lizzie Lindesay had been his daughter. He recalled his own little lass, a flower nipped in the bud, though it might be destined to bloom again, without risk of canker or blight, in a brighter, sunnier clime. He could only say a few heartfelt words, in return for which Moshie, having one hand on his heart, with the other wrung the hand of the minister, and said to him and to the company generally, "It suffices. She is my dear and honoured wife whom you have known all her days. What need have we of further words of praise? Only let me again express my gratitude —the deepest, the most sincere—that you gave her to me with all your hearts. So help me God I will do my best to discharge the trust."

Logie, too, had a heart, and shouted and stamped and cheered with greater fervour at these broken words than at all the fine speeches which had gone before.

Far from seeking to sever his and Lizzie's connection with the town entirely, as if he were ashamed of it, Moshie was willing, nay anxious, that his wife's farm of St. Kennet's should not be sold. He had known too much of changes in his own country not to wish that her inheritance should remain as a resource for her in hers. Neither did he hurry her away from her birthplace, the home of her whole young life, though he more than made up for his reticence on the subject of Pont-de-Saye by dwelling fondly on each atom of detail till she seemed to know every room of the Gascon chateau before she had set eyes on it. She listened with inexhaustible interest, a hundred times, to the elaborate arrangements in accordance

with which the rooms of the late Countess were to be modernized, brightened, and made the pleasantest of apartments by the skill of Moshie, at his expense, for his Countess Leezzie.

The de Sayes tarried till Mrs. Lindesay had time to travel from Ayr with her sons to witness and be convinced of the transformation which had passed over the step-daughter and step sister. The widow addressed Moshie with languid punctiliousness as "My Lord," and even went so far in making up for past omissions as to call her dear daughter "My Lady." My Lord and my Lady were not greatly edified by the amends, but they were magnanimous and willing to let bygones be bygones.

At last a day arrived when Moshie came to his wife and gently reminded her. "*Ma mie*, when your ancestress, the Leezzie of your song, went off to the north it was to be the bride and the darling of the *young* Kennet Mackenzie. But, alas! *petite*, I am no more young. I have not the time to lose. I wish, I wish it well, that our eldest-born should first see the light in the house of my fathers. What will you?"

"I am ready, Raoul," she answered promptly, like another Ruth. "I have been only waiting for a sign from you."

So Lizzie carried away her father's despatch-box and hung it up beside her husband's sword in a Gascony chateau. She never found the first any more out of place than the last in a house in which Mickle Lindesay's name w s a household word.

The Oliphants brought back glowing accounts of the glories of Pont-de-Saye. Hay said that though in former years Moshie had not paid her the compliment of taking her for his partner at his dancing-school ball in the Town Hall at Logie, he had led her out to dance a minuet in his ancestral hall at a ball given in her honour. And none of the distinguished company present save and except Madame had the faintest guess of the source from which Hay had derived the grace and correctness with which she had executed her steps and curtsies.

"Not that I think he would have cared, though I had told his neighbours that he was my old dancing-master," added the wife of young Burn Foot in a tone of conviction.

"If he is silent it is to save their feelings, not his own. He is a fine enough gentleman to be able to do anyt_ing."

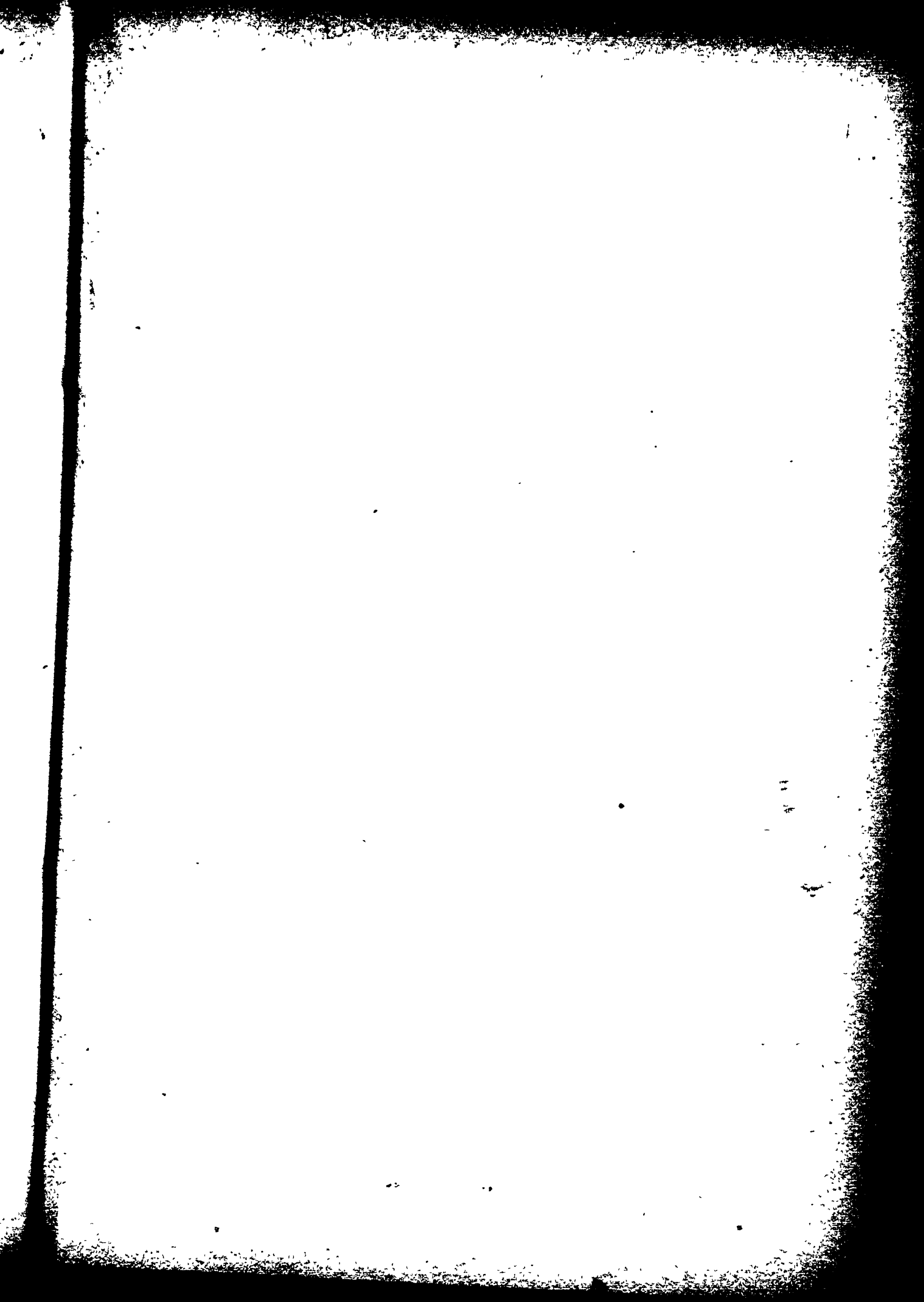
But Logie did not need to depend upon Hay Oliphant's gay tales, or Steenie's quieter but not less emphatic confirmation. The town had not to wait for the visit which Mrs. Lindesay and her boys paid to Madame de Saye, the delicate female braving a sea voyage to keep up family relations. Many an inhabitant of Logie, from the Shirra and the minister down to Chirsty Prendergast, found their way, though there were leagues of land and water between, to the Gascon chateau. Nobody had reason to complain of the short memories of its Count and Countess. All the visitors vied with each other in their appreciation of the noble *ménage* with its grand simplicity.

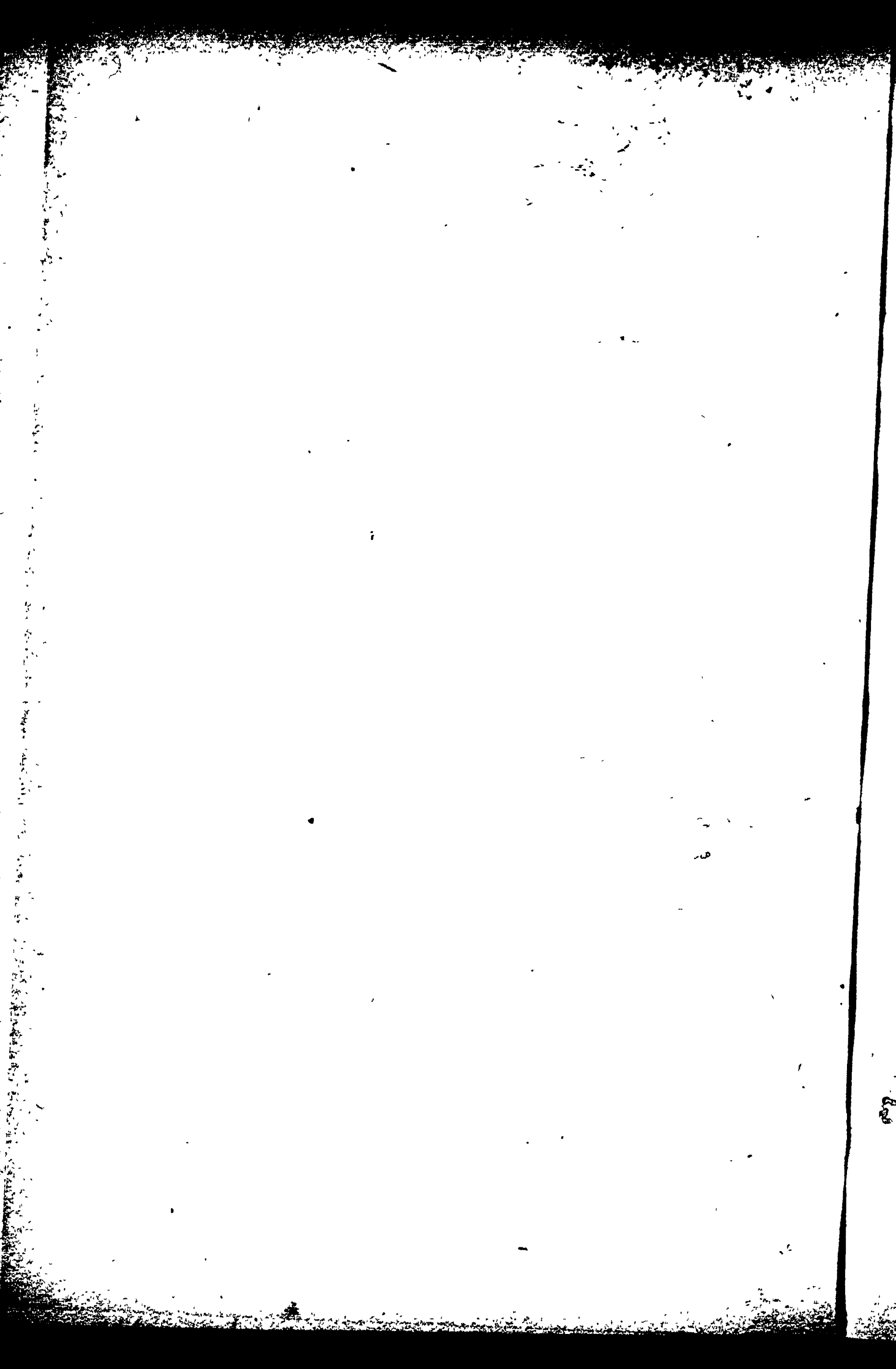
Lizzie, too, came back often to Logie with her husband. Moshie in his day had known too well the agonies of *mal de pays* not to face cheerfully the horrors of *mal de mer*, to save his wife as far as he could from the worse experience. Lizzie boasted that her children could speak Scotch and French with the same facility.

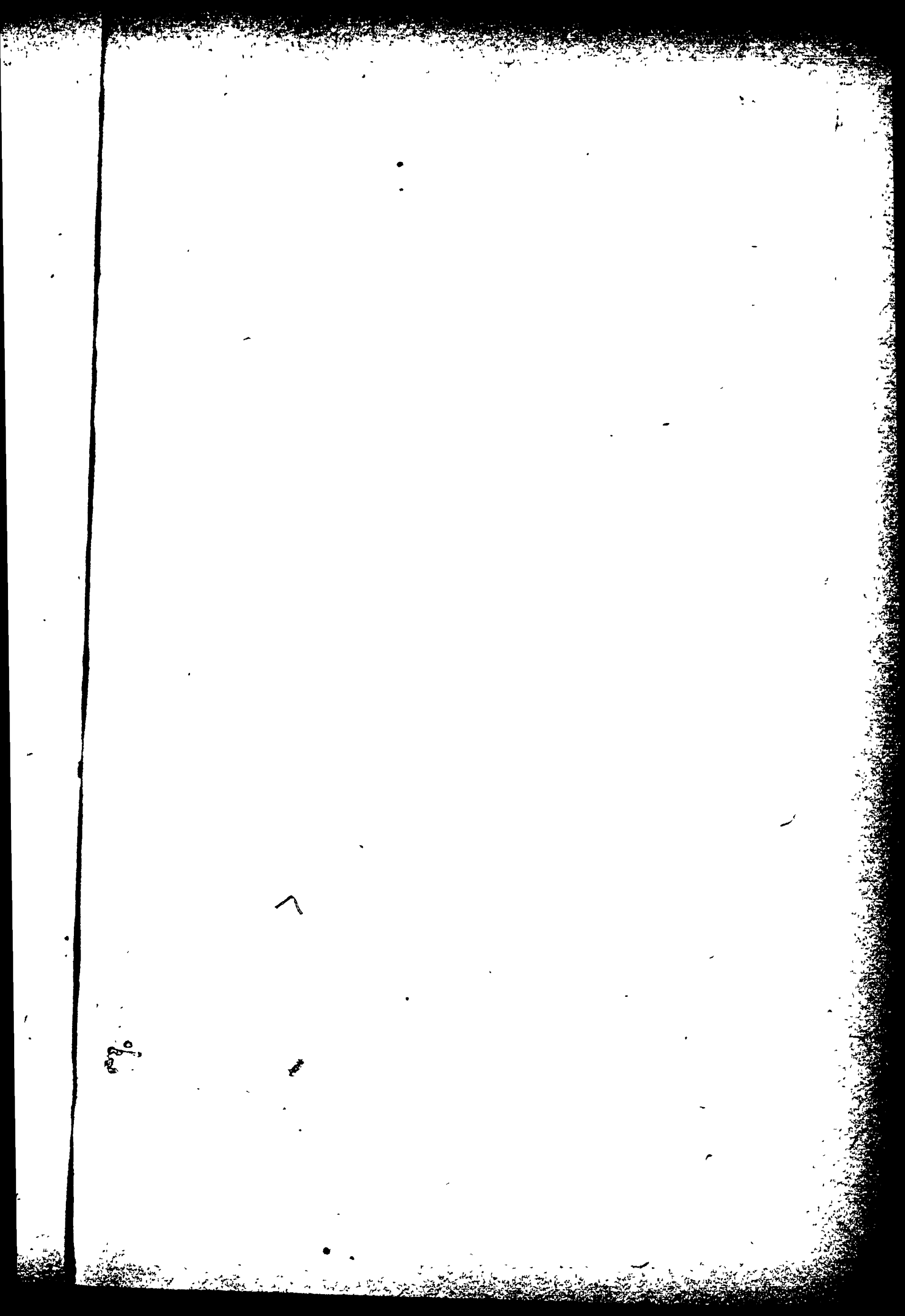
> "*And a gentle consort made he,*
> *And her gentle mind was such,*
> *That she grew a noble lady,*
> *And the people loved her much.*"

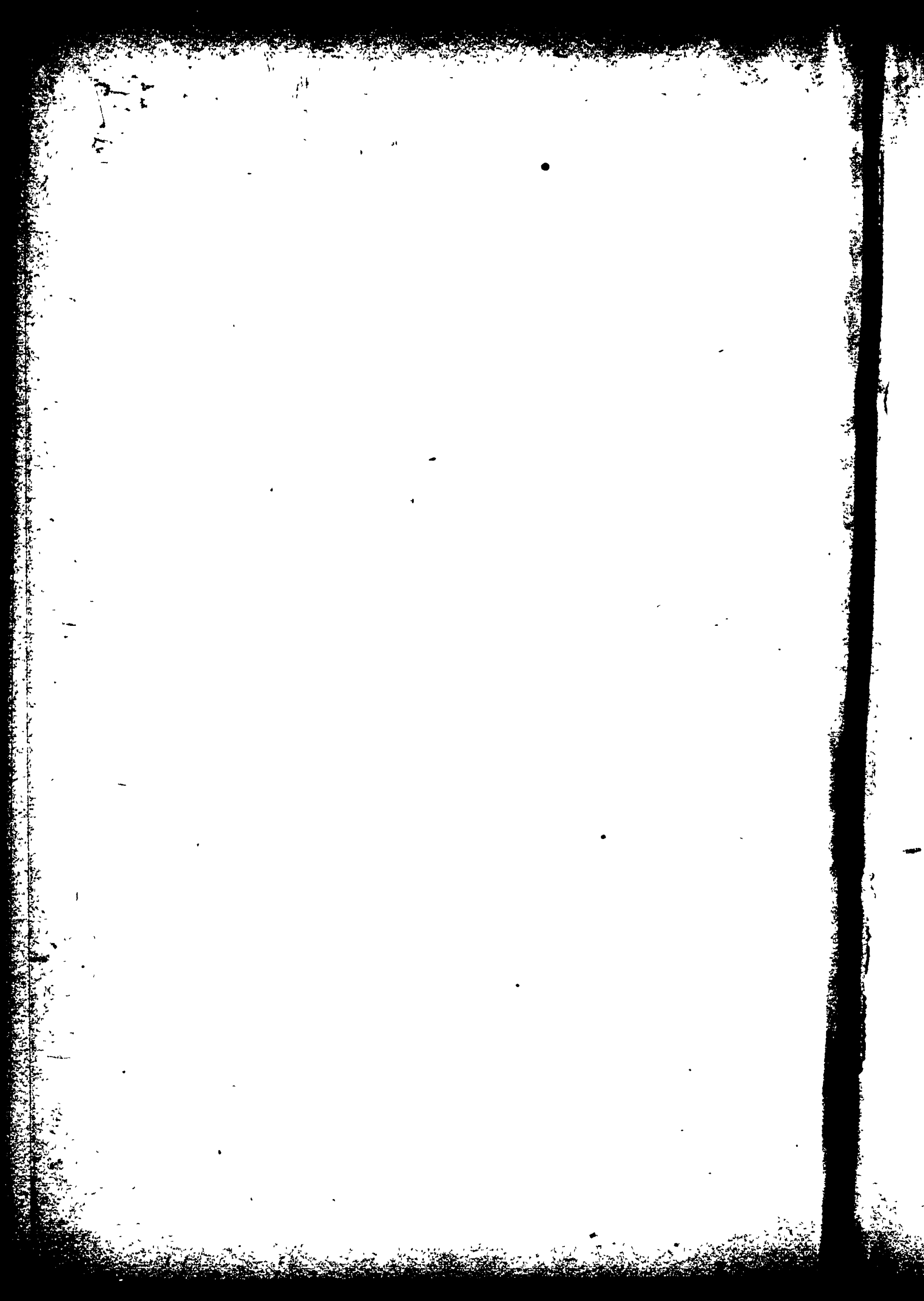
The discrepancy between the auld Captain's daughter and the Countess de Saye was a good deal less than that which had existed between Sarah Huggins and the Lady of Burleigh, so that Lizzie, far from dying of an honour "*unto which she was not born,*" lived to bear it well-nigh lightly. But though she was a blithe as well as a dignified matron, she was never quite so light of heart, so girlishly gay, as during the honeymoon, repeating itself twelve times, in her first year of married life at Logie.

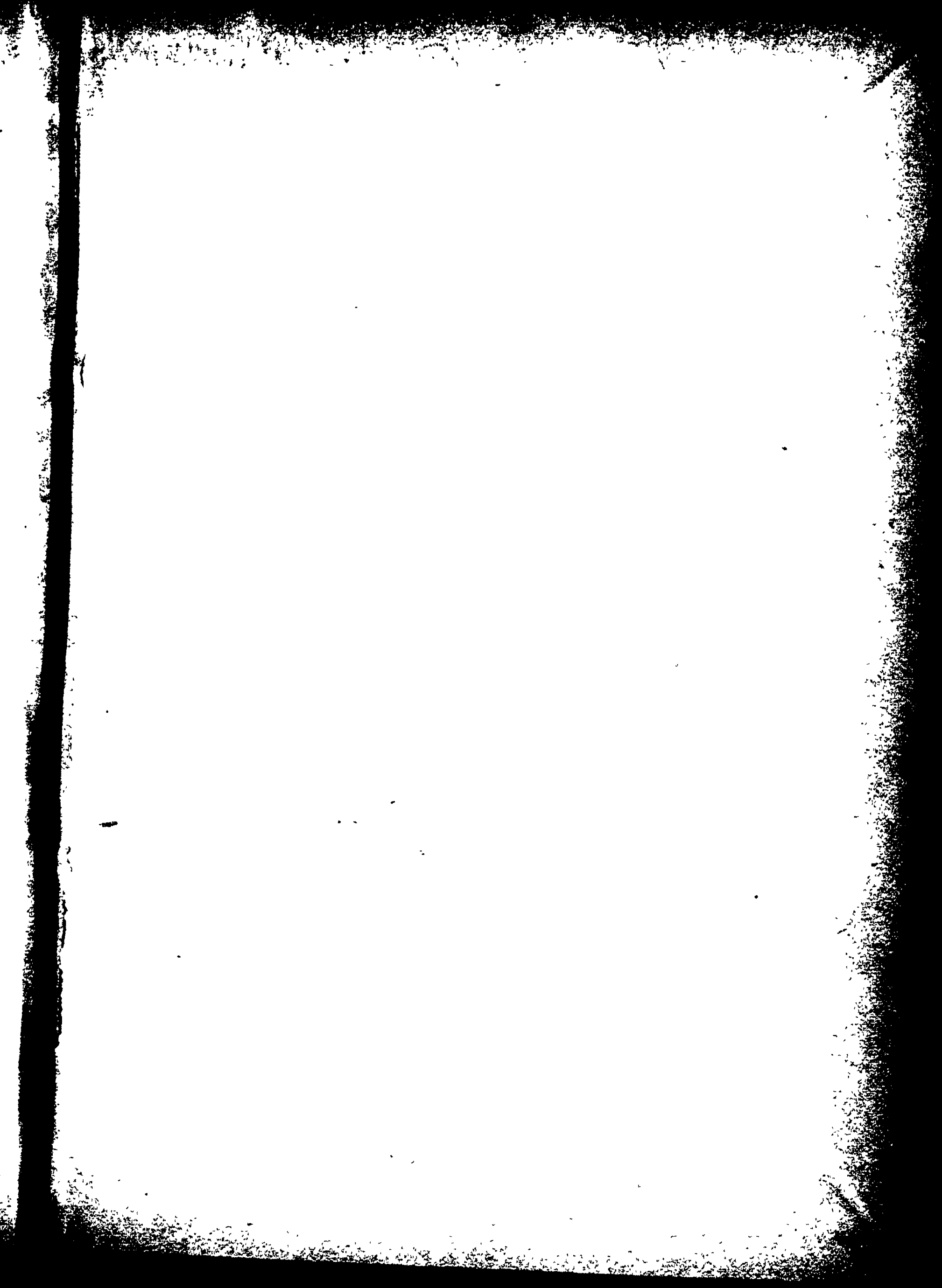
THE END.











CHOICE COPYRIGHT FICTION.

N.L.C. - B.N.C.
3 3286 07313853 5

Scheherazade. By FLORENCE WARDEN. Price 30 cts.
From the Other Side. By the AUTHOR OF "OLIVE VARCOE." Price 40 cts.
Mona's Choice. By MRS. ALEXANDER. Price 30 cts.
Marvel. By THE DUCHESS. Price 30 cts.
A Life Interest. By MRS. ALEXANDER. Price 30 cts.
A False Start. By HAWLEY SMART. Price 30 cts.
The Passenger from Scotland Yard. By H. F WOOD. Price 30 cts.
King or Knave. By R. E. FRANCILLON. Price 30 cts.
A Real Good Thing. By MRS. EDWARD KENNARD. Price 30 cts.
The Wrong Road: by Hook or Crook. By MAJOR ARTHUR GRIFFITHS. Price 30 cts.
"Chris." By W. E. NORRIS. Price 30 cts.
A Glorious Gallop. By MRS. EDW. KENNARD. Price 25 cts.
The Devil's Die. By GRANT ALLEN. Price 30 cts.
Old Blazer's Hero. By DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY. Price 30 cts.
Breezie Langton. By CAPT. HAWLEY SMART. Price 30 cts.
The Heir of Linne. By ROBT. BUCHANAN. Price 30 cts.
By Misadventure. By FRANK BARRETT. Price 30 cts.
A Dead Past. By MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON. Price 30 cts.
Beautiful Jim. By JOHN STRANGE WINTER. Price 30 cts.
Beyond Compare. By CHARLES GIBBON. Price 30 cts
The Honorable Mrs. Vereker. By THE DUCHESS. Price 30 cts.
The Mystery of a Turkish Bath. By RITA. Price 25 cts.
Bootle's Children. By JOHN STRANGE WINTER. Price 25 cts.
The Pride of the Paddock. By CAPT. HAWLEY SMART. Price 25 cts.
Straight as a Die. By MRS. EDWARD KENNARD. Price 30 cts.
The Beckoning Hand. By GRANT ALLEN. Price 30 cts.
Logie Town. By SARAH TYTLER. Price 30 cts.
The Death Ship. By W. CLARK RUSSELL. Price 30 cts.
In All Shades. By GRANT ALLEN. Price 30 cts.
Killed in the Open. By MRS. EDWARD KENNARD. Price 30 cts.
The Girl in the Brown Habit. By MRS. EDWARD KENNARD. Price 30 cts.

For Sale by all Booksellers, or mailed, post paid, on receipt of price.

The National Publishing Co.

23 ADELAIDE ST. EAST, TORONTO.