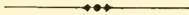




LEAVES FROM LOGIEDALE.



THE STUDENT :

OR, THE MYSTERY OF THE OLD FIR WOOD.



CHAPTER I.

A SUMMER SUNSET.

IT was a sweet, summer evening. The Logie woods waved in their green summer dress. The mavis and blackbird sang out their cheeriest songs. The oak, the ash, the green larch, yellow laburnums, and bonnie silver birk murmured far-away ballads in the June sunset. Logie House, with its climbing ivy, and quaint, white gables, amid noble beeches, and wide-sweeping glades, stood bathed in silence and romance, its west windows gleaming golden, as the ruddy shafts of the western sun slanted through the beeches and chestnuts. Sequestered from the busy

work-a-day world, Logie House, especially on quiet summer nights, has a beautiful aspect, as of Nature's repose—emblematic of ineffable peace and rest. The scent of roses, mignonette, and lilac perfumed the clear air, and naught could be heard save the music of the birds, the light dashing of the water in a neighbouring cascade, and the soft sighing of the vesper wind in the hush of the bonnie, summer evening. It was a scene for the artist or poet.

“Oh, I shall be back soon!” The words broke on the quiet air in clear accents as a young woman emerged from the conservatory in front of Logie House, and leisurely sauntered over the green sward to the west. Let us look at her in the ruddy, sunset light. A figure, arrayed in a snowy-white dress, that showed off its exquisite contour; rosy cheeks and lips; tender blue eyes—deep, almost to violet; a broad brow, over which clustered a wealth of sunny, fair hair, beneath a broad-rimmed sun hat. A lithesome grace animated her whole mien, and she moved with airy lightness. Add to this, that she was about twenty, and you have before you the delightful picture of bonnie Jeannie Winstanley. She had come to Logie in May as governess with some distinguished visitors, and it was now June, and she had awakened an ardent interest in the minds of not a few of the tender-hearted swains in the neighbourhood. The walks of Logie of an evening were unusually lively by June of that year, and the cause was no secret. Jeannie Winstanley

hadn't crossed the High Street of Kirrie twice when quite a fever was created among many hearts, and expressions of admiration for her beauty escaped from lips not usually expressive of "sweetness and light." There was a powerful fascination about her face that never failed to attract a second look. It would have been difficult to analyse its power ; you could only feel it when you met her. Nature, it was at once seen, had given her more than mere physical beauty. The light of thought and feeling lit up her finely-moulded features. There was about Jeannie that exquisite something which cannot be described, but which told the sympathetic observer that

"The stars of midnight had been dear
To her ; and she had lean'd her ear
In many a secret place,
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty, born of murmuring sound,
Had passed into her face."

It beamed eloquently from her sparkling eyes, that would sometimes darken and soften to sadness, like a mountain pool in the shadows of twilight.

She had been at Logie but a few weeks, and she had never ventured out by the path that leads to the "Moniment Wood" to the west till that summer evening with which our story is concerned.

"Please can I get back to Logie House this way? I am quite a stranger here." Jeannie

had reached a point where three woodland paths meet, and she asked the above question at a young man, who came swinging along at an easy pace, seemingly absorbed in thought.

“Ah, yes,” he answered, lifting his cap as he looked up from his reverie. “It is my favourite walk homewards. You simply complete the triangle, and you are back again at the gate near the old oak. I will accompany you that length if you do not object. It is my path for home.”

He spoke in a clear, well-accented voice, the tone refined and gentlemanly. He was dressed in a light tweed suit, and there was something very attractive about him in appearance and manner. Jeannie saw at a glance that he was young, perhaps twenty-four, good-looking, and tall and lithesome in form, like herself. He looked at her enquiringly, evidently intensely interested in the fair companion who had so unexpectedly crossed his path.

His face was very expressive, though pale. A dark brown moustache deepened the paleness, but it was a face that you would have said was out of the common. His broad brow was stamped with the cast of thought, but his eyes were the most striking part of him; they were large, dark, and keen, and as they looked earnestly into Jeannie's, as he stood waiting for an answer, she felt her breast thrill with a

strange emotion. How could she refuse such a favour, asked in so gallant a manner? Besides, she felt herself strangely pleased with the frank, young stranger.

"Yes, I shall be much obliged, in case I lose my way," she answered, half shyly, looking up to him with a smiling expression.

"No fear, I shall steer you clear of marshes or bogs. You shall enjoy the walk between the broom and the moorland heather. At least, I always do," he said gaily.

So he walked by her side, talking with enthusiasm of the glints of silver birks and green-waving larches, and the heather moor in the sunset. He evidently had a great power of interesting speech, and Jeannie felt completely carried away with the conversation. He could speak so well, she thought, and could invest every subject with interest.

"Have you been long at Logie, then?" he ventured to enquire.

"No; only about three weeks, and I haven't before ventured so far west. But it is so delightful, that I shall, like Burns, aye dearly lo'e the west," and she glanced smilingly at him to see if he thought it was a compliment to himself.

"Oh, it's glorious!" he said. "I often spend an hour at e'en, here, and, like the sweet authoress of the "Scottish Chiefs," have moments sometimes fled to heaven." He said

this with much earnestness, and a thrill went to Jeannie's heart as she saw a wistful expression come into his dark eyes. Who could he be that could move her so much? Surely no common mind; nor any of the insipid monentities she so often met about Kirrie.

The sun was now setting, like a ball of fire, over the eastmost corner of the woods of Lindertis, beside the quiet village of Westmuir. The cottages on the crest of the picturesque heights were clearly defined against the golden glow. The lark was pouring down his evening melody; the yellow broom waved luxuriantly; and the blue forget-me-nots and pink heather, or wild thyme, bloomed sweetly by the sequestered paths. A warm haze hung over the steeples of Kirrie, and Catlaw loomed purple and dim in the glowing north-west. The mellow light had left the Sidlaws, and the twilight was beginning to fall on mountain, moor, and stream. The sighing of the summer wind sank to a low murmur, and nature donned her mantle of rest.

They had now reached the stile by the bridge, o'erhung with beech branches, near the old, withered oak. Both seemed to feel the strangeness of their meeting, and the inexpressible sympathy which had drawn them together during their short walk. They stood and watched the fading sunlight with the quiet delight of ardent

lovers of nature—satisfied with a sweet solace, seemingly happy also to be near each other, with thoughts unexpressed in the stillness of the woodland dusk.

“Will you think me unmannerly if I ask the name of one who has given me so much increased pleasure in my walk to-night,” the young man at last enquired, with a slight tremor in his voice.

“Oh,” she replied, half laughingly, “you wouldn’t be any better, I suppose, though you knew. A rose would smell as sweet without a name, you know. But to gratify your curiosity, my name is Jeannie Winstanley, and I’m governess to the hon. Mrs Stanley. And now, since I’ve been so frank, pray, what is your name?” she added with a quiet frankness in her eyes and voice.

“Well, mine hardly sounds so sweet—Frank Lindsay. My occupation, meantime, is, like Othello’s, gone, but I am a student at Cambridge University. I sometimes don the mantle of inspiration; I like it better than the student’s cloak.”

“And the Greek verbs, and the prelections of the terrifically-solemn professors,” she added laughingly, and then they both laughed outright.

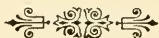
This sudden familiarity was not just exactly conventional, but it seemed to come naturally to them. So they lingered and talked till the skies beyond Catlaw were streaked with bars of silver,

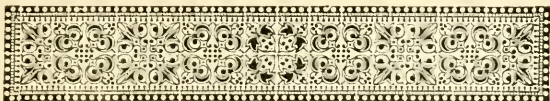
each unwilling to part, though the dusk was growing darker where they stood.

The solitary cry of the curlew and the plover came over the moor, and the brook softly crooned below them, but all was very still. Slowly nine o'clock struck from the steeple of Kirrie, and as the tones came swinging down the woods, they reached their ears. Jeannie glanced furtively back to Logie House, now dim and shadowy in the dusk.

"I shall have to be going in now. I didn't dream I would be so long away. They will be wondering why I am so late, and if they only knew—what a tragedy! So I'll bid you good-night," she said softly, looking up at him the while. Frank thought her surpassing lovely as she stood with her gentle face, full of earnestness, upturned to him, in the summer twilight.

"Good-night," and Frank opened the little wicket beside the gate, upon which a poet had scribbled some verses with a pencil, saw her through, lifted his cap as they parted, smiling—both wondering if they would meet again, as they wended their way homeward under the gloaming skies.





CHAPTER II.

LOVE AND WAR.

NOT far from the highway, about a mile down from Kirrie to the south-west, on the north side of the Glamis Road, at the top of a narrow dell where the broom and the hawthorn flourish bonnily, stood, on the face of the brae that slants to Wester Logie, a white-washed cottage, up the walls of which clustered roses in summer days. Beside the cottage stood also the usual sheds, thatched with straw and heather, attached to a small croft. The place was named Whinnybrae. The nicely-trimmed garden, with its borders of boxwood and daisies, showed that the cottagers had cultivated a love of flowers and shrubs. From the cottage windows and shady - arched summerseat in the garden, a beautiful view could be had of the strath. The cottage walls are all crumbled away now, and those who once dwelt there, who loved the scent of the roses in the balmy summer nights, are all gone, silent for ever. Two old ash trees still sigh in the night wind, and quiver dreamily against the gleam

of the sky above Catlaw after sundown. The burn still leaps down the narrow dell, through Whamond's Brig to Ladywell. But all is changed, save these, since the events recorded in our story happened. Time works many changes—but crumbled walls, mid the rank grass and nettles, and the desolate silence and the dumb memorials, after laughter and sunny voices, and human joys, are among the saddest of her works.

The cottage on the brae was the home of Frank Lindsay. He was always supremely happy when he got away from the dull, grey English college walls, up to bonnie Scotland, to his own native strath, to spend the vacation with the old folks. Frank had had a brilliant career at Aberdeen College, and was now gaining high honours at Cambridge, and the old folks were prouder than ever of their "laddie," as they loved to call him.

"Isn't this the night Sandy's coming?" Frank said to his father, as they both sat smoking and talking on the summerseat, about a fortnight after his first meeting with Jeannie Winstanley.

"Ay; he'll be here, I think, afore aucht; an' he'll be a gey braw chield noo. Div ye ken, Frank, that he's a luvetenant? He's been behavin' grand in Spain in his regiment," and the eyes of the old man gleamed, for he loved to tell of bravery and war.

"Then, cousin Alec has been distinguishing himself against the French. What nights we shall have, with tales of the fife and drum, and cannon's

roar," Frank said, catching the old man's enthusiasm.

Seven o'clock chimed from the "wag at the wa'" in the kitchen.

"I'll need to gang in, laddie, an' tell yer mither to get a guid tea and a'thing ready for Sandy," the old man said, rising off the seat. "We'll need tae gae doon to the Whitehooses for Cabby Latch and meet him, ye ken," he added.

"I'll have to be excused to-night, father," said Frank rather uneasily. "I've an engagement I wouldn't like to miss. You can get Jamie Brown to go down with you. I'll see Sandy when I come back."

Frank's face flushed when he said these words, for the old man was looking down upon him with a surprised and hurt-like expression.

"I didna expect this, Frank. Ye'll need to try."

Steps were heard on the garden path, and Frank's mother appeared. A benevolent, gentle, expression lit up her face, that must have been an attractive one when she was young.

"Are ye no thinkin' aboot startin', she said. "It's time ye were doon the road. Mary Morrison's ower-by frae Logie. She had aye an awfu' wark wi' Sandy, ye'll mind, and the lassie's quite excited ower his visit," and she looked with a smile to Frank.

"Frank's no gaen. He says he has a special

engagement the nicht," the old man answered in a tone of annoyance, as he looked down the road and saw one or two lads and lasses taking their evening walk.

"Oh, it'll be to meet the governess lass at Logie. Mary Morrison wis just tellin' me about her and Frank walkin' thegither some nichts. Mary says the governess is in love wi' him, for she wid aye like to be speakin' about him. She says it's a case o' love at first sicht," Mrs Lindsay said, watching Frank closely. He was busy plucking two roses, and finished by inserting one in his jacket.

"I doot Frank's as far gane as her, else I'm awfu' cheated," the old man rejoined. "I suppose I'll need to gae an' get Jamie Brown, than," and he left the mother and son alone in the garden.

"Well, what about it mother. Could I wish for a better or a bonnier lass?" Frank looked inquiringly into his mother's face, as if to try to read her thoughts. He wasn't sure how she would receive the confirmation of Mary Morrison's story.

"I hev'na seen her, Frank, but I would like. I houp she's as good as she's bonnie, and I'll be pleased. She'll no distract ye frae yer studies, will she, Frank?" and the mother looked up appealingly into her son's face, with an earnest expression, and the light of her great love shining in her eyes.

She was secretly in her heart more proud of Frank's brilliant college career than his father, and she was afraid that even love's shadow should fall on it's light.

"No fear of that, mother. The thought of her shall spur me on to win higher honours. I suppose it's about half-past seven," Frank answered with his usual cheery, buoyant manner. He snatched a walking stick beside the summerseat, and off he strode down the garden, and out at the wicket at the foot, and was lost to his mother's view between the hawthorn hedges that fringed the road.

Love had dawned for Frank, radiant and rosy—the love of life's young dream. The June skies were blue and clear. The stars of hope shone brightly over Strathmore, and the future looked invitingly fair. A dream of golden sunset, of life among his own loved braes, a vision of well-earned ease, honour, and wealth, perhaps, flitted through his young mind, as he paused on the brae at Wester Logie, and gazed on the glorious sunset over the Strath. But

"I've seen the forest adorn'd the foremost,

Wi' flowers o' the fairest, both pleasant and gay ;

Sae bonnie was their blooming, their scent the air
perfuming—

But, oh, hoo' they've faded, an' a' wede away."

* * * * *

The merry strains of a violin were wafted sweetly by the westlin' breeze one bright July evening about four weeks after Lieutenant Lindsay's arrival at Whinnybrae. Alec's—we will call him by the familiar name he used to have in the old days when his father and mother lived on a small croft on the Logie Estate—parents were now dead, and he made Whinnybrae his home when in Scotland. Always ambitious of being a soldier, Alec had run away when very young to join the ranks, and now he had come back with honours. The old folks weren't there to welcome him to his old home, or to share in his pride and joy. But many friends trooped round him, and he felt happy among the dear old scenes and "kent folk," who now looked up to him as a bit of a hero, as well as a handsome, dashing, young soldier. He delighted the old folks with tales of the glories and dangers of war, and made the young rustics gape with astonishment many an evening up the Whinnybrae, while showing Frank the way to parry, thrust, and feint with the foils. Sometimes it grew hot, and the rustics' bumps of wonder and enthusiasm were excited tremendously after a terrific sham onslaught. Alec was a great favourite wherever he went, and Kirrie wasn't slow in praising his valour and daring in his last engagement in Spain.

The gallant owner of Logie took a special interest in the dashing young lieutenant, and old and young were invited to a feast in his honour.

It was held on a bright July evening, and a gay company assembled on the lawn in front of Logie House, and old Sandy Simpson, composer and fiddle player, was engaged to play—and he could strike out his own and other Scottish strathspeys with spirit and animation.

It was a lively scene in front of Logie House on that summer evening, many years ago—a picture of light and beauty. People from Kirrie were there too, as well as the country folks from the braesides round about. Old and young seemed to put on a summer brightness, and nothing could be heard in the intervals between the dancing but merry laughter and conversation. Ale and whisky and many solid dainties and delicious fruits were handed round to complete the enjoyment.

“I say, Mary, aren’t you going to give me this dance? You know you promised. The young lieutenant I see has got the governess.”

It was a young swell from Kirrie who thus asked Mary Morrison up to a country dance that was just about to begin. He was a young accountant, but unaccountably conceited, and wasn’t blessed with more than the ordinary brains of the “swell.” But he wasn’t so bad-hearted after all, and better things came out of him after his weakness for gaudy colours, rings, white waistcoats, and gold-headed sticks had passed away under the gentle influence of Mary Morrison. He had been among the many who had gone wild about

Jeannie Winstanley when she came to Logie first. He had got introduced, like others, by Mary, but Jeannie delighted in administering a sly snubbing to those important personages. When they saw Frank first favourite they rapidly cooled, and the walks of Logie woods resumed their wonted quiet beauty.

So Tom Brown—for that was his name—finding his case hopeless with Jeannie, directed his attentions to Mary Morrison, whose personal attractions had made a rather deep impression on his susceptible heart.

Mary had favoured him very much before the appearance of Alec Lindsay; but somehow, like the innocent flirt that she was, her attention seemed absolutely absorbed by the handsome young lieutenant, whom she had known from her days of girlhood. She quietly ignored the crest-fallen accountant. However, he had got an invitation to the Logie festivities, and was there smiling and affecting to be quite happy. He could look complacently on Frank and Jeannie dancing and talking together now; but at one time he could have knocked the favoured and successful student down with his gold-headed stick. As for the young and handsome soldier, he knew that his father and mother had lived on the croft next to Mary's folks, and that they (Alec and Mary) had, when young, run about together, "an' pu'd the gowans fine," and their fondness for each

other's company seemed only natural. Mary flushed a little at Tom Brown's pointed speech, but she held out her hand.

"Do you imagine I'm jealous of the lieutenant and Miss Winstanley, Tom? How could you? Yes, I'm going up to this dance with you," she said, looking with a kind of angry pleasantness to the young accountant, who seemed highly delighted.

The fact was, Mary cared more for Tom than she cared to show. She knew that Tom cared for her very deeply, and, with the usual perversity of woman, she liked to play upon her lover's feelings.

Frank, Alec, and Tom, and Jeannie and Mary were beside each other in the set, and many admiring eyes looked in their direction. The merry dance went on, many of the old folks vieing with the young ones in sprightliness. But most of them sat enjoying the animated sight.

"Who is that good-looking young fellow with the light suit there?" asked the Hon. Mrs Stanley at a military-looking man, seemingly about thirty-four, who was sitting beside her.

"A young sprig of a student," answered Captain Butler; "a great favourite with your governess," he added with a sneer, biting his lip as he looked vindictively at Frank, who was dancing beside Jeannie with a lightsome heart, unconscious of everything except his own intense enjoyment.

“Ah; he will be the distinguished student from Cambridge, I’ve heard so much about—Frank Lindsay. A very presentable young man, as well as promising. Well, Captain, I rather admire Jeannie’s fancy. Will he know of Miss Winstanley’s fortune by the death of an uncle in India a year ago, I wonder?” The lady looked at the Captain, and was surprised to see a frown on his brow.

“Why, you are actually frowning, Captain. Surely you aren’t jealous of the young student?” said the lady. “But I remember, some one whispered to me that you had a *penchant* for our pretty governess. I can understand it is quite true; and Miss Winstanley being an heiress now will deepen the impression tremendously, no doubt;” and Mrs Stanley smiled at her sly hit, fanning herself complacently.

“And do you think that I would let a student stand in my way if I meant to capture your proud beauty, Mrs Stanley? But, without joking, when does she come into possession of this windfall?” asked the captain, a little nettled.

“I don’t know exactly the terms of the will. Besides, you know, Indian estates are very protracted in being wound up and settled. But you can ask Jeannie herself if you are anxious about it,” replied Mrs Stanley, again adding a sting to her remark, and looking point blank into the Captain’s face with an ironical smile. She

didn't like to see the Captain so much interested in her governess.

The Captain was overladen with conceit. He had once been rather good-looking, but the sowing of his wild oats had left him prematurely worn and aged-looking. He had flirted, and won a few hearts, he boasted, in his time, and was now, as is common, on the look-out for a rich heiress with whom he might settle down. He had come down from London on a flying visit at the invitation of Mrs Stanley, and was struck with Jeannie's beauty, and more so with the fact that she was an heiress. He had, as was too easily seen, paid marked attention to the "pretty governess," as Jeannie was often called. But she had received all his advances with coldness which developed gradually almost into dislike. He was naturally angry at this, and was piqued at Frank Lindsay, whom he had seen repeatedly walking in lover-like fashion with the object of his passion, or rather, ambition. He had thought he could captivate Jeannie with his blandishments and the name of captain; but he hadn't counted on a mind penetrative, and naturally gifted; and a pure, deep, tender soul in Jeannie, who could not be affected in the least with mere shows and ostentations of any kind. To say that the Captain was piqued at Frank, isn't enough; he actually hated him. He looked upon him as the cause of Miss Winstanley's repelling his addresses. To be treated with cool disdain by a gover-

ness, though pretty, and an heiress, made his naturally hot blood leap through his heart with anger.

He manifested his aversion to Frank in various ways. That aversion was to give colour to conjectures and suspicions about a tragedy that was to happen a few weeks later under the pale light of a harvest moon.

“The red roe bounds swift through the Braes o’ Braemar ;
The war cry sounds sharp from the Craigs o’ Glenshee ;
But where nature blooms sweetest, the heart may break
 soonest,
And love tales are aye saddest in vales like Strathdee.”


So was it to be with our hero and heroine in Strathmore.





CHAPTER III.

THE STILL, SAD MUSIC OF HUMANITY.

 ANDY SIMPSON had kept the dancers pretty warm for two hours, and the most of them were tired. Groups of three or four now reclined on the soft green grass, and an anxious, expectant look was on their faces.

It was whispered among them that Jeannie Winstanley was to play "Auld Robin Gray," and some other sweet Scottish melodies on the violin. Jeannie's father and mother, who had both died in Dumfries some years before the period of this story, had been fine musicians, and had charmed the poetic ear of Burns, who was their guest many an evening. Her father had begun to teach Jeannie the violin when she was only about eight years old. She had inherited her parents' taste and genius for music, and soon became quite an expert on the violin.

The slanting sunbeams lighted up Jeannie's countenance with a rich glow, as she came out of Logie House, led by Alec Lindsay, with her violin in her hands. A hush of expectancy fell over the company, broken only by an occasional whisper.

All eyes were fixed on Jeannie, who looked a perfect picture of loveliness in her simple blue dress, with Frank Lindsay's red rose on her breast. His mother was observing how fast the *gloire de dijon* and moss roses were disappearing from the garden of the front wall of Whinnybrae. She didn't say anything, but she knew now where they were going.

You could hear the mavis' evening lay, and the low murmur of the gently-swaying beeches overhead seemed like a prelude to what was to follow. Jeannie drew the bow over the strings; they were in perfect tune, and the tone was clear and mellow.

"Grand fiddle at onyrate. There's no the like o' her here about," said Sandy Simpson critically, setting himself in a posture to listen. He said this to James Precter, another famous Kirrie fiddler who was sitting beside him.

"Maun, ay; she soonds weel, an' she's begun bonnie," James answered, giving the player and the fiddle the same gender; and he then set himself also to listen.

"Auld Robin Gray" floated, plaintive and sweet, out into the summer night. How Jeannie did make the touching music quiver and wail like a heart in pain—now wistful, resigned; anon breaking out into agonising sobs. At last the melody died away in a low murmur. Tears were in many eyes, and sighs escaped from hearts seldom sad. Then Jeannie struck out suddenly a lightsome strathspey,

and Sandy Simpson's eyes glistened when he heard it. It was one of his own—"Grant of Glenquiech."

"Dod, but the lassie beats us a'," he cried, quite in ecstasy over her playing a composition of his own.

The mournful strains of the "Flowers o' the Forest" now stole sweetly into the early gloaming: The first verse quivered and throbbed from the violin, but at the second verse she dropped into an accompaniment, and her own voice rose clear and soft as a bird's. There was a stillness as of the grave, and hearts were thrilling with the pathos and beauty of the singing. Jeannie's fingers wandered over the strings, but her eyes seemed to be looking far away into another world beyond the skies of the crimson west. Her face had a rapt expression and her voice had a wistful tremor, as she almost sighed out the words:—

Nae mair your smiles can cheer me,
Nae mair your frowns can fear me ;
For the Flowers o' the Forest are a' wede away.

Could it have been some glimpse of what was about to happen that inspired her voice with its tremulous pathos? There are more things in heaven and earth than we can ever dream of, and in such an "hour of feeling" who knows what visions may come? Alas, poor Jeannie!

Frank who had been strangely moved—moved as he had never before been, felt an impulse to go and speak to her. She looked so pale and over-

come. Perhaps the emotion had been too much for her? No one spoke, and Jeannie stood for a moment as in a dream. Frank was at her side by this time, and a cheer rent the air as Jeannie and Frank disappeared through the conservatory.

The dancing went on again, and the gloaming had fallen over Logie House before the merry gathering broke up for the night.

Three cheers for Lieutenant Lindsay were requested by the gallant owner of Logie at the close of a stirring speech, full of martial ardour, in the course of which Alec hung his head. Three cheers for the gallant owner of Logie were also heartily given, for he was exceedingly popular among his tenants and the neighbouring town's folks. "And three cheers for Miss Winstanley," cried old Sandy Simpson, who was quite enthusiastic over Jeannie's violin playing. He perhaps wouldn't have been so bold before so many, had not his favourite "Glenlivit" been pressed upon him so often by the servant lasses, who had told him "it would put mettle into his elbow." The cheers rang through the woods, and echoed far and near. Then the company departed, and silence fell once more on Logie House.

"Kings may be blest, but some were glorious,
Ower a' the ills o' life victorious—"

as they wended their way homewards over

dykes, ditches, and stiles, between fields of waving corn.

Frank and Jeannie stood till the gloaming had deepened into the dusk, under one of the grand old beeches, talking in low murmurs, the "old, old story."

The first slim cycle of the moon gleamed above Catlaw before they kissed and parted. They knew that they loved each other now—on that memorable July night. Frank and Jeannie didn't observe two hate-filled eyes glaring at them through a mass of shrubbery on the opposite side of the beech walk.

* * * * *

Whinnybrae cottage lights were gleaming brightly on the broomy slope before Alec Lindsay's footsteps were heard by those inside coming smartly up the garden path. He burst in upon them in his dashing, cheery way, flushed with the thought of the day's honours, his scabbard clanking on the stone floor of the simple kitchen. Frank and the old folks were chatting away cheerily.

"This has been a graund day for ye Alec. I doot ye've been doon at Ballindarg wi' yon awfu' braw leddy that ye was speakin' till sae earnestly afore the meeting broke up. She's baith braw an' boonie, an' I'se warrant has a hankle o' siller. Fa is she ava? If ye cud get

yon ane ye would land, Sandy," the old man said laughing loudly. He was in high spirits, and looked at his stalwart nephew with real pride.

"I believe I would, uncle. Do you know I've had a sort of sudden romantic adventure with her—a sort of love comedy," answered Alec setting himself down on a chair.

"Surely not a spontaneous declaration; but I wouldn't wonder. She seemed to be quite lost with you. I suppose your good looks—and, of course, your dashing uniform and big sword—had quite turned her head. You know ladies have a proverbial weakness for red cloth and fierce moustaches," rejoined Frank jocularly entering into the spirit of the conversation.

"Something had done it surely. But listen. Do you know the young lady is none other than Ballindarg's niece. I forgot to mention to you that I was introduced to her at Logie a week or two ago. She said she remembered seeing me some years ago down at Ballindarg. In some way or other we got detached from the rest, as you had noticed, and we kept up a conversation near the shrubbery yonder. Perhaps it wasn't just exactly a lady's part—she hinted that she would have to go home alone, but would be glad of my escort. Of course I was manly enough to offer my services. So my uncle has guessed right.

"On our way down the winding road she

grew not a little tender in her speech—complimented me lavishly on my bravery; but said that I shouldn't brave the dangers of war any more; that I should marry and settle down. She looked up at me archly while she was speaking. I answered by way of joking that I had little chance of getting a wife now. She said that many women would be proud of me, and she knew at least one heart that would care for me always. Though I'm a soldier I felt a little uneasy under fire like this. Something flashed through my mind. Could it be possible that in so short a time I had made an impression on her heart. We were now standing at the gate in front of the garden, and I said I would like to know this heart that had so great an interest in me. Fancy, Frank, she blushing said—'Can you not guess; it is my own,' and then she asked me half-sadly not to go away again to Spain. Of course I laughed, and said I daren't disobey orders. What could I do? She hung down her head half-ashamed, and I stammered out something about it not being true and so on—really I can't remember what I said, I was so much confused at my awkward position. She looked up at me and seemed a little pained at my carelessness about the matter, so I held out my hand to bid her good-night. 'Before I bid you good-night, Lieutenant Lindsay,' she said, 'will you promise to write me sometimes?' I half promised, but reminded her that

I might get shot in my next engagement. A tender look in her eyes, a warm hand shake, a sweetly spoken 'good-night,' and one of the most romantic and unexpected episodes of my life was over. What do you think of it? Rather out of the common run of events, isn't it?"

"Od, the lass has been struck frae the first. If I'd been in yer shoon I widna thrown awa' her heart sae lichtly. Maun, she has siller in her ain richt. Ye'll need to write till her, Sandy, and no loss sicht of her," said the old man rather excitedly, looking blankly at the yellow-ochred walls. Frank's father had a big grip of the world, and siller was one of his chief topics.

"The lass has been feared she wid never see ye again, Alec, for she had kent ye wis gaen awa' tae Spain the morn; else she wid never looten her love be kent sae sune," said Frank's mother with a wae-like look. She was thinking that perhaps none of them might see Alec Lindsay again.

"I suspect that more hearts than Ballindarg's niece had been captured with that six feet of gay uniform," said Frank, after a little silence, wishing to dispel the sad thoughts of Alec's going away, by a little pleasantry.

However, sad thoughts would not be banished. The four sat in the kitchen talking till the "wag at the wa'" had chimed the hour of midnight.

“ Ah ! weel, laddies, we’ll need to be gaen to rest. Sandy, I aye likit ye, and I ken ye’ll dae yer duty awa’ in Spain. God grant that ye come thro’ a’ safe an’ soond, an’ I hope to see ye back again at Whinnybrae wi’ the rank o’ Captain. Guid-nicht and guid aye be wi’ ye ; an’ that’s my wish, laddie,” said the old man in broken sentences. as he rose from his seat.

He took hold of Alec’s hand firmly, and looked with kindly anxiety into his eyes, as if it were his last look at him. Frank’s mother had slipped away without saying anything. Her heart was too full.

Alec and Frank went out into the garden. A solitary star gleamed above Craigowl on the Sidlaws. Kinpurnie’s lonely walls stood forlorn, like a giant sentinel over the land of the dead, against the dappled skies of the west. Strathmore lay like some enchanted land under the solemn noon of night. The old ash trees sighed as if yearning over vanished years. The scent of the roses and flowers in the garden perfumed the balmy night air. A glory as of dawn lit up the far north, and the Grampian peaks towered far up the northern skies. The two stood for a few moments silent, absorbed in thought, and each burdened with thoughts he could not utter.

“ Do you know, Frank, I’ve a presentiment that I shall fall in my next engagement,” said the soldier, in a quiet, calm voice.

“Nonsense, Alec,” said Frank, “you shall distinguish yourself again, my boy, and come back with higher honours, as my father was saying.” But Alec was listening to the night-wind as it moaned through the old ash trees.

“Frank, you will do me a favour, won’t you? If I fall you will tell the young lady of whom we were speaking that I did not mean to treat her love lightly. I shall write something to-night, and seal it, and you shall give it to her after my death. Will you, Frank? I might have learned to love her, but——” Alec stopped suddenly, and he gave a faint sigh. His eyes wore a wistful expression, and they saddened as they looked in the direction of where his dear old home was near the Monument Wood. Perhaps he was thinking of the old folks asleep in the little kirkyaird—life’s battle over for them for ever.

Frank did not speak, and at last Alec said —“Come, Frank, we’ll need to be turning in. I suppose the old folks inside are in the land of dreams. Heigho, for fate and fortune ; but I’ll be far enough away from Whinnybrae to-morrow night. Remember your promise now, Frank.”

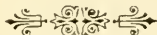
Frank said he would, and tears were in his eyes. Alec was hardly like his usual self, he thought.

They both went in, and, long after Frank was asleep, Alec Lindsay sat writing, and the

candle gleamed out upon the garden through the little window of the "ben" room, till two o'clock chimed from the old clock in the kitchen.

Looking in fancy through the window here we may see a picture of peace. The gallant soldier, strong in the strength of youthful manhood, and fearless, hopeful ambition, sits peacefully at the little table in the "ben" room of the cottage at Whinnybrae. Only the breathing of his sleeping cousin, the scratching noise of his quill, and the steady click of the heavy pendulum which has marked the moments of Alec's young days, break the silence of the house. But Alec must rise and go hence. His destiny awaits him far away on a blood-red battlefield in Spain. No more shall his firm footstep fall on the doorstep at Whinnybrae. He must go forth to duty and death, where the sentinel stars look down upon the dreary scene, as the battle-worn soldiers sink upon their earthy bed—

"The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die."





CHAPTER IV.

THE MYSTERY.

LIGHTY years ago the High Street of Kirrie presented quite a different aspect from what it does now. Thatched roofs and low houses were conspicuous all over the town, giving it an air of rusticity. Handsome buildings now adorn the High Street, and it has a picturesqueness of which few towns of its size in Scotland can boast. No factory stalks then belched their smoke into the clear blue skies. The old kirkyard wasn't full then, and no pretty cemetery, with its terraced slopes and shady groves, looked over Strathmore, away up by the hill. The dell to the west lay unadorned. Southmuir was but a moor of heather and whins. Time, everchanging, has wrought, many transformations, and still onward it moves.

The Square looked dreamy and drowsy one day at noon, about a week after Alec Lindsay's departure from Whinnybrae. No stir, or traffic—everything seemed asleep under the sultry blaze of noon. A shopkeeper now and again would appear for a moment at his shop door, but would

vanish again after taking a look up and down or across the street.

The steeple clock had just struck twelve, when Captain Butler alighted from his horse on the High Street and vanished up a close that led to the chambers of Mr Sniffie, the lawyer.

As the Captain was to knock at the lawyer's door, he heard a voice and stood listening.

"I say, look here, you young rascal; haven't you got that document engrossed yet? What the deuce are you squinting at me for? I'll smash your head with this ruler. Go on!" thundered out Mr Sniffie to his unfortunate and only clerk, who was sitting opposite him at a desk.

Timothy Winnlestrae had had the ambition to become a lawyer's clerk, and six months hadn't passed when he began to consider it wasn't just a couch of roses. Sitting scribbling all day long in grim silence, with now and again a shower of uncomplimentary epithets thrown at his devoted head, and a hunt round the desk with his cantankerous master, flourishing a ruler in full pursuit, to vary the monotony, wasn't Elysian bliss. Sometimes he would bolt right down the stair, and Mr Sniffie wouldn't see his face at least for one day. That was about the most of Timothy's experience as a lawyer. He had run away often, but his parents

got him back again, telling him that a brilliant career at the bar was before him, if he would only exercise his extraordinary talents. His parents had an implicit faith in Timothy's talents. Somehow Timothy couldn't see them himself. He shone best, he would say, at the public-house bar with the barmaid.

Whack, bang! The hunt was in full swing. Chairs were crashing as the two flew round, Timothy dodging, now and again, with wonderful alertness a smash from the ruler, till at last he made a dash for the door. The Captain happened to be at the back of the door as Timothy rushed out, and flop the clerk went through between the Captain's legs, but he stuck, and down came the Captain on the top of him. He got wriggled out below his military superior, and heard him cursing loudly as he disappeared round the corner of the close into the street.

Mr Sniffie was fat and asthmatic, and he was wiping the sweat from his bald brow, as the irate Captain flustered into the office.

"Ah, good morning! Whom have I the pleasure of addressing?" said the blowing lawyer, as he conducted the Captain to a seat, trying to look as composed as possible.

"My name, sir, is Captain Butler. I have called about a little affair, not just exactly my own, but concerning one in whom I have a very special interest," answered the Captain, look-

ing at Mr Sniffie curiously. He was rather tickled over the battle which had just taken place, the fugitive from which had upset him in the lobby.

“Most happy, sir ; what are your wishes?”

“It’s about Miss Winstanley’s affairs. Is there any further information about the Indian estates? These blooming foreign affairs, you know, are deucedly slow, don’t ye know,” said the Captain, drawing a red herring across Mr Sniffie’s scent.

“Yes, they are very tedious. No, sir, no more information than what Miss Winstanley got when she was here last,” answered the cautious scribe, not feeling quite sure about the Captain.

“Ah ! I stand in a very delicate relation to Miss Winstanley, you know ; so you can speak to me without reserve, Mr Sniffie,” the Captain said, with a wink.

Mr Sniffie seemed to catch the cue. “I congratulate you, sir ; a handsome fortune indeed ; and she’s quite a beauty to the bargain.” The little lawyer’s eyes glistened as he said this. He’d be as well, he thought, to keep on good terms with the Captain.

“Thank you. There is a considerable amount of it then. Glad to think authentic particulars are in your possession, Mr Sniffie.”

“Ah, yes, when it is realised Miss Winstanley will be a treasure indeed,” said Mr Sniffie, looking grinningly at the Captain through his spectacles.

“I shall call again some day soon. Good morning, Mr Sniffie, and thanks,” said the Captain, and then disappeared.

On his way down to Logie he thought of a scheme whereby he might bring some gold into his needy pockets. Mr Sniffie seemed to be a bit of a rogue. If he (the Captain) could get him round to his side, things would go as he wanted. If not, well that “sprig of a student” would win. He would win Miss Winstanley at anyrate, but all the money he wouldn’t get, if the tide took the channel he prepared for it. These thoughts ran through the Captain’s mind as he rode, with knitted brows, through the white gate of Logie into the shady avenue, arched with the leaves of the ashes and beeches, through which the sun-glints darted down, making beautiful golden tracery on the soft green walks.

* * * * *

A glorious moonlight night in August. Rosy and red the moon slanted up the Sidlaws, up the clear blue eastern heaven. Slowly it mounted till its broad disc streamed its pale light, soft and dreamy, over Strathmore and Logie braes. The moonbeams gleamed white on the silver birks and the woodland paths. They danced with the rippling wavelets of the burn which crooned through the dell, beside the lovers’ path. They played round the quaint gables of Logie House, which stood cosily amid its silent beeches. The yellow

corn whispered and rustled in the westlin' breeze round Whinnybrae. All was calm and still. A love song would, perchance, waft through the still air of the blythe, dewy eve. Lights twinkled from the cottage windows on the braes. 'Twas a harvest night of peace and beauty. Heaven seemed to smile from the depths of the blue in the far shining lift.

“Do you think, Jeannie—may I hope—that you can promise, in the prospect of my winning something better at college next year—do you think you can give me your heart to-night?”

It was Frank Lindsay who spoke in very tender and faltering accents to Jeannie Winstanley. They were both sitting on a mossy bank of heather, on which the moonbeams glanced through the waving larches, near beside the road where they had first met. Behind them stretched the heather moor—a dim vista in the moonlight. In front of them gleamed the silver birks, and to the east the lights of Logie beamed over the dusky woods.

Ever since that evening in early June, on which they had so strangely become acquainted with each other, Jeannie and Frank had felt that something bright and fresh had dawned over their lives. That night, after Jeannie had parted with Frank, the tones of his voice had lingered sweetly in her ears, and the memory of his words came back often to her thoughts. His dark eyes seemed to haunt her with their fascinating and tender

light. She had never felt so interested in a stranger before, and she lay dreaming and musing of what had passed, strange feelings agitating her breast. She soon learned that it was love—love which brings a rainbow radiance over the world; that brings the dews of heaven into the heart, and glorious day-dreams to the soul.

Frank had felt the same, and who can tell what were his dreams of the fair vision who had entranced him with its fresh lightsome beauty. He wondered if he could win her for himself. He felt as if it would be a higher achievement than winning honours at Cambridge. But

“ Love gives itself ; and if not given,
No title, treasure, worth, or wit—
No gold of earth, or gem of heaven,
Can ever win or purchase it.”

They had met near the same spot one evening shortly after they had first met each other. No doubt Jeannie had wandered westward again in the hope of meeting the handsome young student. The sympathy between them grew deeper—deeper, until it ripened into love, pure and strong, and full of devotion. No words of love were spoken, but the eyes and voice told them each the other's secret. Love may be blind in some ways, but it soon perceives itself mirrored in its object. What happy hours they had together among the dear old woods—lit with the love of life's young dream.

“Frank, that’s hardly fair to tempt me with the prospect of your success. Would you not value my promise more if I gave it for the sake of your own self now, without mentioning the success? Do you really think I’m so worldly?” Jeannie said shyly, with a happy light in her eyes, and looking smilingly to Frank.

“A fair face looks yet fairer under the light of a harvest moon, and a sweet voice sounds sweeter among the whispering winds of a summer night,” thought Frank, as he gazed with adoration into Jeannie’s fair face.

“Remember I’m but a poor student, Jeannie, but will you give me your promise and I shall do my best to deserve you, though I may not be so successful as I wish?” Frank again took her soft little hand into his own as he said this, and his dark eyes grew wistful and pleading as he spoke.

“Yes, dear Frank; I promise to be yours for ever,” she murmured, nestling her fair brow, with its sunny wealth of curls, upon his breast. Frank clasped her to his heart, and imprinted a passionate kiss upon her dear lips. Both were infinitely happy in that moment of holy communion.

Faint fleecy clouds began to drift across the azure sky, and the moon shed a dimmer light over the moor.

Suddenly Jeannie looked up, and with a happy expression on her face, said playfully—

“Do you know, Frank, that I’m an heiress now? You didn’t know how much of a treasure I really was?”

“I wasn’t aware of anything, but that I loved you better than all the world beside. I woo’d and won you for your own sweet self, and all the gold in the world couldn’t make you any dearer or myself prouder. But are you not making fun, my dear Jeannie?” said Frank.

“I should not perhaps have told you; but my uncle died in India a year ago, and I’m his sole heiress. Now you’ll not go back to college, Frank, at all. Study is telling hard on you, and I”—— but Frank interrupted her.

“Ah, Jeannie, you must let me complete my studies. I will soon be back again and we can then do what we like. Would you not like to see me coming back with distinguished honours, even though you had plenty of money?” Frank added buoyantly.

“Yes, you know I would, dear Frank, and I know you will come back with the brightest laurels. Only you must promise to take great care of your health.”

“I promise faithfully, Jeannie, and when I come back you shall help me to do it yourself; won’t you?” said Frank in a cheery tone, and gave her another kiss by way of sealing the agreement.

So they talked, as only lovers can, with the

sweet consciousness of each other's presence, and those delightful silences that go to make up the spell of sweethearts' meetings. "Time flew by wif tentless heed" till the deep sonorous boom of the county town steeple clock came sounding over the strath through the quiet of the autumnal night. They rose from their mossy seat and leisurely sauntered along the path, chequered with the moonbeams by the edge of the moor.

Crack! crack! and something like the whistle of a bullet sounded close to their startled ears. What could gun-shots mean so late in the night? A deep groan came from the wood not far from where they stood. Jeannie gave a faint scream, and would have fallen had not Frank caught her. He led her gently to the bank at the side of the path, telling her he would go and see what it all meant. He ran to the spot where the smoke still lingered.

Stretched on his back lay Captain Butler, his face pallid and agonised, with a stream of blood flowing from the left side of his brow. Frank instantly stooped down, and bound his handkerchief round the Captain's head, to try and staunch the crimson flow. He put his hand on his heart, but the life throbs were ebbing fast. What could he do? Run to Jeannie, and tell her to go to Logie House, and inform his mistress? Wester Logie wasn't so far away. He might run there himself, and tell some one to ride as fast as he could for the

doctor. He ran back excitedly, and told Jeannie what a dreadful thing had happened.

“What? The Captain dying—shot?” gasped Jeannie, with a shudder. She couldn’t help the awful suspicion which flashed through her mind as she remembered the whizzing of the bullet so close to Frank and herself.

“We must go to Wester Logie or Logie House first, and break the news. It’s something dreadful this,” said Frank, much agitated, taking hold of one of Jeannie’s hands.

“We will go together to Logie House, and break the news. Oh, Frank, what a strange ending to so happy a night. Had he shot himself; or how came the Captain to be lying there shot through the head?” asked Jeannie, as she gave a fearful look back to the wood where he lay.

“I cannot tell, Jeannie. It seems a mystery. I saw no one or heard anything, but the groans. It is awful!”

They had now reached the avenue at the back of the house, and Jeannie hurried in almost breathless to tell her mistress. The news created an awful sensation. Mrs Stanley went almost into hysterics, and the rest of the household went about whispering confusedly of the dreadful tragedy. A groom was instantly despatched on horseback to Kirrie for the doctor. Out in the moonlight a silent group stood under the chequered shadows of the tall noble beeches that seemed now to moan a

low dirge for the dead. They stood whispering, anon listening for the sound of horses' hoofs coming down the moonlit roadway, with its sides of holly and beech hedges.

At last the doctor came, and Frank led the way to the spot where the Captain lay in the "Moniment Wood" near the Toad's Well—a sweet spring now covered up, overgrown with rank grass and moss. They found him lying where Frank had left him, his eyes seemingly fixed with a glassy stare on the clear moonlit heaven.

The doctor knelt down, and immediately cried—"Ah, he is dead. He must have died a few minutes after the fatal shot. Whose handkerchief is this wrapped round his head?"

"Mine, sir," answered Frank; "I thought it might help to staunch the flow of blood."

"You did your best, and no human aid could have saved him," answered the doctor, rising slowly.

They all stood round the dead body and gazed upon the pale face, now everlastingly fixed in death. The lips would never move to tell the secret of his end. His soul had taken its flight into another land, the sights and sounds of which no eye hath seen or ear heard. The stars looked down brightly, and the autumn wind moaned and sighed along the moor, but neither could solve the dread mystery which lay over the body of the dead man.

The corpse was taken to Logie House, where it lay for three days, and was then buried. Days

and years have come and gone, but that harvest night of eighty years ago has kept securely its strange secret.

Timothy Winnlestrae used to say that he found a letter of the Captain's in a corner at the foot of the stair, where it had fallen when, he boasted, he had upset the Captain. He often dropped mysterious hints about the letter being dated from Naples. It referred to some intrigue of the Captain's with an Italian lady, and warned him to watch and be on his guard, for revenge was meditated—revenge Italian, and, therefore swift, stealthy, and sudden. Timothy had given the letter to Mr Sniffie, who had burned it after he had read it, telling his clerk never to divulge its contents, as it might lead to unpleasant enquiries.

So death had stepped in to prevent the Captain's meditated plot with Mr Sniffie. Three problems present themselves in the light of events; but no one can solve them now. Was the Captain intending to shoot either Jeannie or Frank, when the bullet whistled past, close to their ears. How did the Captain meet his own death—by accident, or by foul play; by the accidental going off of the gun among the thick, woody undergrowth, or by the deadly aim of some Italian avenger, as the alleged letter from Naples threatened? Had he followed the two lovers and waited for them patiently in the thick wood, or had he been simply coming home by this strange pathway in the moon-

light to Logie from Lindertis? The mists of the past have shrouded all in impenetrable mystery, and to this day no one has been able to make plain the mystery of the "Moniment Wood."





CHAPTER V.

THE LAST GLOAMING.

JUNE—bright rosy June with fair, lightsome smiles—had again covered Strathmore with its mantle of green. The hawthorn blossoms and long yellow broom again waved sweetly round Whinnybrae. Fresh and fragrant the westlin' winds wafted over the bonnie braes o' Logie. Nature was in its sunniest mood.

Far away in a room in Cambridge, a student sits far into the night looking dreamily into the dying embers of the fire. His face, although pale and thin, is handsome, and is lit up with a joyous expression. It is Frank Lindsay, and he starts for home at Whinnybrae on the morrow, laden with college honours, the most distinguished student of Cambridge University for the year. Jeannie Winstanley is coming down from London with the stage coach, and they are going up to bonnie Scotland together. They have arranged that they are to be wedded at the New Year. But Tom Brown was before them, for a wedding was to take place at "The Plans," the croft

beside Whinnybrae, and the home of Mary Morrison's parents. Mary had at last consented to take Tom. He didn't just get her at the first asking. But Tom persisted, and so one autumn evening, when the sere and yellow leaves were flickering and falling thick around them, as they sat under an old beech tree in the range, Mary gave her heart and hand to Tom. No doubt many have done the same since, for the range was once the place o' langsyne trysts.

Tom had sobered down wonderfully, and was now a sensible, as well as a good-looking young fellow. He had crept into Mary's good graces, and she gave him her love and trust completely that autumn gloaming. So a merry and happy night it was at The Plans when they were wed.

Jeannie and Frank and the old folks of Whinnybrae went over the burn to see them linked together. Jeannie's fortune hadn't altered her in any way; she was always the same bonnie, blushing, modest, unaffected girl.

Frank and Jeannie lingered behind the old folks. They hadn't far to go, but still they wished a few moments of sweet converse together—a thing they couldn't get at Whinnybrae. The old folks and friends were so glad at their return, that they would not lose sight of them for even a moment. They had just arrived on the day of Tom Brown's

wedding—and a wedding day was a stirring day among the country folks.

“Ah, Frank, you know how proud I am of your achievements at college; but how pale and thin you have got. Are you feeling well, Frank,” Jeannie enquired, looking up into Frank’s face with an anxious expression.

“To you, perhaps, I owe my success; for the thought of you, Jeannie, did spur me on. My native strath will soon bring the red to my cheeks, and the good things at Whinnybrae, will soon make me as fat as—Sandy Simpson. Here he is coming down the road,” said Frank, gaily.

Sandy was making his way down the footpath on the other side of the hawthorn hedge, and Frank went off to greet him; not, however, before he had kissed Jeannie, and said, “You must sing ‘Mary Morrison’ to-night just to please me. Tom Brown will be confused, but pleased, I know.” Sandy and Frank came forward to where Jeannie stood, when Frank introduced her to Sandy, who couldn’t find words to express how pleased and honoured he was to speak to such a “bonnie, braw, an’ gifted leddie,” and he put a special emphasis on gifted—no doubt alluding to Jeannie’s gift of playing the violin. He was enthusiastic on fiddles.

Why describe the merry night—the hamely mirth and happiness in the quaint white cottage of

The Plans. How entranced the folks were with Jeannie's singing of "Mary Morrison"—

“ Oh, Mary at thy window be,
 It is the wished-for, trysted hour.
 Those smiles and glances let me see
 That mak'st the miser's treasure poor.
 With joy, with rapture I would toil,
 A weary slave frae sun to sun,
 Could I the rich reward secure—
 The lovely Mary Morrison.”

What sly looks were cast at Mary and Tom, whose blushes only betrayed their modesty. Frank was the life and soul of the company with his merry jests and anecdotes. Tom Brown pressed the "spirits" on Sandy Simpson, to put life into his elbow, till it was too strong for him, and he collapsed altogether.

"Isna' Miss Winstanley tae gie's twa-three Scottish airs on her ain fiddle? Maun, I like to hear her play; ye wud think she could mak' it speak an' greet," said the hearty farmer of Ladywell, to "Pluckerston" a neighbouring farmer.

Jeannie looked to Frank enquiringly, and he instantly went "ben" to the kitchen, coming back with Jeannie's own violin in his hand. He had slipped away over to Whinnybrae for it half-an-hour before that, and was to ask her to play. He knew she would do anything to please the company.

So Jeannie's fingers once more wandered over

the strings, and drew softly and quiveringly from them some simple Scotch melodies, till eyes grew moist and dim, and memories and thoughts "o' lang syne," and diviner lands came thronging into their minds.

We now hear through the open rustic door, flooded with light, the sweet strains o' "Auld Lang Syne"—sung often in many lands by exiled hearts. The June night never closed surely on a happier bridal party—but, list—

"The gloomy night is gathering fast,
The muffled drum's in prospect."

* * * * *

The curtain rises over Whinnybrae on a dim, cold night in October.

"The melancholy days have come,
The saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds and naked woods,
And meadows brown and sere."

Round the blazing kitchen fire sit Frank Lindsay's father and mother and himself. The bright log fire throws a red glow on their faces, and the shadows dance on the old-fashioned press and yellow-ochred walls. Frank's mother is sitting knitting in one corner. The old man in front is trying to read something he holds in his hands. There is a hectic flush on Frank's cheeks that the firelight only deepens, and he now seems much thinner than when he came to Whinnybrae first. His eyes

always dark and gloomy, have a strange lustre in them to-night, as he sits reclining backward on the rustic couch.

“I canna mak’ oot this ava, laddie. Wid ye read it oot Frank. Ye’re no needin’ to speak heich ava; jist read it laich, else ye’ll bring on that hoast again. It’s something about Alec, frae Spain.” said the old man, looking tenderly, and handing over the letter to Frank, who started eagerly at what the old man said about Alec and Spain.

“Eh, father—about Alec in Spain?”

Frank liked to drop into the hamely Doric sometimes with the old folks. He eagerly scanned the letter over, and then gave a deep sigh, and his eyes grew moist.

“Alec’s presentiment has come too true then. Poor Alec’s dead. This is a letter from his comrade on the battlefield,” said Frank.

There was a tremor in Frank’s voice as he said the fateful words. The old clock ticked steadily on the wall, the fire danced and crackled, and the autumn wind soughed through the old ash trees, but all the three sat silent, looking with tearful faces into the ashes on the floor. Tear drops fell and glistened on the stocking wires in Frank’s mother’s lap. The old man’s brow was knit with pain. Frank buried his face between his hands. The scene in the garden, and Alec’s prophetic words all came back; all now unutterably sad.

“Ay, read it ower, Frank. He’ll hae dune his duty bravely nae doot. Lat’s hear hoo he fell,” at last said the old man, with something like an eager look in his eyes.

Frank took up the letter that had fallen on the floor, and read with quivering voice as follows :—

SPAIN (On the field of Tallavera.)

Sir,—My dear, dead comrade, Lieutenant Lindsay’s wish was—if he fell in the battle just over—that I was to write to you and tell you of his death. It is now my sad duty to fulfil my promise, alas. But how proud I am (and so will you) to think that he so gloriously died in the front, fighting for his country’s honour. To-night I found him lying with his sword firmly clenched in his hand, and his face turned calmly to heaven—placid as if asleep ; he had been shot right through the heart, poor fellow. Several Frenchmen lay around him dead—their bodies bearing evidence of the brave young soldier’s prowess with the Highland broadsword. The colours were found wrapped round him on the blood-red field of Spain. One consolation it will be to you to know that I found upon him a recently-granted captain’s commission. He had just got it the day before he fell. Death has come too soon and ended his brilliant and promising career. May he rest in peace, good, gallant soul. I may fall myself e’er the war is over, and if so, may my

end be like his. Farewell. In haste, with respect.
—Yours faithfully,

G. CAMPBELL,
Lieutenant, 42nd Highland Regiment.

P.S.—I shall try to get forwarded to you his
valuables someway.” G. C.

“And so that’s the last of poor Alec,” said Frank when he had finished reading the sad news.

“Ay, ay, Frank, but he’s dee’d weel, his’n he, fechtin’ to the last. We’ll never see him here again,” said the old man, and he looked waesomely round the simple kitchen. Frank’s mother was too overcome to say anything. The blow fell sore on her sensitive heart. She had always liked Alec from his boyhood, though he was a little wayward.

“I have a sacred promise I made to Alec, that night before he went off, to fulfil now. There’s a sealed envelope I have to deliver to Miss Ogilvie of Ballindarg. I was to give it to her, Alec said, after he was dead. So I’ll have to try and go over to-morrow,” Frank said, with a far-away look in his eyes, as if his fancies were wandering in Spain.

“Na, Frank, ye’r ower weak to gang yersel’. Jeannie ’ill be up the morn, an’ she can tak’ it,” said Frank’s mother, looking up suddenly from her reverie.

Frank’s mother had a great love for her clever son, and she would not see the winds of heaven visit his cheek too roughly. She watched the

hectic flush on his cheeks, and the strange lustre in his dark eyes, and she grew afraid that she might have to lose him altogether. A hacking cough would wring her heart every time she heard it. So she would not hear of Frank going to Ballindarg.

“ Well, yes, mother, but I would like to put it into her hand myself. I’ll bid Jeannie bring her here, and she can get it,” answered Frank, leaning back again on the couch. That late October night ended gloomily for all in Whinnybrae, but a November night was to close far more sadly.

The old man took the big ha’ Bible, and, as was his wont, read a portion earnestly. To him all therein was very real, and cottage worship was held very often at Whinnybrae in the old-fashioned kitchen, in the old-fashioned way. So over the night of the news of Alec’s death we think of a verse from Burns that fitly describes the scene—a solemn requiem comes as from afar—

“ Then kneeling down to heaven’s eternal king,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays ;
Hope springs exultant on triumphant wing,
That thus they all shall meet in future days ;
There ever bask in uncreated rays.
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator’s praise,
In such society yet still more dear ;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.”

When Jeannie came next day to Whinnybrae it

was arranged that she was to bring the young lady with her, to whom Frank was to give the sealed envelope that Alec had so strangely left in Frank's keeping. Frank gave the letter to Maggie Ogilvie with his own hands. She would never tell what were its contents ; nor did Jeannie or Frank press her.

Jeannie was staying also at Ballindarg, and the two grew friends, knit together in friendship by warm romantic ties. They might have been seen often together driving up to Whinnybrae on the dim October days, when the Logie Woods were sere and yellow. They would often sit with Frank in the rustic seat, when he was able to go out, wrapped in a plaid, to watch the sun set grandly over far Schiehallion. Jeannie would sometimes read—Frank liked to hear Jeannie reading—especially some fine poem. Sometimes she would sing, or play his favourite airs. These were strange, memorable evenings for Maggie and Jeannie in after years. The Strath looked mellow and bonnie, when the fading woods were touched into brilliant gold and yellow gleams and russet tints of autumn's wild decay. Oh, how Frank gazed on the hills and the sweet October skies ! Some grand poetic thoughts he would utter and Jeannie and Maggie would sit and listen to his converse enraptured. His intellect and soul were not dimmed, though his step was feeble, and his strength was fading away like the leaves of his

loved Logie woods. He remained the brilliant student in mind, though manhood's blush was swept from his cheek, and he stooped as he walked.

Jeannie knew he was fast drifting away from her. They often spoke about it; spoke of all their bright hopes so darkly sinking. Frank would sometimes say—

“The wan moon is setting behind the white wave,
And time is settin' wi' me, O.”

But they knew it was not always to be dark. The chill blight would come for her also some day, and her earthly sun set in dusk and darkness. But a radiant glory would burst beyond death and sever love's dark clouds.

October waned, and “dull November's surly blasts” swept over the bare Logie braes. Frank lay in bed now, wasted almost to a shadow. Sometimes his thoughts would wander away to Cambridge, and he would talk incoherently with his college companions. Sometimes he would be away in Spain, and Alec's name was often on his lips. At other times he would be with Jeannie in Logie woods, and he would be gathering some rare wild flowers, and murmuring some fond words. Jeannie would sit for hours at his bedside, and it wrung her heart to hear him murmur her name in his wandering dreams.

That evening he passed away, Maggie and

Jeannie were sitting in the room together where he lay. The red November sunset was flaming over the hills, and the Sidlaws and Logie woods were flushed with its ruddy glow. It came through the little gable window in the west, and it fell on Frank's wasted face, and lit it with a crimson glory. Maggie was to pull down the little blind, thinking that the light might be too strong, but Frank said in a low whisper—

“Oh, let him shine; he will not shine long now for me, as a great spirit once said at Brow.”

“Are you going now, Maggie? Well I shall better bid you farewell. I'll never see you again,” he said later on, and Maggie went away softly, in tears.

The November sunset sank. The dimness of the last gloaming stole over the Strath. The dip candle was lighted, and it shone out into the garden among the withered flowers he loved so well. All was silent round Whinnybrae, and the old ashes no more murmured—leafless and bare they stood in the gloaming.

“Jeannie, tell my father and mother to come ben. I wish to bid them good-bye. I'm going fast now, I feel,” said Frank after he had lain silent a while in a drowse. His voice was weak and low. Jeannie went, and the old folks, nearly heart-broken, came ben. 'Twas a sore wrench to have to lose their clever, promising, and only son. They sat down close beside the bed.

“I’m going to leave you now. I had hoped once to have been able to keep you both in your declining years. But God has thought fit to take me away—so soon, so soon. Yet I’m willing ; it must surely be all for the best. For all your sakes, I would like to stay too,” Frank said in broken accents, and he cast his large dark eyes wistfully upon them, with a look as from that far country, to which he was so fast hastening.

“But you know, dear Frank, that I’ve promised to do what you would have done. And you know that I am able, and, oh, so willing,” said Jeannie in a voice shaken with deep emotion, and she took hold of Frank’s wasted hand. He cast a look of ineffable love to Jeannie, and a pleasant smile flickered over his wan, thin face.

“Ah, yes, Jeannie will take care of you both. I must now go to sleep,” he said in a whisper, and lay looking earnestly at them, sitting with bowed heads in tears, till his eyelids drooped, and he slept. Seven o’clock chimed from the old “wag at the wa’” in the kitchen. When they looked next, the dew of death was on his broad forehead. His sleep had passed into the last dreamless slumber. The last gloaming had sunk into the dark night. Frank Lindsay had slipped quietly away from those whom he loved, and who loved him most—his bright, sunny, promising career of twenty-six years all dark and chilled for ever.

“ Oh, call it not a life,
 ’Twas but a piece of childhood thrown away—
 Faint beating in the calyx of the rose :
 In Eden every flower is blown.”

* * * * *

Perhaps we should have ended our story with
 sunshine and marriage bells. It was not so.

“ Into each life some rain must fall.”

And to many there comes—

“ A mist and a driving rain,
 And the world is never the same again.”

So it was with Jeannie Winstanley and Maggie
 Ogilvy. You could have seen them at Whinnybrae
 many summers after Frank died. The sacred
 memories of their buried loves bound them to-
 gether by ties that the work-a-day world knew
 nothing of. Often as they passed along the
 old, familiar woodland path, a grasp of the
 hand, exchanged in silence, would tell far better
 than words the sweet sadness which filled their
 hearts, as they thought of bygone days ; and
 then

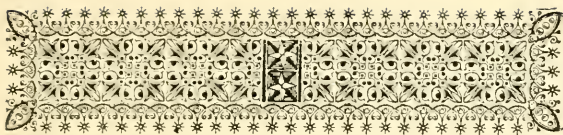
“ Their pale cheeks joined and said, ‘ Once more.’
 O memories ! O past that is !”

After the old folks had slipped away,
 they only came for a few days to Logie
 braes. Jeannie helped many a student, and
 she went about doing good among the poor
 and needy. She had no narrow selfish ideas

of the world and her wealth. Many a summer night she was seen wandering among the old paths of her early love. She died in England. Maggie Ogilvy died some twenty years ago—an old lady. She never told any one of Alec's secret, but she often spoke about him. Timothy Winnlestrae and Mr Sniffie stuck well together, Timothy doing pretty well in some big town after he left the Kirrie lawyer's office. All are now dead.

Whinnybrae cannot now be seen, but the two ash trees still wave drearily at the top of Whamond's Den, where the hawthorn still blooms.





THE
CROFT MARKET ROBBERY :

A STORY OF KIRRIE TWENTY-SIX YEARS AGO.

Auld Stanin' Stane o' Kirrie, grey,
What mystic legends old
The winds of summer nights have hummed,
Or wintry blasts blown cold,
Round thee of Druid chants and rites,
And fairy elfin lore ;
Thou stand'st, grey relic of the past,
Dumb—silent evermore.

IT was twenty-six years ago, and the day of the Croft Market. What mingled memories and lively recollections it calls up out of the past ! The market was then in its glory. Long before the day of the event, what stirring thoughts and expectations lighted up the imaginations of the country folks for many miles around the Hill, with its grey stanin' stane ? Druid legends and mystic stories of witches and bogles and

warlocks of the dim far away times ! And let it be frankly spoken—the Kirrie handloom weavers looked forward to a gala day of fun and daffin' "an' fechtin"—plenty of the last generally before the market night ended. Broken noses, blue and black eyes, and battered faces next morning told of a regular Donnybrook. There was an inveterate rivalry between the trampers of the soil and the trampers of the treadles, and many bold battles and wild skirmishes resulted. How such a bitter rivalry originated no one could precisely tell. One thing was certain, the proud Kirrie weavers looked down on their rustic rivals with supreme contempt and mighty scorn. Mark you, the difference between a handloom weaver and the wielder of the plough in those days was immense—the one was as high as the steeple, the other as low as mud. Of course that was the weavers' opinion. The ploughmen naturally reversed such a preposterous idea. 'Oot o' ma road, ye brose warrior and clod hopper, or else'—contemptuously spoken by a half-steamed drucken weaver as he strutted, like a bantam cock, through the market, was met with—"An' what the deevil are ye, ye puir silly weaver, fed on red herrin' and gruel? Come on ye warrior o' cadiz and treadles!" And then the hullabaloo would commence. The rest of the weavers flocked to the fray. Ploughmen and Irish drovers swelled the crowd, and the battle waxed furious and

fast. It was grand to see the scientific dodges of the weavers. Some diminutive weaver would slip in between a big ploughman's legs, and tumble him right over, the treadle warrior above him. In another minute a heap of ploughmen, weavers, and Irish drovers would be cursing and scrambling above each other in confusion, and a hot half-hour delighted the spectators. It was something rich to see the attitudes of the combatants sometimes. A big, six-foot ploughman tackling a five-foot weaver—the weaver dancing like a monkey round his opponent, waiting for a chance to display his scientific tactics. The ploughman standing, fists cocked, like a monument, his eyes glaring, and his hair on end. The whirlgig of time brings round many changes. The proud martial Kirrie handloom weavers have dwindled down to a few old men and women, and the “click-clack” of the loom is now only heard at intervals. What a contrast to the continuous loud clack of the shuttle, the cheery birr of the pirn wheel in nearly every house you passed, mingled with the songs and laughter of the lads and lasses as they tramped away in the long summer days and winter nights. The ploughmen are as sturdy and numerous as ever. They could swallow all the handloom weavers in Kirrie now.

Gruesome memories cling around the old Croft

Market days. Two years after our story opens, on the morning after the market, a tinker of the White clan was found lying dead at the bottom of the quarry near the road. He was buried in the hill cemetery yonder, and his grave can be pointed out still. The tinker's sad fate was pathetically described at the time in a poem of touching simplicity. A rather good story is told of Mr Wills, the Inspector of Poor, at the time—a man of abrupt and rather brusque manner, yet gifted with a good, feeling heart—a rare thing, unfortunately, in Poor Inspectors. The tinker's friends enquired at "Robbie"—as he was generally called—what sort of coffin the poor tinker was to get. "A blackened wood one of course," said Robbie briskly. This didn't please the tinkers, and they grumbled. "Ah," observed Robbie again, "then you know them that have groats can put the more into the pot." The poor tinker, however, got a good coffin and a good funeral. Another two men were also found dead in the quarry on the morning after other Croft Markets. "Somebody's sure to get killed, or hurt, or robbed at the Croft," was a common saying. Many reminiscences of a humorous and interesting character could be recalled. But to our story. It was a wild and boisterous day twenty-six years ago. The wind soughed through the old hill wood, and the rain pelted heavily. Despite wind and rain, lads and lasses, farmers and ploughmen, Irish

drovers, horses and cattle flocked up the hill road to the great Croft Market. Irish drovers shouting and cursing, lads and lasses laughing and chatting, and farmers grinning as they conjured up visions of grand bargains and overflowing pockets when the market was over. At a bend of the road beside the quarry stood the inevitable old blind man with his dog. Now and again the clink of a penny or 'bawbee,' and sometimes a stone in the tanker he held out would bring a smile to his face, as he kept on his everlasting cry to the crowd passing up the rough and rocky road. The night previous a woman entered the Union Inn, Southmuir, and asked lodgings for the night. She was accompanied by two men—one big and muscular, the other short and slight of build. She said they were her two brothers, though there was a strong contrast between them. Suspecting nothing of the woman's character, the landlady granted her request, and she was shown upstairs to a comfortable room. The two men left as soon as they saw her safely lodged. After getting some supper she politely asked for a book, and during the rest of the evening seemed absorbed in its contents. It never dawned in the landlady's mind who she was or what she was. She was of a voluptuous cast of form, clad in a black dress, and had a pleasant-looking face. No one would have dreamt of her true character. Nothing in her face indicated

the evil that lurked in her mind. With pleasant smiles and courteous words she addressed the landlady when she entered the room to attend to her wishes. The night passed on, and she read till it was time for bed. Next morning she was up betimes, got breakfast, and by ten o'clock was on her way to the market. Among the crowd that wended their way there were the two men who left her at Southmuir on the previous evening. The market went on briskly despite the bad day. The tents were full, and a roaring trade was driven. As the whisky excited and steamed the brain, tongues wagged with glee and jollity. What beaming faces, lighted with friendship and whisky! What mirth and laughter at one end of the tent, and fighting and quarrelling at the other. What heavenly happiness shone on the proprietor's countenance as the bundles of notes slipped into his greedy pockets. What bargains and debates! One can imagine the picture with its strong lights and shadows. Night came down, and the hill grew dark and empty, save for the lighted tents and the drunken stragglers. The tinkers' camp fires were burning too, and would burn far into the night. The streets in the town were busy; squabbles and fights took place, and shouts and volleys from the mixed tongues reminded one of the Tower of Babel. Among the many who had partaken of too much 'barley bree' was a man

named Leslie. He had sold a number of cattle that day for Mr Milner, farmer of Ballinshoe, and the big sum of £297 odds was in his pockets,—rather too much to be carrying on the Croft Market night. Nine o'clock found him with the woman, already described, in a sort of wood-yard off Bellies Brae. After they had separated he found his money all gone, and the shock sobered him. It flashed across his brain that the woman had stolen it, and he ran excitedly and informed the police. A hunt for the woman began, but no trace of her could be got. Public-houses were searched and every conceivable place where she could be hiding, but in vain. At last the information was given that the woman and two men had been seen going down the Glamis Road, and with this clue the police determined to follow. Being the market day, a good number of the county police were in town, and a machine was quickly hired. It was a dark wild, sleety night—

“Sic a nicht to tak' the road in

As e'er poor sinner was abroad in”—

and not very conducive to hunting down a thief on the road. But off two or three of the force set, and they were rewarded by a capture. But it was more by good fortune than genius that it was effected. It is only fair to state, however, that a rumour went out at the time that they adopted a ruse to allay suspicion on the

road. Passing off as some drunk farmers or others on their way home, they shouted and sang with all their might and main to keep up the deception. They had reached the woods of Tealing without any sign of their game, when who should step out of the shadow there but the woman in black and the two men. She was just saying to them as she slipped out—"If I were ance at the tap o' the Hilltoon, I'll no gie a d—— for them a'," when she was pounced upon and arrested. She was to be a long time in getting to the Hilltoon. The horse's head was turned in the direction of Kirrie, and the policemen and their precious companions were whirling away back in the wild night. They were not long in again being back, and as they approached the Southmuir, they passed within a few yards of the very place where the money lay hid. Stopping at the police station in Southmuir, they went inside, and the woman was recognised as Mary Macartney by George Forbes, the constable there, and as having been connected with a robbery at Glamis a few weeks before that. The two men were named Smith and Kelly—the latter being a lithographer. They were taken up to Kirrie, and by midday they were safely lodged in Forfar jail to await their trial. Now comes a strange and interesting phase of the affair. The Governor, named

M'Kay, divined that the money must be hid somewhere between Tealing woods and Kirriemuir. He was but mortal, and his anxiety to find out where it was hid led him into opening negotiations with the prisoners with the view of getting the information. He treated them handsomely—giving them tea and whisky and the best of dainties, plenty of drink, and other wily baits to tempt them to confess the secret; but “Mary” and Smith were not to be pumped, so the cute Governor hit upon a ruse to effect his wishes. He had observed that the other two didn't seem to care for Kelly, and ignored him in their conversation. Whispering to Kelly confidentially that he had better tell him where the money was, as the others were to give him the slip, and he would thus gain nothing by keeping the secret, he succeeded in drawing him. Kelly consented to sketch a plan of the place where the money lay concealed, and gave it to the Governor. So one night, about six o'clock, in the gathering darkness, the Governor with the plan in his pocket, was seen about the Southmuir. His search was for the pocket-book and the stolen pound notes. But he had to return to Forfar without them, after a good search. Angry at his failure, he determined on a bold scheme—nothing less than to make Kelly accompany him back to Kirrie and point out the spot. Next night a machine halted at the Southmuir tavern, and

M'Kay and Kelly jumped out and made their way down the Glamis road, and from a hole in the bank of a small ditch, beside the road that led down to a little strip of wood, called the "Denny," and a few yards from the public road, opposite the old smithy, Kelly took out the bundle of notes, wrapped up in a bit of sealskin, and handed them to the Governor. There were in all about £300 in the packet, so that some one besides Leslie had been fleeced that day. Time wore on, and at the Justiciary Court, Edinburgh, Mary Macartney, Mark Smith, and Kelly appeared, charged with the robbery. The chain of evidence closed around them, and they were convicted, and each sentenced to eight years penal servitude—Mary Macartney eventually getting free at the end of six years. But that did not finish the affair. The Governor and others were charged with being concerned in appropriating the stolen money, and they had to appear at the court in Forfar to answer to the indictment. Kelly was brought out of gaol to give evidence against M'Kay as to the finding of the money. He told all about the sketch, the ride to Kirrie in the dark night, the handing of the bundle of notes to the Governor, and the ride back to Forfar, very graphically. Kelly spoke a long time, and was rather clever in his speech. Dandie Davie, a worthy of some note and eccentricity, and whose bump of vanity

in regard to his own intellectual and personal attractions, was mightily developed, gave evidence as to the finding of the pocket-book in one of the lanes in which the Governor was seen searching. Other witnesses told of having seen him and Kelly. The evidence was strong against the Governor, but he was acquitted along with the others. He had, however, to quit his situation. The Fiscal had to come down from his high estate and leave the town along with the others. Altogether, it was a strange and remarkable affair. Some maintain that the money got into the hands of a gang of thieves in Dundee. Their theory was that a sketch was thrown out of the prison window, and that the robbers' friends discovered the money after the Governor had laid it back in its place of concealment. Whichever way the money went, the robbery is a red-letter event in the annals of the Croft Market. Mary Macartney was seen not many years ago, on a Muckle Friday, in the High Street of Kirriemuir, selling money by the old dodges and trickery. Some one said rather loudly that she was Mary Macartney, the great thief, and she slipped away. The Croft Market is now only the ghost of what it was—like the Muckle Friday. The old customs are wearing away. Great things then have grown little now. The blood does not, in these days, dance through the veins at the thought of markets, with their amusements and shows. The glamour that hung around those things

is fled. The Croft Market robbery, like many other exciting events, is fading away out of public memory. This imperfect sketch may help to make it live a little longer in the records of the past.





QUIET THOUGHTS.

NEARLY every heart cherishes some particular spot with deepest fondness. We love to be near its green braes, quiet dells, and winding streams. Some shady nook, away among the woods, is ever dear to our silent, best thoughts. Some stream murmurs clearer than all others, its low, sweet song; and the wind, sighing through the old trees, awakens memories, though sad, yet sweet. Every tree, bush, or whin seems like an old friend, and we soon miss any of them, if cut down or withered away. The mind invests all with a beauty and interest that time cannot obliterate or wear away. Let us linger awhile among the dear old woods, ere the tender radiance of the west dies out, while the witchery of the gloaming comes down on mountain, moor, and stream, and deepens into the night. How richly gleam the yellowing leaves over yonder in the setting sun. Softly the leaves are falling on the old paths, and the tenderness and beauty of decay rest on

the quiet, loved haunts. The green leaves and glints of June were not so soul-touching or so elevating as these sober tints of sad October. October skies and sunsets have a power and beauty of their own. Look yonder, at the far west flecked with saffron, purple, and ruby! How clear and near are the hills, all glowing with gold against the azure of the north and south. The woods, with their varied mantles, deep-tinted, have a lovelier tinge in the mellow light. A hush, as of death, is over all as the day slowly fades over yon far western hills. But the grey twilight begins to shadow hill, wood, stream, and sky. All seems vested with the dreaminess of saddest reveries. No sound comes from the busy town; all is dim and softened. Only the fluttering of a bird's wings, or the whisper of the passing winds, breaks the impressive stillness. The mind, enwrapt with nature in its most pensive mood, feels the subtle power of imagination, and the memories of long vanished years sweep through its rhythmic structure. A twilight seems to steal over our thoughts and invests them with a mantle, like that of the dimness of the fading woods and silent hills. Some mysterious power subdues the soul into sober meditation, and contemplation exalts it into the realms of fancy and poetry. A poetic impulse stirs the soul to unaffected worship in the vast cathedral of immensity. 'Tis good, we feel, to

ponder, with the stars coming out of the azure depths away up yonder above us. How far apart are these peaceful haunts from the roar and the strife and the sad sins of the city! Over it the curtain of night has descended, and the gay fast throng glides through its lighted streets. The mind pictures life's drama there with its many-coloured visions, its sad and happy tones! To look upon it with superficial, unfeeling eyes, all seems well. We know the reality is far from the seeming. But we must close these quiet meditations at present. The keen wind sweeps down from the north, and the clouds are lowering on the southern hills. Fancy lists to autumn's mystic hymn in the sough of the winds through these grand old woods. How grandly the dim peaks of the Grampians tower against the brilliant western skies, all star-diademed! And as we walk briskly homeward in the gloaming, something like rich melody thrills in our heart. 'Tis the sweet sound of Nature's voice—old as the music of streams or the wild booming of the foam-crested ocean; sweeter than the melody of birds, and deeper than all earthly music.

