

NORTH AND SOUTH OF TWEED

STORIES AND LEGENDS OF
THE BORDERS

BY

JEAN LANG

AUTHOR OF "A LAND OF ROMANCE"



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PREFACE

MANY years ago the writer took an old lady to see an Ibsen play. The lady had, so it was reported, been jilted in her youth by a famous poet-artist, since when she had remained plunged in gentle melancholy. It was, perhaps, the gloomiest of Ibsen's plays, for *mise en scène* a place where "the children are never known to laugh," and in which suicide trips upon the heels of suicide. Yet, at the conclusion of the piece, the old lady gave a deep sigh of satisfied pleasure. "A beautiful play," she said, "a *beautiful* play. Not one gleam of sunshine throughout."

Now in writing the legendary tales of the Borders, one feels that it is almost impossible not to produce a collection calculated to satisfy the melancholy requirements of the aged spinster who had loved a poet. The intense sadness of the Dowie Dens of Yarrow may not pervade all Tweedside, the whole region of the Cheviots and the Lammermuir uplands, yet, in all its legend and tradition,

tragedy is emphatically the dominant note of those shires through which the "wan water" of the Border rivers flows eastward to the sea. They are tales of violence, of bloodshed, of dark tragedy that are handed down through the centuries. In history the shadows remain; the "gleams of sunshine" fade with the day.

In the historical stories in this volume facts have been verified as much as it is possible to do so. Tradition does not readily submit itself to verification, but, as far as may be, this has also been done.

The story of "Pearlin Jean" has many variants. That which is given here is the one adhered to by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, the Rev. John Marriott (Sir Walter Scott's friend), and by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder; but I much regret that another, which seems to me more likely to be the correct version, has only reached me since this book went to press.

The sketches of "The False Alarm," "Supperstections," and "The Doctor" have already appeared in *Scotia*, and I have to thank the publishers of *The Scotsman* for their courtesy in allowing me to reprint "By the North Sea."

JEAN LANG.

EDINBURGH, March 1913.

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THE STORY THE JESTER TOLD

I AM an old man now, and the jest no longer flies from my lips like the flick of a whip-lash, or with the swiftness and the sting of the spray that the breaking seas below send flying up to wet our cheeks as we sit here high above them. The old dog's teeth are gone, yet the Lord of the Isles is kind to the old dog that was first his grandsire's, and in this island that lies so far away from the Forest where I was born, I am promised kind words and food and shelter till my day is done. On days when the sun puts some life into my tired bones I like to come up to this place where the loneroid grows thick and smells fragrant.

It minds me of my boyhood in the Forest, but there it was not loneroid that they called it, but bog myrtle. Hollies and great beeches and oaks grew tall above it; the black swine that rooted amongst the beech mast would squeal as they scampered into it unawares and got bogged in the marshes, and when we hunted by night its scent would make us

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careful where we trod, else we had been the sufferers and not the deer that flitted like pale ghosts amongst the trees' dark shadows. Ah me, these were good days when one was but a boy and the New Forest was a land such as the good priest would have us think is the fair land of Paradise.

He is a good priest is Father Angus, and many times he will sit here by me, watching with me the green waves that lie between us and my own land, and the white wings of gulls in the sunshine, and harking to the sighing of the waves, and the heart-broken wailing of the grey skua and the curlew that is crying, crying. We will sit silent many times together and go home for Vespers with barely a word, but at times remembrance comes to me so clear and strong that I have to speak, and Father Angus listens. And a tale that oftentimes I tell him, but to which he always listens as it were for the first time of all, is that of the poor wanderer who was once a mighty King.

It was a day in June—methinks more than seventy years ago—that I rode with my father to London. I had made a great lord laugh when he hunted in the Forest early that spring. My father was verderer, and my elder brothers worked under him, and I also, though but a puny lad for my age. "A malapert knave," said my lord, yet he laughed most merrily at my forward jest, and spared me the trouncing my father's holly staff was more than ready

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to give. Thereafter many a time did I go out with my lord and his friends, and when they sought the Court again my father was bidden bring me to London to learn at Court all the arts that might teach me to become a jester fit for a King. My poor mother wept, I mind me. Always the red eyes, and the tears that wet my face as she said farewell are what come back to me. And "*Oh,*" said she, "that son o' mine should come to wear the cap and bells! Better a charcoal-burner in our own Forest"—and her voice was full of bitter shame. But there were ten of us, and my father, worthy man, though he liked it but ill, bade her hold her peace, for better men than I had worn cap and bells, and made japes for kings and yet helped them to rule nations. So off we went, in the June sunshine, and I was a weary lad when our journey was ended and we rode one bright morning into London town. It was not a fortunate time of the year for our journey, for the country was up in arms. The King and his councilors had taxed the people so heavily that the people had rebelled. All along the way we saw black smoke rising from burning manor houses, or from the great trees in stately parks, and we heard loud talk and boasting of the many that the mob had slain. In London all was uproar. Ten thousand men from Essex and from Kent were filling up the streets and kindling the fire of rebellion that spread fast as flames in the Forest. They destroyed the Savoy, the palace

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of his Grace of Lancaster, burned Temple Bar, broke up the King's prisons, broke into the Tower, and struck off the head of the Archbishop, and of three others, and these four heads they bore through London, set on four long spears.

We sought the house of the lord who was to be my protector, but we were told that he was with the King. So, stabling our horses, we walked on with the sturdy legs of the Forest men to Smithfield where Bartlemy's fair was wont to be held. A strange sight was it all for a country lad. Insurrection, murder, war—all new things to me. When we reached the place where the Kentish men had collected, the smell of the burning palace and of many houses was in our noses, and in our ears the muttering grumble of a coming storm. All the rioters were armed, though some had but bill-hooks or staves, and their leaders were talking loud, shouting to them until their voices grew hoarse, and like the screaming of gulls, telling them what wrongs they were suffering, and how, to right them, they must murder and plunder and burn. I am an old man, yet can I even now see no sense in such counselling. They were all inflamed with rage at their own injustices, yet, meseems, they none of them could rightly tell what wrongs they really had, only their leaders who had dragged them away from their work in the meadows and apple-orchards were able to speak with fury of the cruel lives that the King was causing them to

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endure. So they shouted too, and the more they shouted, the angrier they got.

Wat Tyler was their leader.

“Methinks that boar should be ringed,” said I to my good father, “I trust him not.”

But as I spoke we saw a little band riding towards the rioters, a very little company of horse-men, and amongst them the lord who was to be my master. Yet it was not at him that I gazed the most, but at one who was a lad some two years older than myself. He was but a slight lad, not tall, and his face was rounder than my own, his hair yellow, and his cheeks pink as apple blossom in the spring. More like a maid than a man he seemed to me, yet it was beside him that Wat Tyler reined up his horse, and to him that he bawled what he had to say.

“I’ faith it is our King!” said my father, and doffed his hat, in face of them all.

The King’s face grew red as he listened to Tyler’s words, nor were they good words for any King to hear from a subject, or for any man to hear from his enemy when with him was but a handful of friends, and with Tyler more than threescore thousand men. Evil hearing it was for King Richard, but he had not to listen long. Walworth, the Lord Mayor, had had terrible affronts put upon him by the very presence of the rioters where only merry-making was wont to be, and his temper

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flashed out like a lightning bolt. I saw the sheen of his sword, and Tyler's words ended in a bellow of angry surprise as he fell heavily from his horse on to the ground.

They lost no time, those men of the King. Three were down from their horses swift as an arrow from a bow, and before he could cry out again, Wat Tyler lay dead.

Then there was riot if you like, and all the rebels were for rushing forward and slaying the King and his little band, while the King's own followers were ready to fight to the death. But then we saw as brave and gracious a deed as any man ever saw done by a great king. With a wave from his hand he bade his followers stay behind. Alone he cantered forward to the great, disorderly army, and called aloud to them in his clear, boy's voice.

“Good people!” he said, “What aileth you? Art angry that ye have lost your captain? Ye shall have no captain but me: I am your King: be all in rest and peace!”

Like a sea when the wind is changing, the people shifted and moved, and their voices clamoured and murmured like the restless waves and then were still. Silently the little king sat erect on his horse and watched them, fearless, and proud, and kind. And then there came from the men of Kent and from all the others a roar of gladness, and King Richard blushed like a winsome maid as they cried

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in a very great voice—" *He shall be our captain! He is our King!* "

Many a time after that June day at Smithfield did I see our King. He was pleased to take joy in my wit, and so I was educated at his court and saw the lad grow into a man. As many can testify, there was never before any king of England that spent so much in his house as he did, and he was ever generous and ready to make good cheer. Many a golden coin came to me from his open hand, and many a jest we have had together, gay lads both—Hob the Jester and Dickon the King.

He was a stripling of nineteen when I went in his train to Scotland, to conquer that proud land. Seven thousand men-at-arms had we, sixty thousand archers, and one hundred thousand horse.

"I go to enlarge my Kingdom, Hob," said he.

"Then, sire, pray take my cap and bells," said I. "Motley were more fit than armour for one with such a whim.

"And why, then, good lad," said the King, for he saw I did not jest.

"Methinks already thou'st swallowed too much land for thy good digestion, sire," I said. "He is a fool indeed whose shoulders are bowed low with a heavy burden of state and power and plots and kingly cares, and who will yet go hunt in the bleak northland for somewhat more to carry."

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His face grew red and he knitted his brows. "Thou speakest truth, good Hob," he said, as one boy might speak to another. "I' God's name, thou speakest truth. But the Scots are insolent knaves, and have defied my power on the Border. I am a King and so must go trounce them."

And so we went, and from Berwick on to Edinburgh we left naught but smoking ruins behind. But, as was their wont, the Scots lay hidden, and hidden, too, were all their cattle and horses and booty that men-at-arms hold dear, and we fought not at all, and felt as though we chased a phantom host all along the line of our marching. To Perth and to Dundee we also went, and these we burned to ashes. And then Dickon the King grew weary of life in camp and wished to return to the pleasures of the Court. So we turned our faces to the south again, burning all that came in our way. I was sick of the smell of burnt wood and straw long ere that campaign was ended.

It was at the peaceful close of day when we rode into a valley adown which ran a great wide river that was silver in the evening light. Rich woods grew on either side, and to the south rose three hills, not part of a range, but by themselves, as if three giants had pitched their tents close together to watch over the little town that lay at their feet. And well worth watching over it was, for close by the river, under the shadow of the

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hills lay one of the fairest abbeys I have ever set eyes upon.

King Richard laughed gleefully as we heard the music of its Vesper bells, and saw it standing up so fair and grand and gracious—a holy thing.

“The night closes in,” he said, “and what is left of Melrose Abbey when our lads have hammered it will make a blaze fit to light a King of England on his way to the south.”

I liked it not, but the army was a hungry one and an angry one, and gladly did they hear the command to destroy the place. I was near the King’s side and the hills were black and the silver river was red with the reflection of the flames that leapt on high, when I heard great shouts and saw some men-at-arms dragging forth an old man wearing a monk’s white robe.

“What make ye?” called the King, and they gave answer that the old fox had struggled with them as they were hammering down the High Altar and had wounded grievously a valiant man-at-arms. It might have been true: I know not. But the old monk himself was nigh unto death. His white hair was all bedabbled with blood, and his white habit was rent and stained with great crimson stains. When he saw the King, “Art thou then the king?” he cried in a terrible deep voice. “Art the King? and hast commanded this?”

The King flushed red, but he shook back his

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yellow hair with the bright movement that he had. "I am the King," said he, "and thou art an old fool to try to fight single-handed my army of two hundred thousand men."

Then, of a sudden, the monk wrenched himself free from the hands of the men who held him and ran straight up to the king.

His face, with the blood trickling down it, was very white, and his eyes stared as though they could pierce the very veil that hangs between us and Purgatory.

"Woe unto you, O King!" he cried. "Woe, woe, woe! Ye have destroyed God's holy place—I give you into God's hands!"

A man-at-arms had plunged a sword in his throat even as he ceased to speak, and the blood-drops sparked out on the King's young face. "Curse him," he said, "and curse *you*, for a clumsy butcher. His blood went in my eyes."

As we rode on through the night, through that wild, lonely, Border land, it seemed to me the King's face looked passing pale and weary, and in the dawning I could see a streak of the old monk's blood still smeared across his brow.

It was nine years after that black night that I left the service of Richard the King, and many times have I praised the saints that I was gone before the Court was a court of conspirators and the King a judge—striking off heads here, banishing there.

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“I am your King,” he had said to the rebels the day Wat Tyler died. Always it was *I am your King*, and for those who dared dispute his absolute monarchy it was death or exile.

In the year of our Lord one thousand three hundred fourscore and fourteen, I was one of the train that sailed with the King to Ireland to make war against the Irishmen. Four Kings of that country did he bring to their knees, and because one of the Kings did like me well and Richard was minded to be very gracious to him, he left me behind him when he went away. It was the Irish King's fair daughter who thereafter wed the brother of Donald, Lord of the Isles, and so it was that at length I came to be the jester of him who ruled the lone isles that lie in the western sea.

Heavy at heart was I, and the jests that came from my lips were like butterflies whose wings a child has torn, on the day that tidings came to my master that Richard the King was King no longer. Another held the sceptre he had loved so well, and he was now a prisoner, in a castle in his own land. Later came tidings that he was dead, and thereat I was minded to rejoice. For Richard was never one to fear death, but to live behind prison bars, a shamed man, was to break his proud heart. The messenger who brought word of it to my lord told us in the great hall where we sat at meat of how the dead King in a car covered with black baudkin, and four

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horses all black in the car, and two men in black leading it, and four knights all in black following, was brought along from the Tower to Cheapside, and there rested for the space of two hours. Thither thronged more than twenty thousand persons, men and women, to see him where he lay, his head resting on a black cushion, and some wept and some were sorrowful, but many rejoiced and said he was well away.

“Didst see him?” asked my lord of his messenger.

“In truth I did,” said he, “but the throng was great, and not much did I see, for only the lower part of his face was left uncovered by the linen bands.”

There flashed into my head something as though Richard himself had whispered in mine ear.

“Then!” said I, “good sir, how dost thou know it was indeed the King and not just Mandelain?”

And those who sat at meat were fain to hear who was this Mandelain, and if I only made a foolish jest. So I told them how Mandelain was King Richard’s private priest, and was so like him, with his ruddy face and fair hair, that many a time he and the King had, out of sport, exchanged their garments, and deceived those who did not know.

But my lord laughed aloud. “’Twere passing strange,” he said, “that twenty thousand folk should take a living priest for a dead king!—a merry jest indeed.”

“But, my lord, Mandelain is dead,” said the mes-

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senger. "He conspired against King Henry, 'twas said, and so he was executed at the same time that his master died in Pontefract."

"Was King Richard laid in the tomb he had prepared for himself at Westminster?" I asked.

But he said, Nay, but that when the crowds had gazed their fill the black car was led away, and that when it was outside London it was taken with great haste and dispatch to King's Langley, thirty mile off, and the body buried there in the Church of the Preaching Friars.

"A fitting grave for Mandelain!" said I, but my lord frowned, and I saw thereafter that he pondered much over the news the messenger had brought and of what I had told him of Mandelain.

'Twas in the autumn of that year that the Lord of the Isles had guests. His younger brother came amongst them and brought with him the fair Irish lady that he had wed.

There was much merry-making in those days, and to the joyance of all they said Hob the Jester added his full share. Yet although the jests may have fallen merrily from my lips, my heart was not at ease. It may have been that I had learned somewhat of the superstitious ways of the folk I lived among, but it seemed to me there was a something in the wind, and there was something more than just the grey autumn sky and the dark tossing sea that my soul misliked. Our castle had ever open doors.

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No homeless wanderer was ever turned away by Donald. Many times in the kitchen, where all was busyness and the smell of savoury roasting venison and game birds tickled one's nostrils, and the scullions were like bees in a hive, would poor, broken men find a place on the long bench by the wall, and take the chill from their frozen blood in the red light of the great fire, and eat with gladness the broken meats that the serving-men would toss to them.

I mind not why I sought the kitchen on that grey, chill even, but seek it I did, and on the bench I saw a wandering man sitting. He sat, stooped forward, his head on his hands, and stared into the flames. At once I was assured it was one I knew, and my heart gave a bound like a hound on a leash when a scullion threw on more logs, and golden and red the flames sent up their blaze. For the beggar man's hair was yellow, yellow was his beard, and often had I seen that yellow head crowned with a golden crown. I laid my hand on his shoulder, and he looked up with a great start.

My heart had told me true. It was Dickon the King.

"Hob!" he said, "Hob my jester! Do I dream? or do I wake now from my weary dream? Art indeed Hob the Jester, and I Richard the King?"

Alack, how my heart-strings pained me when I looked on his weary face and heard his voice so eager

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and yet so piteous sad. With wary words I made him hold his peace and follow me out into the open night, where all was grey loneliness and the voices of the waves and of the sea-birds and of the sad birds of the moors were all the sounds that there were.

We talked long, and the tears were near my eyes when I saw him tremble and draw his rags around him as the wind swept across the sea and proudly smote him who had been a king.

'Twas as I had thought. King Richard's gaolers at Pontefract, Sir Thomas Swinburn and Sir Robert Waterton, had felt compassion for him, spread the report of his death, and had helped him to his freedom, and Mandelain the priest was he who lay in state. How he found his way to Scotland, and all that he had to undergo ere he reached the place where we met was, in truth, a woeful tale. I was minded of a story one of his own jongleurs was wont to tell of a king who lived in Greece once on a time, and who suffered many things on his way from Troyland before he reached his own land at last. It was hard to know in what way I could help. Gold I could give him, indeed, and clothing more fit for his use than the rags he bore; but none must know he was the King, save the faithful few in England who would be proud to welcome him back to his own again, and yet how to bring tidings to them, i' faith I could not tell.

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“I have grown old, good Hob,” he said. “None who had not your keen, faithful eyes, could know me now.”

And he spoke truth, for his yellow hair was all streaked with grey, and grey and haggard, too, was his face that had once been pink and comely as any maid's. Yet I told him that he must not be over-sure, and that amongst our guests was the lady that once he had known in Ireland, and to whom, in token of the homage he paid to every fair face, he had given many a costly jewel. “So she is here!” he said—and 'twas the first of the two times I saw him smile. “Better far, were it not, that she had come to Court in London than wedded with a savage Scot!”

That night there were great feastings in the castle, and naught would please my noble lord but that all the poor beggar folk who watched like starving dogs at his door would come into the great hall and there have good food and wine given them to make them forget even the cruel bitterness of that autumn night. By evil chance there were that night but few, and my King had to obey the command of him whose roof gave him shelter, and come as a beggar to the dining-hall.

The beautiful Irish lady sat by the side of her lord's brother, Donald, Lord of the Isles, and on her white neck sparkled the great green stones she got from Richard the King. Dragging weary feet, and with downcast head, my King came last of the shabby band. But when her laugh rang out clear

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as a bell, he sudden raised his head, looked straight at her, dwelt his eyes for a moment on the shining stones, then, his head thrown back, looked her full in the face, and smiled. She gave a sharp cry, and her face grew pale, and she seized my lord by his arm.

"'Tis the King!" she cried. "'Tis Richard the King!"

Then, because her voice carried truth with it, at once all was uproar. My lord and his brother, and my Lord Montgomery and many of the other guests sprang to their feet, and because they wot not what ailed the lady, but only saw her white face and pointing finger, two serving men laid hold of the King as of a culprit who might escape. With an angry sign Donald, Lord of the Isles, bade them take off their hands and came to where my king stood, still and white and proud.

"Is this the truth?" he asked, looking straight into his eyes. "Art indeed King Richard?"

And my King gave him look for look and said in his hard, cold voice: "The lady is pleased to jest, my lord. I am but a beggar man, as any eye may see. An Englishman truly, am I, and a true lover of mine own dear land, but King only of my trusty staff and empty wallet."

My lord gave a strange, short laugh.

"A gallant beggar indeed," said he. "Once and for all, art Richard the King?"

And King Richard said once more: "I am no

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king. The beauteous lady jests with her slave. A beggar am I."

Never another word said the lady, but as she left the hall with her proud white neck held high and the green stones gleaming on it, I saw her face still white as snow and her grey eyes looked black as the sea when a chill storm-cloud hangs over it.

I had no chance that night to speak another word with the King, but ere it was dawn I sought him, and gave him gold to carry him safe across the seas.

"Fare thee well, friend Hob," he said at last. "My kingship is done, and now I am in God's hands—where the old monk at Melrose placed me. Mayhap His hands may be gentler than the hands of man."

So I watched him take his way across the moor, down to the sea. And when he came to this spot where the loneroid grows so high, I saw him turn round, in the grey morning light, and he waved his hand to me, and I, who had well-nigh forgotten how to pray, knelt down, and said no words, but begged for mercy. I was taking my way homeward when I heard a clatter of hoofs, and drew aside behind that clump of grey rocks, and watched ride past me six horsemen, and one of them my Lord Montgomery.

Six horsemen it took to take one beggarman, but that beggarman was a king.

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They laid hold on him ere he reached the sea, and they took him to Scotland and gave him, a captive, to King Robert. He was a gentle king, was Robert the Third, and with my master he dealt as befitted his rank, yet ever as a captive—a golden eagle in a cage whose bars no beating wings could break. Then, when King Robert died, his stern brother, Albany, became gaoler. Ever and again tidings came to the Isles of the captive King. From England there came to have word with him Henry Percy the elder, Henry Percy the younger, and the Bishops of St. Asaph and of Bangor, the Abbot of Welbeck, Lord Bardolph, and other honourable persons. But none could persuade him to see one of them, though all of them longed to set him once more on his throne. One only would he ever see—Serle, one of the gentlemen of his bed-chamber, and truly had he always loved the King whom he and I had served.

To him King Richard gave letters under his privy seal to his friends in England, and for some while there was noise of plots for bringing back the King. A priest of Ware was drawn and quartered for telling the people that King Richard still lived; eight Franciscan friars were hanged for spreading the same report, as was also the Prior of Launde in Leicestershire. Sir Roger de Clarendon, natural son of the Black Prince and half-brother to our King, was also executed for plotting for his sake, and block

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and gibbet claimed others who dared proclaim aloud that he was not dead and buried at King's Langley. The old Countess of Oxford, who had always been one of his lovers, formed a plot for bringing him back to his own again. She caused to be made many of the little stags of silver and gold such as the King used to give to those whom he held most dear, and those who were ready to die for him bore them as warrant of their good faith. But they died mostly—alack that such cruel things should be—not on the field of battle, but on the shameful gallows.

And as each year went by, the tidings of the King that my lord's friends and messengers brought were ever a heavier burden to be borne on the heart of me who loved him. They said he had grown fierce, and sullen, and wicked, like a misused wild animal that doth hate its cage. He was little inclined to devotion, nor would he hear Mass, and often he would rage like a wild thing, and often be no better than a foolish, whimpering child that fears the dark.

Ah, my King, my King, whom first I saw at Smithfield on that June day all these years ago, a boy, and yet a King! My King whom I saw that night when the old white monk lay a-dying, and rode with across the lonely Border moors when the splash of blood was across his brow—my King, my King! . . .

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'Twas on the Feast of St. Luke that he died in the castle of Stirling, and they buried him on the Feast of St. Lucie the Virgin. I know not how he died. Would that I did, or that I might have been nigh at hand when he started forth on his dark journey alone. He was but young—only thirty and four years—when Death took him, and I have seen over fifty summers and winters since then, and yet the wound in my heart still bleeds for him whom I loved, and who was my King.

They buried him at Stirling in the Church of the Preaching Friars, on the north side of the altar, and above his royal image that they painted there, they placed the words that the good Father Angus wrote out and gave to me. I have but little book-learning, and so he turned them from the Latin tongue into good plain English.

“Here lies Richard, King of England, himself buried, whom the Duke of Lancaster thrust down by evil guile. By treason prevailing he gains a throne of unrighteousness. All his own seed pays satisfaction. This Richard, Scotland bore from his years to the shades. Who in the fort at Stirling finished the journey of life. In the year of Christ the King one thousand four hundred and nineteen this before you was the end.”

There are times when I sit here at nightfall, and the pewit wails very bitterly across the dark moors, or the terns scream harsh and wild down in the

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waves before a coming storm, that I can hear again the voice of a dying monk, and I know full well that it is him whom I saw with his white hair bedabbled with blood.

“In God’s hands I leave you,” he said to my King.

And Father Angus, who listens so patiently, will ever say as I reach the end of my tale, “Truly, yes, in God’s hands he left him, and God does not forget—Yet our God is merciful—May God rest the soul of Richard the King.” And after him I say, “God rest his soul.”

And so we slowly take our homeward way, with the Vesper bells a-ringing, and the scent of the loneroid and the sharp, sweet scent of the sea mingling together, and the golden sun sinking behind the blue hills, and all things murmuring in my old ears of a day that is done, and of a rest that cometh with the night.

THE LADY WITH THE WHITE COCKADES

A CLEAR, bright, September afternoon in the year seventeen hundred and forty-five. In the sunshine the Firth shows blue as the Adriatic, and from the Castle Hill the Links of Forth and the Fife hills are seen plain as through a glass. Arthur's Seat, that great, silent, couching lion that keeps watch and ward over the city of Edinburgh from generation to generation, looks grimly down on streets as busy as though Edinburgh were an ant-hill into which some mischievous lad has just thrown a stone. Armed horsemen clatter through the town; kilted caterans jostle respectable citizens on the causeway. Honest tradesmen know not whether to shelter in shops which they momentarily fear may be raided, or to press their wares upon the notice of gallant officers who swagger along with an air of having the whole kingdom lying, a football, at their feet. Ears are assailed from all directions by the skirl of the pipes, and ever and anon a shot is heard, making the hearts of all law-abiding subjects of King George quake within them.

At the Market Cross in the High Street, with all

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the pomp of heralds and men-at-arms, James VIII has this day been proclaimed King, and his son, Prince Charles Edward, a gallant young figure in tartan coat and blue bonnet, has been appointed Regent. The Jacobite army has cheered itself hoarse; the Highlanders have recklessly fired their pieces into the air (wounding one fair Jacobite in the doing of it) and the bagpipes have rung echoes from every close and "land," as they triumphantly welcome back a Stuart King and acclaim the rule of Bonnie Prince Charlie.

The proclamation is over, yet the crowd grows little less, for, seated on horseback beside the Cross, is a figure that claims the eyes of both old and young. From the Court of London to the far-off northern isles it would be hard to find a fairer woman than the one who sits there, proudly erect, white cockade in her hat, drawn sword in her hand.

"Who is she?" ask the crowds, and the word passes from one to another that she is the beautiful Mrs. Murray, wife of John Murray of Broughton—a Peeblesshire barony—one of those who have worked hardest to bring back the Stuart kings to their own. Soon the excited, jostling mob see that Mrs. Murray is there not only to be stared at as a part of the great show which they have just seen. She waits to enlist soldiers for her Prince, the gallant, handsome, conquering prince of fairy tale, who is so soon to evict "German Geordie" and to restore the

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fortunes of a fallen House. To the exciting accompaniment of the Highland music, the sound of shots, and of loud huzzas, the recruits press forward. Many a good lad this day renounces his half-hearted allegiance to the House of Hanover, as he bows low over a little hand that gives him the Stuarts' white cockade, and blushes with pleasure as the lovely recruiting sergeant welcomes him to the ranks of the loyal subjects of King James the Eighth.

That night many a maid of Edinburgh must surely have dreamed of the noble "Young Chevalier," but surely there must have ridden through the dreams of half the lads in the city a lady like the Queen who took True Thomas with her to Fairyland, drawn sword in her hand, and in whose path white cockades blossomed like flowers in the spring.

John Murray, husband of the lady who set many a young heart aflame in that year of the '45, was what one might call a Jacobite by birth. His father, Sir David Murray of Stanhope, was "out" in the '15 when John Murray, his second son, was born. In Edinburgh and at Leyden young Murray was educated, and from Leyden he went to Rome, where his Jacobite affections were given every chance of coming to maturity. For there the Chevalier held a little Court, and Prince Charles Edward had already begun to win the hearts of the men he lived beside. In 1738 Murray returned to Scotland, and from then until 1745, when Prince

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Charlie landed at Eriska, John Murray of Broughton was ceaselessly active in the cause of the exiled House.

Margaret Ferguson, niece of William Ferguson of Cailloch, in Nithsdale, was the beautiful bride that the active young Jacobite agent brought home to Broughton, and however lukewarm may have been her principles before marriage, she had no choice but to be an ardent supporter of the Jacobite cause, once she was the wife of him who was to be Mr. Secretary Murray. His later name of "Mr. Evidence Murray" was a coming shame, as yet mercifully hidden in the lap of the gods. In the year 1744 Edinburgh had already begun to be a rather sultry place of residence for Murray of Broughton, and in the spring of that year he had to send by express a letter to Mr. Scott of Hundleshope near Peebles, enclosing the key of his private closet in Broughton House, and begging him to carry away and hide a strong box that lay hid in the closet. The contents of that box might seem to be merely papers, but, in truth, they represented the heads of men. Mr. Scott acted promptly. The box was removed and buried in the garden of Hundleshope, cabbages were planted over its resting-place, and Murray was able to join his Prince at Eriska, when he landed there in July of 1745. How affairs marched thereafter is common property. The occupation of Edinburgh—the victory at Prestonpans—the fruitless march to Derby—the

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crushing defeat on Drummossie Moor—the wanderings of Prince Charlie—with all the details of that most pitiful tragedy Mr. Secretary Murray had much to do. On the day that Culloden was fought, he lay sick at Elgin. Next morning he was carried on a litter to the house of Mrs. Grant of Glenmorrison, and when he had rested there for a little, there was broken to him the direful news that the Jacobite army was cut to pieces, and that his Prince was a homeless fugitive. For the weeks that followed, Murray lurked about in the Highlands, still trying his best to arouse and unite the scattered clans, and to persuade them to await with hope the arrival of the ships which even then were on their way from France, bearing with them a golden cargo of casks of louis d'ors. But Murray's efforts were all in vain. When the casks of gold arrived they only spread suspicion, jealousy, and ill-feeling amongst the followers of the Prince who already doubted each other, and Mr. Secretary Murray was by no means immune from the general suspicion.

Meantime his wife was amongst the fugitives who had followed Prince Charlie's fortunes and lost when he lost all. In the wild highland country of Strontian, Murray met with his wife, and did what he could to arrange for her to be sent by boat to Ireland. On then he went, a weary journey south by moors and by-ways, constantly ill and utterly worn out, no longer the dapper little Mr. Secretary

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Murray, but a haggard fugitive, clad in old coat and breeches and blue bonnet that he would fain have had proclaim him the drover that he posed to be. More than once he lost his way, more than once his overridden horse could scarcely drag one leg behind the other, and forced him to stop when all his own desires and inclinations were madly spurring him on his way to the south, where safety lay. In upper Tweeddale, the poor beast was nearly done, but he durst not risk a more than uncertain welcome at his brother's house at Stobo, and pushed on. Not much farther on, however, near Kilbucho, his horse failed him utterly, and he was forced to try his luck at Kilbucho House. His aunt Margaret was the wife of William Dickson the proprietor, and to his regret he found only her and her daughters at home, and not one of them with any of the intriguing instincts that were so necessary for the insurance of his safety. There could be no doubt as to the sincerity of the good old lady's welcome. Disguised fugitive, a rebel "wanted" by Government, and with possibly prison or the gallows in front of him, was not John Murray all the same her own brother's son, who must be treated with all the respect and hospitality that she had ever been wont to give to her own kith and kin?

Na, na, — no whisky for him — a servant must needs bring him a glass o' the best claret wine in Kilbucho's cellar.

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And, staring curiously at the unshaven drover in shabby clothing who was so favoured by his mistress, the fellow presented the wine and drew his own conclusions. In vain Murray appealed to his cousin Miss Dickson that no ceremony should be used with him, nothing said nor done that might rouse the suspicion of the servants. He and his horse only wanted to be fed and rested, and to take their way south again.

“Na, na,—ye maun dine wi’ the leddies. Ye’re no’ gaun to be affronted wi’ a bit piece, gin ye were a ganging body. Ye’ll just hae your broth, an’ your bit saumon, an’ your saiddle o’ mutton, an’ your jeelies, an’ your glass o’ wine as ye’ve aye had them. I’m no’ gaun to mak’ a difference noo, my puir lad.”

So dine with the ladies he did, and at each thing they said and did the chances of their guest’s escape grew fewer. Mrs. Dickson herself, delightfully conscious of a mysterious and secretive manner, severely rebuked her daughter for calling Broughton by his rightful name before the servant.

“Daft lassie! have ye no’ sense? William’s a decent lad—I’ve kent him a’ his days—he was bred at Stobo—but in maitters o’ poalitics servants are no’ to lippen to.”

Thankfully the guest of the good lady of Kilbucho arrived at the end of that meal, remounted his refreshed horse, and rode on across the moors to his

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sister's house at Polmood. His own house at Broughton, only one mile from Kilbucho, was occupied by dragoons, but at Polmood he would be safe for a night at least. Kind Miss Dickson had sent a messenger before him to tell his sister Veronica—Mrs. Hunter of Polmood—to expect him, and when he reached the house, long after nightfall, he had a welcome most soothing to the heart of a weary, outlawed man. For a long time he and his sister talked together, and when, at two in the morning, he went to bed, it was with the happy knowledge that the first steps towards his escape to France were to be taken next day, and had been wisely and safely arranged. For three hours Mr. Secretary Murray must have slept soundly indeed, and then came a rude awakening. The clatter of horses' hoofs and jingle of accoutrements, knockings and shouts, "Open in the King's name!" Then, still only half awake and only half attired, off to Edinburgh with a strong escort of dragoons, who roughly mocked and rallied him over his dinner of the previous day, and volunteered the information that the servant at Kilbucho had run over to Broughton the minute after he had ridden away, and told the soldiers where to capture him.

"Mr. Secretary Murray" he was when he rode away from Tweedside that dark night into captivity—an honest man, as far as one can tell, and a true friend to the House of Stuart.

"Mr. Evidence Murray" was the shameful title

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he had gained for himself when he returned. What strange processes John Murray's mind passed through during the term of his imprisonment, who can say? But that they resulted in his taking to himself the shameful rôle of informer is undeniable.

By his agency Lord Lovat had been brought to the block when, in June 1748, Murray received the pardon that was the price of his information. Happier far had he died for a hopeless cause than lived on as he did, a pariah amongst both Jacobites and Hanoverians.

Lockhart tells the story of how Sir Walter Scott's father threw out of the window the cup out of which Murray had drunk tea: "Neither lip of me nor of mine comes after Mr. Murray of Broughton's." The Prince who had trusted him wrote in April 1747 to the Chevalier: "Poor Ld. Lovat is executed by ye Rascality of Jn. Murray, and it is much fierd many others will suffer in ye same manner."

And yet, nearly twenty years after Prince Charlie wrote that letter to his father, Murray's own son, a child of nine, one day was present at an interview that a stately, red-faced gentleman had with his father. Unfortunately there exists no record of what passed at that strange interview, but when the red-faced gentleman was gone, Murray said to his boy—an actor in days to come, son of a Quaker heiress with whom he had eloped—"Charles, you have seen your King."

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Such was the career of the husband of the lady with the white cockades, and to him we owe what little we know of her doings after they parted in the autumn of 1745.

The Odyssey of the adventures of the fragile, beautiful woman as she found her way from Inverness-shire to Edinburgh is one of the stories over which history is dumb. But towards the end of June 1746 she came to the house of her mother, Mrs. Ferguson, in Cant's Close, Edinburgh, and for three days remained in hiding there.

A weary woman was she, and one soon to become a mother. The sorrows and privations of the friends with whom she had been sharing hardships all through the winter haunted her. "Hunted from hill to hill," she said they were, "with difficulty able to procure the common necessaries of life." From her mother's house she was taken to the house of a Lady Wallace at Abbey Hill, but she was then so weak and ill—the beautiful recruiting sergeant of the Market Cross—that no one durst tell her that her husband was a prisoner, in danger of his life. From Abbey Hill she had to be hurried, as rumour had got about of her hiding-place, and, on Sunday, the 6th of July, she was taken to a house in one of the suburbs of Edinburgh, near Bruntsfield Links, where she was concealed for many a week to come in a garret closet. The owner of the house, a Mr. Hamilton, was quite unaware of the presence of

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his guest, but of course her hostess was a Jacobite, and equally, of course, so were the three Hamilton children. They may have seen the lady with the drawn sword and the white cockades as she sat at the Market Cross on that September day, and what greater joy could come to them than to serve her, plot and plan for her, for her sake have a magnificent secret even from their own father. It was while she hid at the Hamiltons' house that the news of the taking of her husband was broken to her, and the poor soul heard it with terror and surprise. Her friends saw that the sooner they got her off to Holland the better, but when her passage had been secured in a boat sailing from Leith on the 3rd of August, and all her little preparations were made, a message came from the captain six hours before he sailed, saying that he "would have carried her with great pleasure, but was advised against it by some of her own friends." Who the "friends" were, she knew only too well, for Murray's brother-in-law, and former agent, M'Dougal, had already refused her money belonging to her husband to enable her to pay her way. Boat after boat was then tried for, by those who were truly her friends, but either the character of their masters was such that the poor fugitive durst not be trusted to their keeping, or there were some other good reasons why it was inexpedient for her to go. Sick with hope deferred, torn by anxiety, with pain and illness her constant companions, Mrs.

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Murray's state in that chilly little garret-room at Bruntsfield was a sorrowful one indeed. Her friends saw that a move must be made, and late one August night she was taken to a house in the Land Market where, on the 25th of September, a son was born to her. A non-jurant clergyman christened him the same day, but baby Charles had less life in him than the cause of the Prince whose name he bore, and went out of the world a few days after his piteous entry into it. Mrs. Murray was then very seriously ill and so continued until the end of October, when she was taken to her mother's house to be nursed and coaxed back into health. She saw few people there, and save with her true friends, the three Rachael's—Miss Rachael Erskine, Miss Rachael Hamilton, and Miss Rachael Maule—whose loyalty and devotion to her had never once wavered through all those trying months, and with one or two other good women who proved themselves more than worthy of the trust she put in them, she played a little comedy with regard to her lodging. To the few Jacobite gentlemen who were admitted to see her, she always appeared in a plaid, and pretended that she had been sent for by her mother, and had come from the place where she lodged.

To get to Holland was her constant desire, but her health was completely broken down, and she was obviously unfit for the voyage, and so the dreary winter and early spring were dragged through, and in May of the next year she followed her husband's counsel

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and went to London. There, under a borrowed name, she lodged at a milliner's in Newport Street, Lambeth, seeing none who knew her but her mother-in-law, Lady Murray, her physician, and three Jacobite gentlemen, two of them prisoners of war. Gloomy indeed had been all those long months that followed the day that Mrs. Murray sat at the Market Cross of Edinburgh, beautiful, radiant, Victory incarnate. Gloomiest of all surely must have been those months when day by day she realised that the loyal, fearless, Jacobite gentleman, her husband, had evolved into a craven, who, to save his neck, sold the secrets of his Cause. Mr. "Evidence" Murray, the prisoner in the Tower, who was scorned alike by Jacobite and Hanoverian, was he truly John Murray of Broughton?

"Do you know this witness?" Douglas of Kelhead was asked, when confronted with his betrayer before the Privy Council. "Not I," answered Douglas; "I once knew a person who bore the designation of Murray of Broughton—but that was a gentleman and a man of honour, and one that could hold up his head."

In the days that seemed now a thousand years gone by, when the Tweed made silver music as it ran past Broughton, and the white roses in the old garden whispered of the Stuart Cause, how his eyes sparkled when he spoke of the coming of his Prince,—of his unalterable devotion that no cruel death could ever shake! How good it had been, when

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she sat in her little panelled chamber in the long winter evenings, stitching, stitching at those never-ending white cockades, to listen to her husband's brave words, to feel that even she was doing something to help the King across the water, and to look forward to the day when all the world should know how nobly and loyally John Murray had toiled ere he put that King upon his throne!

All that was past; all gone. Little wonder if her love died then. Love was for Broughton the trusty Jacobite; hatred and scorn for "Evidence" Murray.

Murray was still in the Tower when she left London and went to Holland, and, with her going, blotted her existence completely out of every record at present known.

Some years later, Murray eloped with a young—surely a very young—Quaker lady from a boarding-school, and as he married her and she passed as Lady Murray, it was naturally supposed that his beautiful wife was dead. Perhaps she was, although the date of her death has never been ascertained. Rumour accused her of infidelity to her husband; baseless slander coupled her name with that of the Prince her husband betrayed. But that so radiant, so beautiful a personality should have been so completely lost in oblivion in the days that followed her flight to a foreign land, must surely suggest that the gaunt recruiting sergeant, Death, was not long in coming to claim a woman with a broken heart—the lady with the white cockades.

THE TRAGEDY OF MARY ANN DODD

“She did not seem to serve a useful end,
And certainly she was not beautiful.”

J. K. STEPHEN.

SHE walked down the village street in the swiftly gathering dusk, a dowdy little figure. Two women, leaning over the gates of their gardens, where “southern wood” and mint and sweet peas and roses fought for ascendancy as they scented the evening air, watched her approach with interest. She was short and stout and red of face. Her dress of black and white print was held up at the wrong places. Her black mushroom hat was worn, with unconscious rakishness, much too much on one side. Hers was not a dignified gait. She planted her feet down flatly and heavily with a waddling motion. It bore an appearance of aimless haste, and her face, whose features were those described by the journalist as “homely,” also wore an expression of aimless, objectless excitement.

The two women exchanged meaning smiles, and the younger, to conceal a laugh, stooped and uprooted a weed, as the little woman came tacking uncertainly across the road. Like a ponderous and

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unseaworthy craft in a strong and variable breeze she tacked, and hove to, half uncertain whether her presence was welcome, yet impelled to stop by an intense desire for conversation, and stood with a flickering, conciliatory smile, in front of the first little green gate.

“Good evenin’,” she said, “a fine nicht, Mistress Readman. Your gairden’s looking beautiful. It never lookit better, I think. And yours is braw too, Mistress Broom. That’s a rael fine rose o’ yours.”

The women acknowledged her compliments with a somewhat grudging courtesy. The younger, a pale-faced, long-nosed girl of unamiable expression, gave a wink to her friend and took the conversation in hand.

“Ye’ll be aff the morn, Miss Dodd,” she said. “Ye’ll be unco throng wi’ the packin’, I’m thinkin’. Megsty me, wumman, ye’re fair like thae fine leddies in the papers, gaun off to the sea for your summer holiday.”

Mary Ann Dodd’s face flushed a deeper red, and she beamed widely in recognition of her neighbour’s civility.

“Ma packin’s dune, ah thank ye,” she said, relapsing into a broader Scotch as the atmosphere seemed to thaw from formality into friendliness. “Eh, wumman, it’s an unco job when cadgers ride.” And she laughed deprecatingly.

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“Is your brother and his wife away yet?” asked the elder woman.

Mary Ann came nearer the gate and leaned both thick, red, nervous hands upon it.

“Ye see,” she said, “mebbes ye’ve heard us tell a’ about it afore” (her hearers exchanged looks of half-pitying, half-scornful amusement) “but this is how it was. Ma brother Jems an’ me, we’ve scarcely seen yin another sin’ he was mairret, only at Mother’s feunerl. An’ of coorse, wi’ Mother being that ill wi’ the pains, an’ me that occupeed wi’ the dress-makin’, I never could gang an’ see him an’ his faimly. So, as ye ken, I was that ta’en aback when I got a letter frae him askin’ iz to bide wi’ his bairns when him and Euphy—that’s my gude-sister—was at Newcastle, that I very near wrate till him to say I couldnae gang. But it’s few that can get a summer holiday at the sea, as ye ken, Mistress Readman, an’ so, as ye ken, I’m gaun. It’s an unco peety ye cannae tak’ your ticket the day afore, for it’s siccan a strow gettin’ your things thegither. But of coorse I was yince at Edinbury, so I’m no’ like them that’s never traivelled.”

“An’ is Jems Dodd and his wife gane tae Newcastle?” asked the woman once more.

“Aweel,” said Mary Ann, “they’re gaun the morn. But a’ the bairns’ll be at hame. It’ll be rael nice an’ cheery for iz wi’ the bairns. I wonder, noo, Mistress Readman, is there naething ye wad like iz

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to bring back for ye?—a wheen shells for the gairden, or the wundy-sill? They're rael bonny. Or mebbes a pickle sand for the bird? or I daursay I might bring ye some hern—they're rael tasty, an' ye can scarcely get them fresh here. Or mebbes a cod? Div ye mind yon fish Jems sent Mother when she was deein'? It was a kinda big haddie; ye could scarcely ca' it a cod."

These were not gracious neighbours of Mary Ann's. They received her overtures with no cordiality. They merely looked at one another as who should say, "Hearken to the folly of this fool."

"Ah thank ye," said Mrs. Readman stiffly, "ah have no need for nane o' them."

Mary Ann looked wistful.

"It seems an unco peety," she said, "for me tae have sic a grand change, an' for nane o' the rest o' the folk here tae be gettin' away!"

"Ah'm pairfeckly content where ah am," said Mrs. Readman shortly.

"Daursay Jems an' his wife kens fine they'd hae to pay a wumman to mind the bairns if they hadna gotten you, Mary Ann," said the younger woman. "Ye'll hae your hands full wi' five bairns, an' the youngest but three year auld."

Mary Ann looked abashed, but no amount of neighbourly effort could scrape the gilt from off her gingerbread.

"Aweel," she said, "I was aye an awfy yin for

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bairns. Jems kent that fine. Ah take it rael kind of Euphy trustin' them till iz. An' wee Betsy's twelve. She'll be rael compainionable. It'll be a great treat bein' near the sea—wakening up i' the morning an' seein' the ships, an' hearin' the waves. When ah was a wee lassie, ah aye likit to haud that muckle shell on oor chimley piece to ma ear and hear the sea boomin'. It's queer hoo the sea booms in shells."

"The sea is fearfully and wonderfully made," said Mrs. Readman, with condescending sententiousness.

"It is that," said Mary Ann. "It says that in the Bible, dis't no'?—in the Revelations. There's some gey queer things in the Revelations."

"Mary Ann," said the young woman, breaking in, "what about that fuschy o' yours when you're away? There's a lot o' flowers on it. It seems a pity for it to be wasted. I've an awfy fancy for yon."

Mary Ann was silent for a moment. It was evident that the fuschia was amongst the chiefest of her Lares and Penates, for there were signs of a struggle in her face. But it was a brief struggle.

"Jean Tamson was to water it every day wi' the geraniums," she said, "but ah'll tell ye, Mary Broon, if ye've a fancy for the flooer, ah dinna grudge it. Ah'll bring it, this very meenit."

And she went off down the village street, like an elderly duck in full cry for its pond.

"I wonder at ye, Mary Broon," said the elder

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woman reproachfully. "It's a fair imposeetion. That wumman wad gie her heid to onybody that asket her for't, an' she's clean daft at gaun tae the sea, so that she disna weel ken what she's daen. Think shame o' yersel'. Here she comes, puir crater."

Hot, breathless, and redder in face than before, with a large pot containing a fuschia in full bloom clasped against her chest, came Mary Ann Dodd. Her expression was, rightfully, that of one who had done generously a generous deed. She thrust the plant over the gate into Mrs. Brown's ready hands.

"Here 'tis," she said, "good-bye to ye baith. Ye'll likely see iz gaun tae the train the morn's mornin'."

She took a step or two away, and then paused and looked back.

"It's a graund summer holiday ah'm gaun tae have, is't no'?" she asked, with a wistful desire for some neighbourly enthusiasm showing itself in her voice.

"It is that, Mary Ann," said Mrs. Brown, feeling the necessity for some wordy payment for her plant. "I'm obleeged to ye for the fuschy."

And Mary Ann, cheered and satisfied, hurried homeward in the dusk.

It had not been a primrose path that Mary Ann up till now had trod. Her mother was a strong-minded, exacting, stern woman, and something like

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forty years had been spent in tending her. Nor had the dressmaking business ever been a success. An indignant lady in the neighbourhood who had rashly entrusted her with the manufacture of some simple garments, angrily said that horse cloths for elephants were all that Miss Dodd was competent to make, and even *they* wouldn't fit. And now Mary Ann felt like the sleeping Princess awakened.

Three brown paper parcels, and one of newspaper, a yellow-painted tin box tied up with rope, a wooden box with wall paper of a blue and white pattern inside and out, a bandbox, a small and shabby leather reticule, and an umbrella, had Mary Ann Dodd in her possession when the postman's gig that drove her from the village to the station deposited her at the platform next morning. Moreover, clasped tightly in her left hand, was a large bunch of flowers—roses, tiger-lilies, mint, southernwood, and honeysuckles—firmly compressed to begin with, but growing more and more cumbrous and uncomfortable to carry owing to the slack knot of the many times enfolding string. It was "roses, roses, all the way," and mint and honeysuckle and an occasional lily dropping on her path as Mary Ann walked. They incommoded her greatly, but yet she clung to them. By the sea, she had heard, flowers were few and far between, and the children of her brother were sure to appreciate them.

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The postman was ruffled at the outset by three false starts. First it was the smallest brown paper parcel that was erroneously supposed to have been left behind, and then it was the umbrella. Thirdly and lastly it was a nervous dread lest Tommy the cat had been shut up in the big chest in the parlour and left to perish there, a second Ginevra, before Mary Ann's return, that took them back to her cottage, driving furiously. The whole village was standing at its door in delighted expectancy by the time this third return was accomplished. When they were for the fourth time leaving the outskirts of the village, and the postman's arm was clutched again, while his passenger frenziedly exclaimed that she feared that her purse wi' a' her siller was left lying on the chimley piece, the Government official grew stern, pulled his pony up short, and commanded her to search her pockets before he turned back "to be made a fule o' owre again."

Search was rewarded by discovering the purse on the floor of the cart, and Mary Ann jogged on in comparative peace of mind for the rest of the four miles, chilled by the severe silence of her still huffed companion. She mopped her flushed face with one of her new visiting handkerchiefs, still with a glazed and stiff surface, unfriendly to the skin, and drew on and off three times her black cotton, kid tipped gloves. The bead-fringed dolman that had been her mother's—and her mother was

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an old woman of spare and angular figure—she tried to tug into some semblance of fit, and the bonnet she herself had trimmed with black ribbon and purple chrysanthemums she tilted from its lodgment over the left ear to a corresponding angle over the right. She was then about to count her money into her lap when a stern nudge from her companion and a “Gie owre, wumman,” bade her desist.

“We’re no’ owre late, er we?” she feverishly asked as they drew near the station and heard the snort of the trains and saw the puff of smoke.

“It’s no’ your fault if we’re no’,” said the postman stringently. The recollection of a joyous hoot of “Megsty me! here they er back again!” and of the sight of Tommy the cat peacefully slumbering on a garden wall, still rankled. But his stringency relaxed as she paid him for the lift. Two shillings was the most he had dreamed of asking, but three and fourpence halfpenny (one and fourpence halfpenny of which, being in coppers and threepenny bits, was, not unnaturally, scattered on the floor of the cart and on the road in its transit from her purse to his hand) was what she gave him.

“Gude-bye tae ye! I’m muckle obleeged to ye,” she called as she ran back to see whether the yellow box had, through mischance, been left in the cart. “I wish ye were gaun tae have a grund summer holiday like me.”

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The porters, the ticket clerk, and the station-master of that station all had reason to remember that Mary Ann Dodd travelled that morning. When she took her ticket she felt it necessary to make full enquiries on the subject of trains, their speed, and their destinations, and to confide in the ticket clerk the details of her holiday. Finally she took her ticket with her, and left her change, and on being hunted back by a porter to receive the change, left the ticket behind her. She lost and found each separate article of luggage before the train started, and was at last dragged from out an empty excursion train in a siding by an exasperated stationmaster and two indignant porters, just in time to be thrust into the train that was to convey her to the sea.

At Berwick-on-Tweed, where she changed trains, further mental anguish awaited Mary Ann. When she had begrimed her person and made herself hot and excited beyond all bearing in the search for her purse on the floor and under the seats and amongst the legs and skirts of a crowded third-class, and it had finally been found by a fellow-passenger in the hat-rack, underneath the newspaper parcel (containing food which she had no desire to eat), she had not only exhausted herself but also all the patience of those she travelled with. They all knew her family history, the object of her journey, the trials that had from the start beset her path. But it was a warm day and the compartment was

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overcrowded. The *camaraderie* of the third-class passenger, of which we hear so much, had wilted in the sun. They were glad when, having been thrown from the lap of the third-class mother, which already contained the third-class sustenance-imbibing young child, on to the knee of the perspiring artisan, by the jolt of the stopping train, and having caused a blinding hail of packages from the hat-rack to fall on the heads of her companions by the removal of her luggage, Mary Ann got out at her destination. The newspaper package was thrown out of the window after the train had started by an angry young man whose head had been bumped by the heaviest parcel, and the paper-covered box was discovered to have burst its hinges and to have scattered garments, foods, and gifts for her nephews and nieces over the platform and amongst the other luggage.

But an angel appeared then, in the guise of a fat man with a gig—an angel specially chartered by her brother James—and when ten minutes had been spent in hunting for her ticket, which was found, eventually, limp and humid, in the palm of her left-hand glove, and ten more in searching for a fourth parcel, the creation of an overheated imagination, Mary Ann was able to clamber into the gig and drive away.

For some time she was too much upset to speak, but when the new handkerchief (no longer white, but stiff and unyielding to the last) had been brought

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into requisition, she was able to gaze at the landscape and to cast an eager eye around for the sea. There were hedges on either hand, cornfields, trees, farm buildings dotted here and there, an occasional stream, a duck-pond or two, but no sea.

"I expect we'll soon be at the sea now," she ventured at last to her companion, a silent man who breathed loud.

"The *sea!* we're no' going near the sea," he said, giving the Northumbrian roll to his R's.

Mary Ann's heart sank within her.

"Stop; stop!" she said, clutching his arm with wild apprehension—"there maun be a mistake. I'm gaun to my brither's hoose—Jems Dodd's—near the sea! Ye maun stop and let iz oot!"

The man remained calm.

"Dinna fash yersel', wumman," he said, "it was your brither himsel' that tellt me to fetch you to his hoose in this verry gig. Sit still. If you care to foot it four mile from his hoose, ye'll see the sea right enough. Ye're four mile frae Beal, and Beal is just opposite Holy Island, and *that's* in the North Sea, as a'budy kens."

"Four mile!" said Mary Ann faintly.

"Fourr mile," said the man, and relapsed into silence.

When the pony stopped with a sudden jerk that threw Mary Ann almost on to its back, and made her wearily murmur "Megsty me," as she clutched her

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companion's knees for safety, the glories of her summer holiday were somewhat dimmed. The man had not congratulated her on the care of James Dodd's five obstreperous children. He had indicated in a few words that in the opinion of the Dodds' neighbours Mary Ann had been put upon. He had dwelt at some length on the flightiness of Betsy, the eldest girl, and on the labours entailed in the care of a cow, a pig, a garden, a house, and a family of five children.

"*Three* weeks ye've come for!" he said with withering emphasis. "I thoct better of Jems Dodd. It's that wife of his. A self-seekin' wumman."

It was a small house, standing a little back from the road, at which the gig stopped. There was a garden in front, and Mary Ann, still tightly clutching the faded remains of what had once been honeysuckles and roses, felt chilly at heart as she noted the profusion of hollyhocks, sunflowers, roses, stocks, and pansies that served as a border to the cabbages and peas. Some hens arose from wallowing in the dust and clucked across the road under the pony's nose. A woman from a cottage farther along came out to gaze. The bees round the row of beehives in the garden hummed loudly, and the voice of a pig could be heard hungrily announcing itself from somewhere in the back premises. But, otherwise, all was still and silent. The family of James Dodd might have

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been dead and buried for weeks, for all the stir they made. Mary Ann clambered down from the gig, catching her skirt on the step and tearing the gathers, and the man lifted up his voice and shouted for Betsy. Other names, not baptismal, he also tried, without avail, and then the woman from the cottage strolled up.

“They’re all out,” she said, “the hempies. They’ve been away nearly ever since their faither and mother left in the morning. They’ve taken my little Agnes Ellen with them. They’ll hearr of it when they come back.”

One housekeeping precaution only had Betsy taken before going forth to the wilderness leading her tribe. She had locked the door. The cow was un-milked, the pig unfed. The fire, said the neighbour, who had kept an indignant eye on the chimney, was out. Of the enormities of Betsy and her brethren Mary Ann heard volumes during that first hour of her summer holiday. Her luggage, when dragged up the garden path and left outside the door, had the appearance of having been swept up there by an unfriendly sea. She could do nothing. She was unable even to go to the aid of the pig and the cow, for the pig’s meat and milking pails were alike locked up inside that deserted dwelling.

A terrible thought entered her mind. She suggested it to the neighbour. What if the children had strayed to the sea and therein been drowned? But

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in this the woman laughed her to scorn. Blackberrying, she declared, was their pursuit. It was a pursuit forbidden by Mrs. James Dodd, and therefore they pursued it joyfully the minute her back was turned. She proved to be right. Just when the unhappy lowing of the neglected cow had made the neighbour suggest the desperate expedient of milking it into a series of basins—for pail she had none—there straggled into sight a little band of six. Johnnie, the youngest, heralded his approach with wailings, and Agnes Ellen, the Dodds' guest, was engaged in such recriminations with Jane Dodd, her bosom friend, that they alternately chased each other and exchanged breathless and furious slaps when proximity rendered this possible. Betsy, hauling Johnnie by the hand, serenely led the van. A large, plain girl was Betsy—a snub-nosed girl of complacent manner. No products did they bring with them of their lawless day—only much-stained faces, hands, and pinafores, many scratches, and garments torn and ragged. On seeing their Aunt Mary Ann they evinced no surprise, nor any compunction. Indeed all their attention was given for the time being to the entrancing spectacle of Agnes Ellen Embleton being publicly whipped by her mother.

That was a busy evening for Mary Ann. By the time her family was fed and her numerous domestic duties performed, the gnawing hunger she had felt as she awaited their return had passed off. The

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Dodds were a plain family, but sleep is a wonderful beautifier even to the plainest baby face, and as Mary Ann put her dead flowers in water, ("What's thae for?" little Jane had asked with contemptuous wonder,) and ate some fragments left from the children's supper, her motherly heart warmed within her and all her tiredness was forgotten. For, lying on the pillow in the middle of her bed, whereupon by rights her own should have been, lay wee Johnnie's touzled yellow head.

The Dodd children were not brilliant, but they were not long in grasping the character of their aunt. Mary Ann had the most elementary ideas of discipline, the most rudimentary notions of managing a household consisting of more than one, and although her intentions regarding order and cleanliness were excellent, circumstances usually proved too strong for her, and she had to succumb to them. The mother of Agnes Ellen Embleton watched her with the eye of a paid detective, and stored up with scornful disgust such tales of the doings of that uncontrolled household as should brindle the hair of Euphemia Dodd on her return. The children never even simulated a shadow of respect for their aunt. They treated her with somewhat less consideration than they gave to the cow, and with rather more affection than they gave the pig. She was useful to them as their general servant, and yet more useful as a penny bank from which they could continually

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draw without fear of an overdraft. She bound up their wounds, she washed their clothes, she fed them with an amplitude and richness that upset little Johnnie's digestion for days and made the elder ones reproach her for their sickness. It was a bitter blow to Mary Ann when the cake she essayed to bake at the request of Robert, her eldest nephew, was received with derision by Betsy and shouts of laughter from the others. She herself had to own that it was a very moist cake, and burned in parts, but it hurt her when Robert announced that he was going to save up a piece to show to his mother.

A week of her holiday reduced Mary Ann's weight by several pounds. She rose early and went to bed late. Her face grew lined and old, and she looked, as she felt, chronically tired. But her day was yet to come. It was near the end of the second week of her visit that the suggestion came from the mother of Agnes Ellen Embleton.

"You've never seen the sea yet, Miss Dodd," she remarked one afternoon in her plaintive, rolling R-ed Northumbrian drawl. "You've been here near two weeks and never seen't. Not but what it's fower year sin I saw it mysel'."

"It's four mile to Beal," said Mary Ann wistfully. And then Mrs. Embleton took Mary Ann in hand and made plans for her. The walk of four miles was a mere nothing if you took it quietly. And at Beal you not only saw the sea, but you could walk

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across the sands to Holy Island at low tide and there see the ruins of a church and purchase crabs. It was an excursion that could be accomplished with the greatest ease. Mrs. Embleton could milk the cow and give the children tea during their aunt's absence, and Mary Ann would be back in plenty of time to give them supper and put them to bed. Nothing could be simpler. To Mary Ann it seemed an almost incredible thing that such joy should come her way. The airy castles of her summer holiday had seemed to have belonged to someone else and to have crumbled into ruins some time in a past existence. Now they reared themselves before her again, gay as ever. She confided her plan to the children as she gave them their evening meal, and they received it graciously. Jane requested that her aunt should bring her home some St. Cuthbert's beads—"Thae queer wee stones that belonged to the auld man that once lived at Holy Island." Agnes Ellen Embleton owned many, found by her uncle, but Agnes Ellen was a cat, and would not part with them. Mary Ann promised beads by the dozen all round, rashly, and with gladness. "Fossils," Embleton himself explained to her between puffs of his pipe, and he showed her one or two from out his waistcoat pocket, and told her with some scorn that the Roman Catholics regarded them as charms. "Ye'll get home safe enough if ye find ony o' them!" he laughed.

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It was a hot, tired, triumphant Mary Ann Dodd who jogged along the dusty highroad next afternoon, wearing her holiday trappings of ancestral dolman and home-trimmed bonnet with purple chrysanthemums. Her arm ached with the basket entrusted to her at the last minute by Mrs. Embleton, containing one dozen eggs, a present for a friend in Holy Island who was expected to fill it on its return with something fishy, and, it was hoped, crustaceous. Her elastic-sided boots pinched her feet. The sun beat fiercely upon her. But she had a heart far above such minor discomforts. She had so feared, with a dull, despairing, ashamed fear, that she might have to go home at the end of her holiday and own to her neighbours that she had never seen the sea. But now her fear was groundless. She even tried to sing to herself as she went on, but she gave up the effort, for Mary Ann was what is known in Scotland as "timmer," and the sounds that proceeded in gusty tunelessness from her unaccustomed throat were no pleasure even to herself.

Beal was reached at length, and there she found Fortune still smiling on her venture. They told her at the scattered hamlets that compose the village that the tide was out, and that to wade across the three miles of wet sand between the island and the mainland was the simplest task possible.

And then, in all its glory, there burst on the eyes of Mary Ann Dodd the sight for which, since

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those childish days when, in her own inland village, she had listened to the booming of a shell, she had longed with an eager longing. That long, straight, grey-green line that met the sky, far, far away—white-fringed where it touched the yellow sand—that was the sea. Her heart beat loud and fast. She ran that last half-mile down to the shore. Arrived at the edge of the long wet sands she sat down, and, as instructed by Mrs. Embleton, removed her boots and stockings and “kilted her tails up.” Her striped woollen petticoat dipped in the water as she followed the track by the posts across the island, but the wet sand was delicious to her hot tired feet, and she enjoyed splashing through the shallows as any child might. “If only Mistress Broon and Mistress Readman could see me now,” she thought to herself with jubilant triumph. The island lay direct in front of her, and there was no mistaking her way, for the posts marked it clearly. She reached the shore at last, and donned her boots and stockings, and, still full of excited enjoyment, sought out the house of Mrs. Embleton’s friend and gave her the basket of eggs. The friend’s conduct was all that Mrs. Embleton had hoped, and the basket was heavier than it had been when she left home when it was returned to her with a damp exterior and a powerful odour of fish. Moreover, Mary Ann was invited to stop to tea, but she hurriedly explained that she must see the

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ruins and go down to the shore to hunt for St. Cuthbert's beads.

The waves were thundering on the rocks when she reached the further side of the island, and she shrank, half-frightened, from them and their noise as they crashed upon the stones and sprinkled her with spray. And then her hunt began. No one, not even her own mother, had ever fancied that Mary Ann was gifted with much intelligence. She knew naught of the nature of fossils. She had already almost forgotten their appearance, but she pursued the search with all the conscientious zeal of which she was capable, and loaded her pocket with a strange assortment of pebbles, flints, and stones of various sizes. Not until the pocket was full—so full that as she walked it swung like a ponderous pendulum against her right leg, bruising it—did she desist from her pursuit and return to the village. The thought of tea seemed pleasant to her then—tea, but, first of all, the purchase of some sweets for the children. She went to a tiny shop and asked for strong white peppermints, and bulls' eyes, a handsome supply. Tenpence was the total, and Mary Ann put her hand in the pocket of her dolman to get out her purse. Not to everyone, mercifully, is it granted to know that feeling of numbing, chill despair that came to Mary Ann Dodd when she found her pocket empty. The purse was gone. It was too great a catastrophe

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to be believable, and then she had so often lost her purse before on that adventurous foreign tour. That fat, shabby leather purse, with its strap of worn elastic bore a charmed existence. It *must* turn up again. It was quite impossible that it should be gone for ever. In this belief she turned all the stones out of her pocket on to the floor of the shop and sought for it there. She shook her skirts. She felt, nervously laughing the while, all round the flounces of her gown. She positively apologised to the Fates for allowing herself to imagine for one moment that her purse should be *lost*—that they could play her such a scurvy trick as to lose it for *good*. She tried to smile, and looked bewilderedly round in impossible places, thinking to find it, perhaps among the glass jars of sweets in the shop window, or staring at her from the fender of the little fireplace behind the counter, with its fat, plain, familiar face. The woman of the shop was most sympathetic, and did all she could to aid the search. She helped to restore the stones to the pocket when it was evident that the purse was not among them. Subsequently she said that she thought that Mary Ann was mad or drunk.

And then Mary Ann's search commenced in earnest. Back to the shore she went, her eyes fixed on the ground, that heavy, heavy basket still on her left arm and the stones bumping and buffeting her

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right leg at every step. In vain she looked; in vain she made eager dashes forward, with her hopes rising high, to pick up some dark object on the road or among the shingle on the shore. A wet stone, or a bit of wood was the most she ever found. Meantime the hours crept on, and Mary Ann knew she must go home. Slowly she retraced her steps to the little shop. A malicious demon whispered to her the encouraging delusion that the shop woman would greet her, smiling and delighted, with the purse held out in her hand. But no, the woman was sympathetic as ever, and kindly took down her name and address, and promised that every search and enquiry should be made, but the purse was still unfound.

As Mary Ann wearily sat down on the coarse grass on the last piece of dry land, to take off her boots and stockings, she tried to count up the sum of money her purse contained—two pounds—two substantial, greasy bank notes—fifteen shillings or thereabouts in silver and copper, and her return ticket. It was the thought of the return ticket that somehow smote her heart with the greatest sense of loss and desolation.

The woman in the shop had suggested that the purse might have dropped out on the sands in crossing. That was a good idea. She plashed on across the wet sand, and through the pools of water, her eyes fixed on the ground in eager search.

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The sun was going down, and the sand and water were chilly. Far as eye could reach, east and west, was cold, grey sea. The sands still lay stretched out, cold and bare, between the island and the shore. The guiding posts stood up like long black sentinels, and behind them, to the left, the patches of brown and black seaweed that had lain still as she crossed in the afternoon, had begun to surge gently up and down with the flow of the tide. The sun's last warning touches of gold and green and red faded away on the western sea, and only the fields on the mainland were still bathed in warm light. They seemed very near, those yellow corn-fields with their dividing hedges and dotting green trees. It comforted Mary Ann's sad heart to look at them. They meant home and rest to her.

She had walked half a mile, maybe, or rather more, when she discovered by an ache in her left arm, unaccompanied by its attendant burden, that she had left that precious basket of Mrs. Embleton's standing on the shore where she took off her boots and stockings. She turned and ran back all the way. It seemed as if some malicious sprite had laid itself out to hinder her return.

“Oh if I've lost the basket too—oh if I've lost Mistress Embleton's basket wi' a' thae crabs and things!” she moaned over and over again to herself as she breathlessly splashed through the pools on her way. But the basket was there, safely and solidly

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planked down just where she left it. She could have wept for thankfulness as she took it on her arm again.

The sun had sunk lower as she faced the shore once more. The grey sea looked very chilly and cold, but the distant fields still looked warm and homelike. The moan of the sea struck on her ear as it had not done earlier in the day—its moan, and the crash and roar of its waves. It seemed to her that there was less sand. There was no longer a dull plash as she put down her bare feet, but the splash of running water. And then, in front of her, a dismal sight appeared. She had not strayed from the track; she was still close to the posts, but in front of her, instead of a long stretch of sand, lay a lake of cold, grey water. It terrified her. She felt as when at night, in an evil dream, she saw a horror coming upon her and dared not shriek or cry aloud for help. When a sea-gull, wheeling above her, gave its shrill scream, she started with nervous dread. It seemed to her impossible to ford the lake. It would take her past her knees. So she walked steadily out to the west, trying to skirt round it. "It will make me so late," she thought, "and, oh dear, I'll no' be there to give the bairns their suppers."

She tried to get round it, but when she had walked many and many a yard out of her way, she found that her attempt was vain. The water was deeper still out there, and she had to retrace her

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footsteps. She would wade it, deep or shallow, she bravely resolved, and held her skirts up the higher. And so she reached the point at which she had diverged.

But the sea had not awaited her return. The lake was stirred by a rushing stream; a gushing, ever-widening, ever-deepening stream. The brown sea-weed bobbed and floated, and streamed like the hair of a drowned woman. She looked back to the island, but between her and it was the sea—the rushing, hungry sea. She looked in front, and there, too, was water, surging, dark water. And from the east and from the west came the sea, steadily, steadily, swiftly, swiftly coming to devour her. Like a hunted animal she looked from right to left, and then desperately ran, ran, splashing, stumbling through the rushing water that every moment grew stronger and more fierce. And then there was a worse stumble than those that had gone before—a more powerful wave.

The tide still flowed in, lapping the shore, and the guiding posts stood up, gaunt and black, from the water; the sun had faded from those distant fields that had seemed to her so close at hand; the sea-gulls still wheeled and screamed.

Only that black, stumbling, terror-blinded figure was gone. And amongst the long brown, tangled sea-weed that rose and fell with the waves, there floated something. . . .

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A bumping little spring cart brought her home to her brother's house next day. The basket, robbed by the waves, was still on her arm, and they wondered why her pocket was full of stones. "They're not even St. Cuthbert's beads," Mrs. Embleton said pityingly, as she emptied it.

James Dodd and his wife were telegraphed for, and on the evening of his return, in the public-house at Beal, where he was received with all the respectful and admiring sympathy due to the occasion, her brother grew maudlinly sentimental and talked much of his sister. It was then that he gave voice to the popular feeling, and spoke Mary Ann Dodd's epitaph.

"Mary Ann wasna fit to take care o' hersel'," he said, "she meant weel—no wumman ever meant better. But she was unco senseless, puir body."

THE REVEREND NICOL EDGAR

WHEN, in the year 1688, the roof of the old parish Church of Southdean fell in with a crash very shortly after the kirk had skaled, the good church-goers in many another Border parish began to have grave qualms as to the safety of their own places of worship. The people of Hobkirk looked with fresh eyes at their kirk, and realised with dismay that the walls and roof were quite ripe for accident, and that on any Sabbath day the entire congregation might be buried where they sat.

For two years they ran the risk of entombment and discussed the situation, but in 1690 the work of building a new church was begun, and in 1692 there stood completed an ugly little new building, of the barn type so common in Scotland, with low roof, clay floor, and thatched with heather. It had neither belfry nor bell, and that Hobkirk was not a wealthy parish is obvious from the fact that on Sacrament Sabbaths the communion cups had to be hired from a neighbouring parish, while one of the principal heritors, Dame Magdalen Elliott, widow of the first baronet of Stobs, notes in her account-book that she borrowed "40 punds Scots" for her share in the expenses of "Hobkirk bigin."

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A kirk grudgingly built by unwilling heritors—and that they grudged every penny spent on the church, the heritors' books testify—was scarcely likely to be a first-rate piece of work, and very soon it was almost as much out of repair as had been the building it succeeded.

In 1694 a new minister came to the new kirk, the Rev. Nicol Edgar, a son of the Laird of Wedderlie. It must have been a heartless business for him to labour in a parish where the church was looked on as a bothersome expense, but Mr. Edgar was a man whose heart was not easily daunted, and he was quite ready to cope with his reiving parishioners and to meet any difficulty that might cross his path. He was sixty-three years of age and had for twenty-six years ministered to the spiritual needs of the people of Hobkirk parish when he felt called upon, for the sake of his little flock, to wrestle with a power more fearful than that of any godless reiver or hard-fisted heritor.

We do not know in which year it was that one who passed Hobkirk graveyard in the gloaming first saw a tall man with a blue bonnet prowling amongst the tombs, but for years on end that man in the blue bonnet was a terror to the people of the district. The bedral would see him peering down at him as he dug a grave. Children making daisy-chains on the big grassy mounds of God's acre would run home, white-faced and sobbing, because

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of the grim-faced man who had suddenly stood before them and had as suddenly vanished away. Even the kirk itself was not holy enough to prevent the gaunt apparition from showing himself seated in a pew and scaring nervous women into hysterics or fainting fits. The whole neighbourhood lay in terror because of him, and Hobkirk Church came to lie under a ban because of the ghost that haunted it.

The Rev. Nicol Edgar bore with rumour for many a day, but when the hauntings grew so frequent that his two daughters, Susanna and Elizabeth, could not go to see a sick woman without bringing back a fresh tale of the bogle, and even began to have a horror of crossing the kirkyard, the minister felt that the time of dalliance was past. Prayer he had tried, and apparently in this case faith without works was a fushionless thing. The ghost must be laid, and who but the minister was likely to be able to do it? That was a woeful night in the manse of Hobkirk when Mr. Edgar—then a widower—imparted his decision to his weeping daughters. Fain would they have begged him to remain at home, in the warmth and light and sanctuary of the manse. But the minister had not taken his resolve without many a day and night of prayerful and earnest consideration. What was clearly his duty must be performed without fail. A second Greatheart, armed with the big kirk Bible and with an old claymore that

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had long been in the possession of the Edgar family, he left his terrified womenfolk shortly before midnight and strode off alone to the kirk. No terrors greeted him as he passed through the graveyard. The dead slept in peace, and only their headstones loomed black in the darkness. The key creaked in the lock as he opened the church door, and his footfall on the rough clay floor echoed loudly as he slowly walked up the aisle and ascended the pulpit. With the point of the claymore—that had laid low many a living man, but surely never before had been called upon to lay low the dead—he carefully drew a circle around himself, and then, committing his soul and himself to the safe keeping of his Maker, he awaited developments. An owl hooted in the trees outside, and, as if in answer, from somewhere near a cock “crowed a merry midnight.” The church was dark, black dark were the shadows, each wooden pew had its separate creak, but the minister quietly waited. Then gradually, gradually, like a strange grey dawn, the church grew lighter, until its darkest niche was lighted up. In its eastern corner a strange noise was heard, and on the spot from whence the eerie sound came, the minister saw a hillock like a large molehill appear on the earthen floor. Up and up heaved the hillock, with each heave growing larger, until from out the brown earth there stepped a tall man, wearing the knee-breeches of the period, a blue bonnet

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on his head, and on his legs a long pair of blue stockings.

The description given by those who had seen the man in the blue bonnet was a true one. His face was white and gash, like one who has looked on an evil sight and cannot forget it, and his great eyes stared up at the minister like two fathomless pools in a mountain burn with a white moon lighting them. He walked steadily forward up to the pulpit, his gaze never wavering from the minister's face, but Mr. Edgar, firm and strong in the grace of God, gave him stare for stare. The big kirk Bible lay on its rightful place on the musty red cushion in front of him, the claymore that had been his forefathers' was held tight in his right hand. As he reached the pulpit steps the ghost halted, stooped to pull off his blue hose, and pulled them off deliberately, gave each one a shake, and threw them across the back of the seat just below the pulpit. The familiarity of the sight—the long knitted stockings of coarse blue yarn—warmed the chilled blood of the godly minister. Whatever the man with the blue bonnet might be, undoubtedly he wore hose such as might have been knitted in the manse. To make sure Mr. Edgar leaned over the pulpit, impaled a stocking on the point of his sword, lifted it up, and found that it was indeed and in truth a real, tangible, knitted piece of yarn. The comfort of the discovery was very great. A ghost whose stockings

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were of stout blue worsted instead of flickering phosphorus was a more or less possible creature to deal with. Opening the Bible that lay before him, and holding his sword above his head, the minister adjured his fearsome congregation of one to state by all that was holy the cause of his appearance.

As meekly as any earthly penitent might have done, the ghost confessed that in his life he had been a cattle-dealer, that he had been foully murdered on the moors on his way from Lammas Fair, and that his spirit never could find rest until his murderer had been found and had paid the penalty for bloody murder. Very patiently and sympathetically Mr. Edgar listened to his tale.

“But what gars ye trouble Hobkirk?” he asked. “Man, ye’ve been as bad as the Plague here. Ye’ve brought a fama against the Kirk of Hobkirk. Decent folk would rather be hurled all the way to Souden than be laid here, and the attendance in the kirk on the Lord’s Day is sore diminished.”

The cattle-dealer had no defence. All he asked of the minister was that he might be allotted a certain space of ground where his restless spirit might walk to and fro without let or hindrance until such time as his murderer might be brought to bay.

“Puir body,” said Mr. Edgar. “There’s nane will grudge ye that—for I’ll no’ ask the heritors. And here’s your marching orders:—Henceforth, until the

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Lord gives your wearifu' spirit rest, ye shall trouble Hobkirk no more, but shall walk in a straight line atween Hoddleswoodie and Howabank, on the lands of Hoppisburn."

Grey and gash did the minister's face look as he opened the manse door in the dawning, and was received by his trembling daughters as one returned from the dead.

"I have done my duty," he said in a weary voice when they plied him with questions, "and a merciful God will do the rest."

There is no record of the man with the blue bonnet ever being seen on the lands of Hoppisburn, but certain it is that from that night he returned to Hobkirk graveyard and kirk nevermore.

The mercy of God is infinite. Man's mercy is never a thing to lippen to. One might think that the people of his parish showed some gratitude to their minister for all he had dared and done for them in the kirk on that dark night. But ever after his meeting with the restless spirit the minister of Hobkirk was looked on as an uncanny thing by most of the members of his flock. The superstitious could never feel comfortable in his presence.

"He has a kinda look I dinnae like," said they. "Mind ye, I'm no sayin' he's a warlock, but I wadnae like to meet him alane in the kirkyard on a nicht when the mune's no' owre bricht."

So did the Rev. Nicol Edgar pay for his embassy

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to one who had intimidated his flock, and for that flock's subsequent peace of mind.

Four years after his night of vigil the minister of Hobkirk died, and was buried in the graveyard of his church. One might imagine that his parishioners liked to think of him resting near them after having for so many years spent his life on their behalf. But there had been too much talk about the minister's uncanniness. Now that he was dead the Hobkirk people felt sure that his spirit would wander, and that once again the church and graveyard would be haunted places. Some of the bolder young men of the place decided that the wise thing to do was to lift him from his grave under the shadow of the kirk, carry him to some lonely spot, and leave him where only the whaups and the pewits would be likely to suffer from his restlessness.

It was a warm dark night early in June 1724 when the grave was rifled. The resurrectionists broke open the coffin, tied a rope tightly round the body of their dead minister, binding his arms close to his sides, and swung off with their burden towards Bonchester Hill. They were half-way to the spot they had fixed upon when, in crossing a deep syke, one of the bearers stumbled and roughly jerked the corpse. One of the arms got loose from the rope, and the chill dead hand of the minister violently smote the face of one of his

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bearers. It was more than enough to cause a panic amongst those who had already fancied that they saw strange forms and heard dread noises, and whose hearts had grown chilled by the stillness and loneliness of the dark June night. The body of the Rev. Nicol Edgar was dropped without ceremony amongst the bracken in the syke, and the resurrectionists fancied all the warlocks, ghosts, and evil things of the nether world in pursuit as they ran, at heart-bursting speed, back to their homes at Hobkirk.

All night and most of the next day the dead minister lay out there, the kind open sky above him, but when next night came round a party of bearers returned and carried him back to his grave in the kirkyard. There, though much defaced by time and weather, the record on his headstone is still to be read :

“Here lys Nicol Edgar, son of the Laird of Wedderlie, who died upon the 31st May 1724, aged 67 years. And his spouse Susanna, who died 30th June 1713, aged 52.”

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IT is an old tale, that of the Lancashire man who owned a bull-pup and who, when the dog fiercely attacked his son and the son shrieked for help, responded calmly: "Let un be, lad! let un worry! it'll be the makkin o' the poop." A little brutal perhaps, a little unpaternal, yet no worse in sentiment than the speech of the true-born Briton when he says that "A real good war—an invasion of Great Britain—and a real good licking is what our nation at present requires." In a word, "it would be the makkin o' the poop."

It may be true, yet if those who speak seriously believed in the possibility of an invasion, presumably they would not speak in quite the same strain. It is only to the minority of the British people that such a contingency seems not only to be likely, but imminent. To a very small proportion of the inhabitants of our Islands does the necessity for a systematic preparation of national defence seem urgent. Already we have forgotten the tales our grandfathers told us of the days when apprehension laid chilly hands on many hearts and grim fear stalked unabashed through great Britain.

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For a giant then walked the earth, and where Napoleon Bonaparte was, there was ever found action, and action that, for him, almost invariably meant success.

A French invasion of Britain was a thing that was daily expected, daily looked for. In 1804 the favourite threat of nurses when our grandparents cried was that they should be thrown to "Boney and his Frenchmen." It yet wanted eleven years till Waterloo should close the long and bloody drama that had brought grief to many a home, and in those early days of the nineteenth century, alike over England and Scotland, the great Shadow hung.

In the minds of all God-fearing people the name of Napoleon was synonymous with that of Apollyon, the Arch-Fiend, the great Destroyer. He and his armies had overrun and well-nigh conquered Europe. The Netherlands had fallen before him. Spain, Sweden, and Prussia had been forced to sue for peace. Lombardy had been conquered in a single campaign. Austria had been forced on her knees in the Treaty of Campo Formio, and Britain was left without a single ally. From the Tiber to the Seine he had written in blood his right to possession. The Powers of Darkness seemed to fight for him. "He had always won," says one writer; "that was the terror of it."

The children played French and English with

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all their might. Schoolboys gave and took black eyes for the deadly insult of "French puddock," for that frogs were the staple food of the cut-throat Johnny Crapauds was a horrid fact well known to every intelligent schoolboy. Children of larger growth also played at soldiers.

"We all cracked very crouse about fighting," says Mansie Wauch, "when we heard of garments rolled in blood only from abroad. . . . I shall never forget the first day I got my regimentals on; and when I looked at myself in the bit glass, just to think I was a sodger, who never in my life could thole the smell of powder, and had not fired anything but a penny cannon on the Fourth of June, when I was a halflins callant. I thought my throat would have been cut with the black-corded stock; for whenever I looked down, without thinking like, my chaff-blade played clank against it with such a dunt that I maistly chacked my tongue off."

Mothers may have smiled at their sons as they swaggered, glorious in a new volunteer or yeomanry uniform, but tears must often have been very near the smiles, for it cannot be so easy for the fisher-folk on a storm-beaten coast to laugh at their children's plays of shipwreck as for the mothers who live far inland and have no fear of storms.

Even the Jacobite songs that had stirred men's hearts in the '45—while over the toll paid then to the bloodthirsty god War some hearts had not

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ceased to ache—were adapted to suit the case, and our grandparents were dandled to the song, sung to the original air :

“ Bonaparte owre the sea,
Threatens you and threatens me ;
Single-handed though we be,
Whistle owre the lave o't ! ”

The pulpits of Scotland rang with warlike declamations. In Scotland, at Kilmany, Dr. Thomas Chalmers, who was afterwards to make a name for himself as one of the fathers of “ The Disruption,” preached to his people with a fervour that must have made the heart of many a good woman sink into her shoes and shiver there: “ May that day when Bonaparte ascends the throne of Britain be the last of my existence ; may I be the first to ascend the scaffold he erects to extinguish the work and spirit of the country ; may my blood mingle with the blood of the patriots ; and may I die at the foot of that altar on which British independence is the victim.”

Thus thundered Dr. Thomas Chalmers. In the heart of every true-bred Presbyterian Scot there has ever been an undeniable hankering after the martyr's crown. But in spite of the forebodings of that eminent divine, and the equally gloomy expectations of those better versed than he in the game of war, in spite of the great Conqueror himself, who

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had arranged that the Pope should crown him "King of England" at Notre Dame on his return, and who had dies prepared for a medal bearing on one side his own head crowned with laurel, and on the reverse Hercules crushing Antæus in his arms, the motto being "*Descente en Angleterre,*" and in smaller letters "*Frappé à Londres 1804,*" there was no ascent by Napoleon Bonaparte of the throne of Britain.

We had instead our "False Alarm," to be followed by our Trafalgar and our Waterloo, and the British lion, still calm and unmoved, looked across the sea to the little rocky island of St. Helena, and saw there a pale little man, with folded arms and knitted brows, and a heart full of the mighty sorrow of a mighty failure.

In the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland, in Northumbria, on Devonshire Moor and Sussex and Kentish Weald, from the Pentland Firth to the English Channel, from hilly Wales to the bogs of Galway, war levied her tax on husband, father, and son, and without a murmur the tax was paid.

There is in this country of ours no epidemic more rapidly contagious, more quickly ubiquitous, than the war-fever that fires our blood and makes us sweep aside all party considerations and convictions as so many childish toys that we must dally with no longer, so burningly desirous are we that we and ours

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shall play the man and fight, and die if need be, for King and country.

Distance and wont and use may sometimes reduce the fever-heat of warlike patriotism, but in Britain in those days the excitement was never allowed to cool. For a year or two only twenty-five miles of shallow water divided Britain from a host of 150,000 of her well-armed enemies. On clear days people on the south coast could see the accoutrements of drilling armies at Boulogne twinkle in the sun. A fog that must last for twenty-four hours was one of the few requirements of the little General who had everything so carefully planned for a successful invasion, and there was never a foggy night in those years that there was not a possibility that peaceful English homesteads might be sacked and burned before morning and their occupants put to the sword. In Scotland the outposts by the grey North Sea were ever ready, ever watchful. Anywhere from Berwick to Leith the foe might be expected to land, or a mighty French army might tramp across the Border hills as the Romans did of old, and view the country of their conquest from the Carter Bar. It was a situation that seized the imaginations and fired the pens of the poets of that day. We had no "Tommy Atkinses" nor "Absent-minded Beggars" then, but Robert Burns, a Dumfriesshire volunteer, sang "Does haughty

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Gaul invasion threat?" dropping, after his first somewhat bombastic line, into his more familiar Scotch:

"Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united;
For never but by British hands
Must British wrangs be righted."

Walter Scott, a member of that corps, wrote "The War Song of the Royal Edinburgh Light Dragoons," "To horse! to horse!" (and, to the credit of the dragoons, be it said that they were mounted, armed, and uniformed at their own expense):

"To horse! to horse! the standard flies,
The bugles sound the call!"

In "Donald M'Donald," Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, sang for the Highlanders:

"Wad Bonaparte land at Fort William,
Auld Europe nae langer should grane;
I laugh when I think how we'd gall him
Wi' bullet, wi' steel, and wi' stane."

His friend David Thomson, styled by Sir Walter Scott "the Galashiels Bard," proclaimed that beyond all dispute

"The safeguard of peace is the helmet of war";

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and a greater than he was roused to equally warlike sentiment :

“ Vanguard of liberty, ye men of Kent !
Ye children of a soil that doth advance
It's haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardiment ! ”

• • • • •
No parleying now ! In Britain is one breath ;
We all are with you now from shore to shore :
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death ! ”

So wrote that gentle, tender nature-lover, William Wordsworth, from his home at Grasmere in October 1803.

On 20th October 1803 a general fast was observed throughout the country, and it was indeed a field-day for the Scottish divines. In the High Church of Edinburgh the preacher's text in the morning was, “ O God, go forth with Thy hosts,” and in the afternoon, “ Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest in Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude.” In the Tolbooth Church of the same city the preacher spoke from the words, “ Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people ” ; and a well-known Scottish minister, Dr. Paterson of Glasgow (a grandson of “ Old Mortality,” and a Border raider by birth, as one might almost guess) went still further : “ He that hath not a sword, let him sell his garment and buy one,” were the words he chose to preach from. The godliest of Presbyters

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have always been good fighting men, and the men of Edinburgh and of Glasgow must have felt their souls stirred within them that day, even as the souls of the Israelites were stirred when their leaders called aloud to the God of battles.

But it was left for the Border—that piece of debatable land where English and Scottish blood had so often reddened the heather and bracken—where only the cries of whaups and pewits break the Sabbath-day stillness of moor and moss—to show what sort of blood ran in the veins not only of Britain's regularly mobilised troops, but in those of hind and herd, of weaver and of artisan. And, as not infrequently before and since, the deed that proved what courage can be, and that made a whole nation a prouder and a stronger one, was the result of a great mistake.

In the winter of 1803-4, Napoleon, with 150,000 tried veterans, lay encamped at Boulogne, with a fleet of flat-bottomed boats, ready for crossing the Channel. "Let us be masters of the Channel for six hours," said this monster who was reported to live upon human flesh and have rashers of baby every morning for his breakfast, "and we are masters of the world." On what part of British shores he would land, no one could tell. Every Englishman was sure it must be on the south coast of England, and Scotchmen were equally certain that some portion of the Scottish coast was destined to receive him.

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News travelled slowly in those days. Newspapers only appeared once a week. Carriers going from the small Border towns to Edinburgh or to Newcastle felt themselves on their return to be of no small importance, so precious was the freight of verbal news and rumour which they carried with them. At every stopping-place the coaches were besieged by eager crowds, who feasted their eyes on the caricatures of "Boney," chalked by artistic wags on the panels, and held out hungry ears for each scrap of information. Can we, pampered children of the twentieth century, imagine how we should have felt had we had to wait a week, or more, for the latest news from South Africa, and then have it brought to us *viva voce* by the not always accurate guard of a lumbering stage coach?

That was the time of which it is said that "the glint of a fire at night upon the coast would set every woman upon her knees, and every man gripping for his musket." There were no railways, no telegraphs, but a simple, yet effective system of signalling by beacon was arranged.

In the event of the French fleet appearing anywhere off the coast, the beacon nearest the supposed place of disembarkation was to be lighted. From one hill-top to another, the fiery signal was to be passed, and warning of impending danger thus speedily given.

The system was no new one. Many a time

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had the clans of Teviotdale, Liddesdale, Tweedside, Ettrick, and Yarrow been stirred up by it. When chief fought against chief, and the forays and reprisals of English and Scottish reivers were of daily occurrence, men would oftentimes be roused at night by the flaming signal—the “red cock’s crow”—and ride in hot haste through the darkness to draw the sword for their feudal lord. An Act of Parliament in 1455 had drawn up a code of rules for the management of such beacons. It directs that “One bale or faggot shall be warning of the approach of the English in any manner; two bales that they are *coming indeed*; four bales, blazing beside each other, that the enemy are in great force.” . . . “The same taikenings to be watched and maid at Eggerhope Castell, fra they se the fire of Hume, that they fire right awa. And in like manner on Soutra Edge, sall se the fire of Eggerhope Castell, and mak taikenings in like manner. And then may all Louthaine be warned, and in special the Castell of Edinburgh; and their four fires to be made in like manner, that they in Fife, and fra Stirling east, and the east part of Louthaine, and to Dunbar, all may se them and come to the defence of the land.” In later times, Sir Walter Scott tells us, those beacons were “a long and strong tree set up, with an iron brander fixed on a stalk in the middle of it, for holding a tar barrel.” Eight waggon-loads of faggots, with

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three or four tar barrels, was the regulation for those beacons which flared up in warning on that January night in 1804.

Should the French fleet arrive in daylight, twelve minute guns were to be fired from Eye-mouth, St. Abb's Head, Berwick-on-Tweed, Knockenhair (near Dunbar), and Haddington. If at night, the minute guns were to be fired, and the beacons lighted, while, in either case, men detailed for the purpose were to drive all the cattle inland, remove all the upper mill-stones, and destroy all the ovens. Places of rendezvous were appointed by the military authorities, and in the Borders war-like feeling was at fever height. Leith and Berwick were named as the most likely ports for the disembarkation of the French, and heated imaginations sighted the distant fleet making for these ports, almost daily, for months. On the Dunion—the round green hill near Jedburgh—on the furze-covered crest of Duns Law, on Ruberslaw, on the hill where the old keep of Hume Castle still stands, on the farthest east of the three sister Eildons, and on Penielheugh, commanding Lower Teviotdale, where a monument to those who fell at Waterloo is now visible from every part of the Border—on every prominent hill-top from John o' Groat's to Land's End, beacon fires were laid. The Belling and Cheviot Hills had their fair share, while the men of Ettrick Forest looked to The Wisp and

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Black Andrew—two rugged peaks towering darkly above the silvery Ettrick and tumbling Yarrow as they run through their valleys.

The night of Tuesday, 31st January 1804, was chill and dark, as the men on each beacon hill kept their lonely watch. The Tweed and Teviot, Ettrick and Yarrow, swollen by winter floods, rushed through the dark shadows of their wooded banks. That great sweep of Borderland that we see as we stand on any of these beacon hills—the ploughed fields with their thickly intersecting fir-woods, the purple plain, with the jagged line of mountain towards the south, the sharp peak of Eildon, and Black Hill, and Ruberslaw—all was wiped out by the darkness, with here and there the glow-worm twinkle of the lights of a little village or farm.

The beacon on Hume Castle Hill was under the superintendence of a retired captain of the Regulars, who lived three miles from the Castle, the man immediately in charge being a sergeant in the volunteers and a newcomer to the district.

At Shoreswood, in Northumberland, at about 9.30 that night, some charcoal burners were hard at work, and as the red flames rushed skywards, they caught the eye of the zealous volunteer.

Shoreswood is sufficiently near Doolaw where a properly authorised beacon was known to be, for the two localities to be mistaken by an over-zealous man on a very dark night. In a twinkling, a light

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was applied to the tarry wood on Hume Castle Hill, and, with a crackle and a roar, the fire burst forth, to publish far and wide its false alarm.

As soon as the flames of the beacon were seen by the captain in charge, he sent a groom on horseback, full gallop, to ascertain the cause of the sergeant's proclamation. The groom returned with the tale that the sergeant had made a mistake and had only then discovered it. But it was a mistake which it was too late to rectify. One has sometimes, from the dark window of a house in town, watched admiringly the activity of a lamplighter as he hurries along the dusky street and rapidly adds one light to another. On the Scottish Border, on that dark January night, the lights sprang up so rapidly, one after another, that they might have been the work of a titanic lamplighter. Doolaw beacon followed the lead of Hume Castle: Caverton Edge, the Eildons, and the Dunion followed suit, and passed the tidings on to the hills of Cumberland. Steadily onwards, north and south, the fiery signal ran, until at St. Abb's Head the naval officer who was in command of the station reasoned with himself that an invasion must come from without, and not from within, and that Napoleon must land on the coast or nowhere. Thus did he refrain from lighting his beacon, and spared the Lothians and north of Scotland, and the country south of Berwick-on-Tweed, all the tribulations and the glories of the False Alarm.

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The beacon was fired by a mistake, but it was a "mistake" that morally strengthened a nation's power, and the response to that call to arms is a fact of history to rouse a nation's pride.

In every town and village a wild scene of excitement was caused by the sudden call to duty.

At Jedburgh, the old county town of Roxburgh, a bell clanged the alarm, while the town drummer beat it sturdily. The town-bell in the old tower rang out a tocsin. Gilbert Elliot, Lord Minto, a Lieutenant-Colonel of the 1st Battalion of the Roxburgh Volunteers, already a distinguished man and the friend of Nelson, proved himself a worthy son of the Border and a scion of the House of Elliot, which was a terror to those on the English side in the old freebooting days, by swimming on horseback the flooded Teviot and leaving his servant to follow by an easier route. The other Lieutenant-Colonel of the battalion was John Rutherford of Edgerston, whose father, Major Rutherford, was killed in the war with the revolted Colonies of North America at Ticonderoga in 1758, and who was a descendant of Robert de Rutherford—the friend and gallant supporter of Robert the Bruce—who was slain by the Saracens in Spain along with the Black Douglas in 1330. The Roxburgh volunteers were lucky in their leaders.

The troops assembled in the market-place, and women and children hung weeping to husbands,

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lovers, and fathers, who were being so ruthlessly torn from them. In the semi-darkness many mistakes of identity were made. One gallant volunteer had a small bundle thrust into his hand by an agitated young woman, who immediately thereafter ejaculated, "Mercy me! it's no' him!" and fled in horrified haste. An old woman, throwing up her window, demanded in a shriek, "If ony person could tell her at which end o' the toun the French wad come in." One man, with his wife and family—Jedburgh still blushes at the tale—took to the hills, provisioned for a fortnight. Another, for whom—for he was a single man—Jedburgh's blushes are still deeper, remained concealed under a bed until the close of the following day. "Dr. Doctor," a third man wrote to his medical attendant, "this comes to enform you that the Kernel of our Core will not let me off from voluntearin. So you wod oblige me by giving me a sartificate that I am inkapable of serving." "Oh, mother, mother, a wuss a was a wumman!" was the moan of a hero from Denholm as he buckled on his sword to go. "Ye auld limmer! see what ee've brocht iz tae!" was the reproach that another mother received from her son who felt it was not a good thing to be born into a world where French invasions had to be dealt with. But he was also a "Jethart callant" who bore arms all that night, and the following day, with his hands in so painful and dangerous a state

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that no medical authority could have pronounced him fit for active service, and when the roll of volunteers was called there was but one man absent, and he—so says tradition—was a lame tailor.

The company, when drawn up before Lord Minto, must have looked a dandy troop indeed. A blue swallow-tailed coat with scarlet facings, white waistcoat and breeches, white cotton stockings and short black gaiters, a tall bearskin cap, with a taller feather—such was the ingenuously unpractical uniform of the Roxburgh volunteers, so that the appearance in their ranks of a shabby stranger in working clothes, and armed with an old firelock, was the more noticeable.

“Hullo, my lad,” said Lord Minto, halting before him, “where are *you* from?” “Frae Horsley Hill, my Lord,” said the man, touching the battered remains of an old felt hat by way of salute. “And pray, where are you going?” “To have a day’s blattering at the French, my Lord.” “But you are not a volunteer.” “May be no, but I am willing to be one,” was the prompt reply. “Hold up your hand,” said Lord Minto, and the new recruit was immediately sworn in.

The “Roxburgh Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry” mustered 108 strong, under another of the clan Elliot, Colonel Elliot of Borthwickbrae, who had already, more than once, successfully fought the French, during the Irish Rebellion, when he

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held a commission in the Roxburgh Fencible Dragoons. "The conduct of the cavalry was highly conspicuous," say the dispatches relating to the Battle of Ballinamuck in 1798, where the Roxburgh Fencibles took a leading part.

At 6 A.M. the bugler sounded the order for saddling, and at 6.20 every man was found in his place. A certain Corporal Grieve of Branhholm—one of whose descendants, a midshipman of 17, died gallantly at his post on board of the ill-fated *Victoria* in 1893—arrived with two bundles of hay at his saddle bow. There might be but little fodder where they were going, he explained, and his horse was dear to him. And off, at a sharp trot, went the Eastern Division of the Roxburgh Cavalry, to Kelso, where they joined the troops from the west, and rode together to Duns, where they were billeted for the night.

Hawick was in no way behind her rival Jedburgh in her response to the call to arms.

The eligible age for service was from seventeen to fifty-five, but in the Roll of Names for General Defence, dated August 27, 1803, we read the names of "Thomas Dyce, preacher, above age, yet willing to serve," and of "Walter Grieve, under age, yet willing to serve."

As there were no beacons in the wild country beyond Hawick, the cavalry trumpeter rode up the valley of the river Slitrig, and down through

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Liddesdale, waking sleepers up with a start, and rousing all the echoes of the hills. Worthy descendants of Scotts, Elliots, and Armstrongs, famed in Border legend and ballad, did those men of Liddesdale prove themselves to be. The haste with which they were armed and saddled did credit to their reiving descent. Their horses had, perforce, to swim the flooded Liddel; many of them had twenty miles to ride. But daylight saw them in full force, piped through Hawick with two Elliots in command, and to the old Border air:—

“My name is little Jock Elliot,
An’ wha daur meddle wi’ me!”

It is recorded by Sir Walter Scott that when Dr. John Leyden, the Border poet, was lying ill of fever in India, the news of the rising of his fellow Borderers reached him. As he listened to the account a friend read him of the various troops entering Hawick, the languor of illness left him, he sprang up in bed, and, with vehement gesticulations, he sang:—

“Oh, wha daur meddle wi’ me!
An’ wha daur meddle wi’ me?
My name is little Jock Elliot,
An’ wha daur meddle wi’ me!”

His attendants thought him delirious, until his friend and fellow Borderer, Sir John Malcolm, was

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able to explain what a Borderer's love of country could mean.

Captain William Elliot of Harwood commanded the Western troop. He had seen active service against the French and rebel Irish in 1798, and when he subsequently became captain commandant of the Western troop of Roxburghshire Yeomanry, there could have been found no more popular officer. His troop turned out to a man, and marched through the night to Dalkeith, some forty miles away.

"Oh, faither, faither! Kill's yersel'! Kill's yersel'!" cried a Hawick weaver's daughter, "ye'll dae't cannier than the French!"

The parish of Yetholm, a stronghold of the gipsies—their place of royal residence, indeed—produced 188 volunteers. The schoolmaster, who had a command, noticed, when they were ready to march, a woman in their company. "What are *you* doing here, Bella?" he asked; "this is no place for a woman. Where are you going to?"

"I'll aye slack a bullet afore my bairns," was the reply of the dauntless Bella.

The volunteers of Smailholm, a tiny hamlet on a hill above the Tweed, marched into Kelso during the night, headed by their minister, the Rev. Thomas Cleghorn. "They wore," says one writer, "flannels for underwear, all of which had been made in the manse."

Another little village, Sprouston, near Kelso,

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was also led by its minister, the Rev. Andrew Thomson, subsequently a celebrated Edinburgh divine. In the parishes of Lilliesleaf and Bowden, under the shadow of the Eildon Hills, Sir John Riddell of Riddell, Lieutenant-Colonel of the 2nd Battalion of Roxburgh volunteers, had in four days enrolled 64 men, 75 horses, 54 carts, and 27 drivers, all to be ready when called upon, and they mobilised most gallantly. The Roxburghshire volunteers numbered 1060; Berwickshire produced 160 yeomen and 772 infantry; so that there were some 2000 men besides those in Northumberland. Three thousand men in all answered the summons. The total enrolled throughout the country was 90,000 militiamen and 42,000 volunteers.

At St. Boswells the roll was called at one o'clock in the morning, and out of 500 volunteers only two failed to answer to their names. "We had not yet got our coarse regimental red coats, white breeks with black legs, like Highland sheep," wrote John Younger, the village shoemaker, who was one of those who answered the call, "and so, of course, we marched as we were, in our own various-coloured raggery." At Kelso Bridge they found a strong palisade as if in readiness for the French, and in scaling this the brave John's corduroy breeches suffered serious damage. "So in we must march through the Kelso causeway to join the assembling force in the Cross Keys' big ballroom—my shirt all

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the while doing, of its own free-will, the kindly office of a Highlandman's kilt very sympathetically. No matter for the colour of kilts in such a night as this, and such a ballroom surely! It might beat that at Brussels, I suppose, for mud, crowd, noise, and confusion."

At Kelso, ball cartridge was served out to each man, and 14 lbs. of biscuit dealt out to them, and in the dark street, lighted only by blazing torches, they anxiously awaited their marching orders.

At Galashiels those weavers who were too old or too young to serve, watched, with the women and children, the start of the country's defenders. And then they found that they could not bear to stay behind. Armed with old guns, sticks, and pitchforks, or any other weapon that came handy, the old men, women, and boys marched along the Edinburgh road, a valiant, if undisciplined crew, in the wake of the volunteers, until fatigue and the non-appearance of the French army caused them to give up their well-meant effort and return to their families.

Mr. Pringle of Whytbank, captain of the troop of Selkirk yeomanry, was visiting Lord Napier at Wilton Lodge, near Hawick, that evening. The well-trained butler entered the room and solemnly made the announcement, "My Lord, supper is on the table, and the beacon's blazing." Equally de-

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corously must that worthy man have announced the simultaneous arrival of supper and of the end of the world. With a delightfully responsive decorum Lord Napier remarked, "Whytbank, if the beacon's blazing, little supper may suffice. The sooner we ride to Selkirk the better."

At 4 A.M. the Souters of Selkirk—"the Flowers o' the Forest"—got marching orders. Many of them lived fifteen, twenty, and thirty miles from Selkirk, yet when they mustered at the Cross, every man, save one, answered to the roll call. Gideon Scott, a tailor, was the recreant. His second thoughts, however, were better than his first, for no sooner had his companions-at-arms started on their long night march than his courage reappeared, and he set out in pursuit. As a passenger on the "Fly" coach, he reached Dalkeith next morning, and entered the first barber's shop he saw, for he wished to look as trim and soldier-like as possible when he joined his company. Others of his townsmen had been there before him, and had told the barber of the defaulting Souter, and he, not suspecting the identity of his customer, proceeded to entertain him with the story of the week-kneed and chicken-hearted tailor. Having vigorously lathered the tailor's face, and seized his nose with the fingers of his left hand, the barber flourished his gleaming blade and apostrophized Selkirk's only coward—"Base, craven-hearted, cowardly

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loon! if I only had a haud o' him by the nose, I'd cut his throat wi' this razor, and hang him up by the heels until every drap o' bluid ran oot o' his vile carcase!"

It was with a blanched face and trembling knees that the tailor left the shop, and the patriotic tradesman discovered too late that he had lost the chance of putting his threat into execution. Nor did Gideon Scott's tardy repentance prove of any avail. On the return of the volunteers to Selkirk they were paraded at the Market Cross in a hollow square, with the unhappy man in the centre. All the officers were present, and the Duke of Buccleuch, their Commander-in-Chief, warmly complimented his men on their gallant behaviour. "He then," says a writer, "alluded to the conduct of the tailor, and said that he was exceedingly sorry that any person in Ettrick Forest who bore the ancient and honourable name of Scott, should have disgraced it in such a cowardly manner. The buttons and facings of the tailor's uniform were then torn off, he was expelled from the company, and drummed home to the tune of 'The Rogue's March.'"

But Gideon Scott the tailor was the one blot on the banner that the sons of the Forest carried that day. The descendants of those who fought and died at Flodden were not unworthy of the names that they bore. "The Selkirk Yeomanry," says Sir Walter Scott, "made a remarkable march,

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for though some of the company lived twenty to thirty miles distant from the mustering-place, they were embodied, and marched into Dalkeith, which was their alarm post, about one o'clock on the day succeeding the first signal, with men and horses in good order, though the roads were in a bad state, and many of the troopers must have ridden forty or fifty miles without drawing bridle." At Dalkeith, all fear of alarm over, the Selkirk men were feasted by their commandant and feudal chief. Lord Home called upon them for the old song :

"Up wi' the Souters o' Selkirk,
And doun wi' the Earl o' Home."

He called in vain, and so sang the song himself, was rapturously received, and at once enrolled a Souter. Compliments on the appearance, alacrity, and zeal of the corps were poured upon the happy warriors by the Duke of Roxburghe, Lord Dalkeith, General St. James, and St. Clair Erskine. One of the troopers, a Scott, came from far up Yarrow, yet almost as soon as the summons reached him he was mounted and ready for action. His mother, who had already had two sons slain by the French, kissed her son as he bent from the saddle, and, says a local historian, "consecrated him to his king and country with a mother's blessing." Two members of the corps happened to be from home, in Edinburgh, on private business. One of them,

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who was only a few weeks married, had his uniform and charger sent on by his bride to meet him on his way home, so that he might join his troop without loss of time. The other, Andrew Lang, a lad of twenty-one, grandfather of another Andrew Lang whose weapon was the pen, had his uniform, arms, and charger sent on to meet him at Dalkeith by his widowed mother. Sir Walter Scott relates that he was "very much struck by the answer made to him by the last-mentioned lady, when he paid her some compliment on the readiness which she showed in equipping her son with the means of meeting danger, when she might have left him with a fair excuse for remaining absent. 'Sir,' she replied with the spirit of a Roman matron, 'none can know better than you'" (for her husband, John Lang, was Sheriff-Clerk of Selkirkshire when Sir Walter was Sheriff), "'that my son is the only prop by which, since his father's death, our family is supported. But I would rather see him dead on this hearth than hear that he had been a horse's length behind his companions in the defence of his king and his country.'" Eight years later the same lady's only other son, an ensign in the 94th Regiment, was killed as he carried his flag on to the ramparts of Badajoz—one of the gallant forlorn hope that successfully stormed the town. The old lady was certainly fit to be the mother of heroes, and it is interesting to note that the bride who was so

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determined that her husband should serve his country was her eldest daughter. The writer's great-grandfather, a man of sixty-seven, the oldest yeoman in his troop, had that day ridden nearly thirty miles and attended a market before settling down to spend the night at the house of his son, who commanded two companies of volunteers. The moment the alarm was given he rode home seven miles, cut down a ham from the kitchen (provident man!) and hung it at his saddle-bow, while his no less practical wife stuffed his knapsack with soft linen rags to bandage the wounds that French swords might inflict. Before midnight he was off, and never drew bridle until—when the next day was no longer young—he and his comrades were met by the news that, for any appearance to the contrary, Boney and his soldiers were still encamped at Boulogne.

One Berwickshire yeoman, having for some misdemeanour been deprived of his arms, armed himself with a cudgel and joined his company. Two other men of the Merse, who were fifteen miles from Duns at the time the corps marched, covered the distance with all possible speed, picked up their arms and accoutrements, and were in their places when their corps paraded at Haddington next morning. Baillie of Mellerstain, who commanded the Lauderdale men, did not even pause to draw on his boots before galloping to Greenlaw, on his way

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giving the alarm to all of his men whose houses he passed. Sir Walter Scott was at lonely Gilsland, on the line of the Roman Wall, when the alarm was given, and it took him twenty-four hours to cover the hundred miles between him and Dalkeith. Cover it he did, however, only to be disappointed when he reached his destination. "Fear is an evil that has never mixed with my nature," he himself has written, and he gloried in the fine gallantry of it all.

King Arthur and his knights, in their cavern halls under the Eildon Hills, must surely have felt restless and turned in their sleep that night.

So rare it was amongst these mighty men of valour to find a craven—or, maybe, a man whose over-vivid imagination had made him sick with dread, so that he braved shame rather than death—that posterity has never been allowed to forget the few who were branded as cowards. One unfortunate refused to go until one of his officers, who had been through the Irish Campaign and was a man of deeds, not words, held a pistol at his head, and gave him his choice of dying there and then or of delaying his decease until a French bullet should put an end to one who was a disgrace to the Border. The volunteer chose the reprieve.

A company of farmers, all of them belonging to the volunteers or yeomanry, had been that evening dining at the house of a friend, himself a yeoman.

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During the evening one of the party, thinking it time to break up, went to the door to see what of the night. A glimmer of light, gradually increasing in size, on a distant hill, at once caught his eye and sent a thrill to his heart. To prevent any mistake he climbed a piece of rising ground behind the house, and from this point of vantage saw one beacon after another flare up in rapid succession. He hurried back to his friends and gave the alarm: "Up, lads! look sharp! The beacons are blazing!" A general rush to the door confirmed the fact, and as soon as horses could be saddled each guest galloped off. Owing to lack of stabling accommodation the horse of the man who had first seen the signal had been put in an old horse-box with a ricketty door, and, as ill-luck would have it, a sow which was prowling about had pushed its snout under the door, raised the latch, and liberated the prisoner. But the yeoman was not to be overcome by so trifling a misfortune. He looted a cart-horse belonging to his host, and rode his five miles home at a pace which surely no cart-horse has travelled at before or since. The farm cottages stood some two hundred yards from the dwelling-house, and a maid was dispatched to fetch the steward to receive what might be his master's last orders. One idea, however, possessed the woman's mind, and in a few minutes she returned shrieking "Help! Help! the French are at the town-gate!"

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Many poor women had very muddled ideas that night. It was a very feminine form of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest that caused a certain young Miss Romanes (relation of the late G. J. Romanes) to wail beseechingly, "Oh, dinna shoot the bonny ones! dinna shoot the bonny ones!" as her father and brothers rode into the darkness with their swords on their hips and grim determination in their eyes.

The Selkirk volunteers had an extra trial of their fortitude as they marched to Dalkeith. The report ran that the French had landed on the shores of the Forth, at Musselburgh, and orders were given to keep a sharp look out. At daybreak a sergeant gave the alarm of the near approach of the enemy. The company halted, pulled their transport waggons across the road, and drew up to receive the charge. It was a kind fate that prevented any nervous hand from touching a trigger with undue haste, and so putting an end to one of the drivers of a string of coal carts that presently emerged from the darkness.

That must have been a long, long January night for many men and women. The straggling rays of a half-moon and the red glow of the dying beacons lighted some of the yeomen as they started for a solitary ride. One by one their fellow-soldiers joined them as they went on, ever nearer the enemy—the hated French, whom they were to fight and to conquer. In comparative silence they rode. Life and death

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seemed much too stern realities just then to permit of much conversation. Men and horses were alike tired, yet equally much possessed, it seemed, with a resolute purpose to pass steadily forward to their appointed goal. Occasionally they would halt for a moment and eagerly listen for any sound of war that might come to them through the still morning air. At last, as day began to break, and the sun crept over the Cheviots in amber and gold, they met messengers who brought them strange tidings: that the firing of the beacons had been only the result of an accident, and that all that their country now demanded of them was to go where man and beast would be fed and rested, therefrom to return home at their leisure. Some, it may be, were thankful at the abrupt termination of their first and last campaign, but not a few were heartily disappointed at losing the chance of measuring swords with the hated Frenchmen, and even, maybe, of gaining unending renown by slaying Bonaparte himself. Of this, however, there could be no doubt, that on the return march a more gay and gallant company of warriors could nowhere have been seen. They were no longer silent, but like a pack of boys let loose from school they found vent for their energies, and showed off their martial spirit by severing branches and tops of saplings and turnip tops at one clean cut as they galloped past—severing them as French heads must have been severed. Fierce thrusts were

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given to unresisting haystacks, peatstacks, and anything else that came handy as they joyfully hastened home. And great was the welcome there, for they and their friends alike shared the joy of feeling that Britain had expected every man to do his duty, and that by every man most faithfully the duty had been done.

For many a long day afterwards, endless were the tales told of that memorable night; and now, even to the third and fourth generations of those who mustered then, there is still a charm to be found in the oft-told story of the False Alarm.

There has been no ruler in Europe equal in might with him since the "Little Corporal" died in exile, a broken-hearted man, and our island has known peace. In far countries Britons have fought and died, but the Scot and the Englishman of to-day have grown comatose under the delightfully comfortable delusion that invasion is a spectre that haunts the minds of only a few Cassandras, that peace and prosperity are for them and for their nation perpetual and unending gifts.

We have no all-conquering Napoleon to fear, yet there are armies now in Europe that would be vastly more terrible engines of destruction, when turned against us, than anything that our forefathers had to dread. And meanwhile, because it seems an impossibility that, in our time, homes, wives, and children may be subjected to all the nightmare horrors

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of invasion and bloody war, we are contented to watch Peace swaying from month to month on her delicately adjusted scales, and to leave our future in the lap of the gods.

When one is on the Border on a winter night, imagination can once more muster, from mansion and farm and lonely sheiling, a gallant army of horse-men and of footmen, in all the cumbrous military trappings of bygone days—can watch them as they swiftly march into the darkness towards the eastern sea, to meet the phantom foemen whose bones have long since mouldered into dust.

Do we dare to rest secure in the memory of the heroic past? Is there no fear lest our self-satisfied apathy, our complacent unpreparedness, may be mustering for us in future years a spectre host of reproachful dead?

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SOUTH from the broken coast-line of East Lothian lies the blue chain of the Lammermuirs, a barrier between stormy breakers and a green and pleasant land of promise for those who go down to the sea in ships and do their business in great waters, and who glance longingly inland as, gale-driven, they flog past the rocks by Dunbar harbour. Up on the slope between sea and hill lies the village of Spott, and on an April day of the year of our Lord, fifteen hundred and seventy, there walked slowly along the road near the little hamlet a tall, well-featured, well-favoured man in sombre black garb, the livery of the minister of the parish. In the woods the primroses were showing—a shower of timid stars that had lost their way—and a blackbird trilled its song from a snowy tree of gean-blossom—a slender bride of the forest. The sky was a symphony in blue and white, and a sea of sapphire and opal was edged by a broken creamy line that ever moved swayingly along the yellow sand, like a long white feather in the wind. The message of spring did not come to an unappreciative heart. The Rev. John Kello saw everything with glad eyes, valued everything, heard

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with exquisite pleasure Nature's proclamation of a world's resurrection from a wintry death.

Not a pastor of small reputation was the minister of Spott, but one whose notable piety and eloquence, and whose zeal as a follower of the godly Mr. Knox had marked him as one of the rising men in Scotland in a day when Papacy was on the wane and the star of Mary Queen of Scots was setting. On a height beyond the village he sat himself down on that bright spring day, and looked out to the Bass and thought of many things. Life had been kind to him so far. Ten years earlier he had been passed by John Knox and other ministers and commissioners sitting in Edinburgh as being "maist qualified for the ministring of the word of God and sacraments, and reiding of the common prayer publickly in all kirks and congregations." He was pious and he was popular. His wife was all that wife should be—a plump, fair-haired, gentle, simple-minded creature, with a complexion of strawberries and cream. No dowry worth mentioning did she bring with her, but she was of worthy birth, had given him three handsome, healthy children—Bartilmo, Barbara, and Bessie—was a notable housewife, and the most adoring and tender of helpmeets.

Yet, as he sat gazing out to sea, the thoughts of the Rev. John Kello were not all in keeping with the sunny sky, the song of the blackbird, and the white cherry-blossom that gently moved

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in dancing measure with each soft breath of the spring.

Only one Sabbath ago he had preached a sermon that moved the hearts of many of his hearers, taking for text the words of Timothy: "*For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*"

To the educated members of his flock the sermon was the more moving because of the pathetic fact of the beggarly pittance in pounds Scots upon which the preacher, who spoke with such eloquence of the disease of the soul wrought by filthy lucre, had to exist along with his wife and three stirring bairns. As the laird's coach waited outside for the laird and his wife and sister to come out, Mr. Kello, wiping from his high forehead with a snowy handkerchief washed and laundered by his wife the drops of perspiration induced by his eloquence, came by and becked low to the great folk of his parish. The laird's sister was a handsome spinster, with a good tocher still awaiting a worthy partner, and she looked at the earnest minister with kindly gaze.

"Oh, Mr. Kello," she said, "you have wrestled with Satan for all our souls this day."

"It is my trade, Madam," said Mr. Kello; "many a time and oft have the Evil One and I wrestled together for a soul."

And the lady drove away with the recollection

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of a fine pair of dark eyes fixed earnestly upon hers, and of a gallant figure in shabby black but with linen of spotless white bowing low at the kirk door, and forgot both discourse and minister ere she reached the syllabub at her brother's sumptuous Sabbath meal. But Mr. Kello did not forget so easily. Kind words and kindly glance still stayed with him. Margaret was getting stout. A grey hair or two grew amongst the golden, and her face was growing weather-beaten from much exposure to North Sea breezes. Her hands were those of a toilful peasant. Her clothes . . . that brown padusoy was sorely worn and had never been much of a fit. Dear Margaret—gentle, worthy creature. . . . She was a handsome woman, that sister of the laird, and bore a pretty little fortune on her slim white fingers and on her shapely shoulders. Had Providence but willed an earlier meeting, what might not a fortune, with so much family influence in Lothian and the Merse, combined with his own eloquence and popular gifts, have succeeded in accomplishing. . . . With a start the minister dismissed his thoughts.

“*Retro me, Sathanas!*” he said inwardly.

Down on the grey walls of the Castle of Dunbar the sun was shining. On a spring day only four years ago that wicked woman, Mary Stuart, had come there in company with Bothwell, her husband's murderer. What righteous indignation had been

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Mr. Kello's that day! The very souls of the queen and her paramour should have been scorched and have ascended to the skies in smoke, like one of the witch-burnings on the top of Spott Loan, before the fiery words of condemnation of the murderers of Darnley and my Lord Regent Moray and the lurid picture of their coming destruction, that were hurled from the pulpit of the minister of Spott.

She was born at Linlithgow, that wanton queen. Mr. Kello knew Linlithgow well. . . . It was there that he had invested the little sum of money that came to him from his father's estate, an investment which had proved thoroughly satisfactory.

At times he could wish that he had left the money where it was originally placed and where it had brought such return that it obviously had a blessing on it. But those fields close to the church of Spott were very tempting. Their purchase had meant the expenditure of all his gains, the mortgaging of the lands at Linlithgow, and the borrowing of other monies. Yet if seasons were good he might yet recoup himself. Margaret had wept over both wadset and borrowed money, but she had never any head for finance—faithful, fond creature. If only the Kirk would do its duty by him, the paying of the interest would be a mere flea-bite, and this sickening skimping

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and saving might be at an end. What with Bartilmo wanting new boots and Barbara having a flux and requiring the services of the chirurgeon from Dunbar, there never seemed a time when the children and their needs were not sand-papering his sensitive nerves. At moments he could almost wish himself a bachelor. The Kirk was most culpable in neglecting the crying needs of the ox that trod out the corn. The people of the parish were a mean lot. "It is their *duty* to take care of me," he said petulantly, and his under lip looked for a second like that of Bartilmo about to undergo a flogging.

If Margaret were to die—if the Lord had willed to take her away when little Bessie was born . . . his grief undoubtedly had been terrible, yet it would have been a blow from the hand of the Almighty. It would have been a duty to replace her—to give the babes another mother, a mother with a handsome dowry and influential friends who could procure advancement for the devoted father of three motherless babes. . . . So did his thoughts circle round, and the unconscious lady who had enjoyed his eloquence must have been horrified indeed had she seen the place prepared for her by the preacher.

A dark cloud was gathering behind the Bass, the lights on land and sea faded, the tree of gean-blossom beside which he sat gave a shiver in the wind, and

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the minister hastily rose to his feet, chilled, as he found when he rubbed his hands, and took his way hastily home to the manse. Shouts of laughter and children's voices came from behind the big yew bushes by the door as he clicked the latch of the little front gate. A scutter on the gravel, like rabbits fleeing to their warren, and three pairs of flying legs vanished round the corner of the house. The Rev. John Kello's brow darkened, nor did it lighten when with heavy step along the narrow passage to the door, his wife came to greet him out of an atmosphere where turnips and onions strove with each other for mastery. Her plump, kindly face pink from the kitchen fire, Mrs. Kello looked anxiously at him who for the eleven years of her acquaintance with him had stood to her for divinity.

"Was the bairns making owre muckle noise?" she queried timidly. "I have given them a flyting, but the young things are just like lambs in the spring."

"You bring up your bairns to behave like fools, Mistress Kello," said the minister.

Mrs. Kello's brow wrinkled anxiously.

"Have you a sore heid?" she asked.

"*Heid!*" said her husband with contempt. "Sore heid, she says! and weel she kens that I hardly shut eye in the nicht-watches for thinking how to provide for her and for her regardless bairns, forbye

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having been up since the dawning searching the word of God for the discourse for next Sabbath. A puir thing it is for a minister of God to come to his ain hoose after having striven alone in the wilderness and to be met wi' nothing better than skirling laughter like the crackling o' thorns under a pot, an' wi' a stench o' neeps and ingins."

Mrs. Kello's face paled under its sunburn and scorching.

"I'm sore vexed, Mr. Kello," she said, a little quaver in her voice; "I will better go ben the hoose and shut the door to keep the smell oot o' the study . . . it's a sheep's heid. You're aye fond o' a sheep's heid. I will give the bairns their denners by themselves——" Tiptoeing footsteps along the passage and an irrepressible giggle cut short her words.

"For *God's* sake!" said Mr. Kello—and the door slammed on terrified heels in grey knitted stockings.

That was a long, long spring for the minister of Spott. Interest fell due and he could not pay it. Income from the Kirk failed as it had failed before. Many a night did he lie awake till near dawn, while the winds from the sea soughed through the yew-trees and elms by the manse, tossing, turning, striving against the actualities of life—resentfully laying before Providence the duty that Providence owed to him. And through many a

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night did his wife lie there beside him, not daring, lest she angered him, to show that she did not sleep, eyes shut, breathing peaceful, listening with miserable, alert ears to her husband's sighs and turnings, welcoming the first chirping of the sparrows in the ivy—waiting the gradual tuning up of a feathered orchestra—still more gladly welcoming the first pale streaks of dawn. At times she would timidly open her eyes and nervously watch her husband, to see if indeed he slept at last, and when she softly got out of bed and went about her morning duties, there were dark rings under the eyes that in the golden days of courtship the Rev. John Kello had likened to “the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milk, and fitly set.” The thoughts that had come to him as he sat by the gean-tree on that spring morning were evil birds that had come to roost, and each day they grew stronger, more formidable, well-nigh irresistible. Now and again, when he had come to persuade himself that only one really feasible course lay open to him and that to hesitate in pursuing it meant weakness, sudden terrors struck him and prevented him from putting his plans into execution. To allay all suspicion he made a will appointing his beloved spouse “to have the whole care of his gear and upbringing of his children,” and at the same time dropped dark hints to several of his parishioners that she was beset by melancholia. For forty black

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days his temptation lasted, until at last his devil-ridden mind affected his stalwart body, and sent him to bed seriously ill. Joyously did Mrs. Kello welcome the chance of nursing her divinity and pouring on him all her wealth of tenderness. Bartilmo, Barbara, and Bessie did not dare to speak above a whisper. Mrs. Kello tiptoed along the passage till each loose board squeaked aloud in protest. The bedroom door she opened in a long-prolonged series of cracks, excruciating to an invalid with nerves all ajar—murderous to herself, poor soul, had she but known it. Sometimes, every devil in his heart awake and kicking, he would feign sleep for no better reason than to have her torture him by the heavy, tiptoed creep up to his bedside, the long pause to listen to his breathing, the final, half-whispered, timid inquiry: “Are ye sleeping, Mr. Kello?” Justified in his own eyes was Mr. Kello each time her wifely anxiety so led her to trespass. It was after some days of this, and when the apothecary from Dunbar had left with the minister some potent drugs with which to treat his disease, that it came to Mr. Kello that poison was a gentle means of attaining his end. “Poison the wife who is nursing you so tenderly?” queried his horrified conscience. But the very consciousness of her devotion—her doting devotion—seemed to give Mr. Kello the more reason for his plan. Had she only fallen upon him, slain him with her tongue—nay,

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even smitten his sullen face with angry hand when he received all her gentle ministrations with rude unthankfulness—he might have been less merciless. But gentle Margaret Thomson was of the type of the cat that runs away, and so is chased by dogs or stoned to death by cruel boys. It was her saint, her brilliant, handsome, popular husband, the minister of Spott, who treated her thus. He was ill, and doubtless she must deserve it. So it came on a day that he would have her sup the strong broth he left in a basin, and she, joyful at his solicitude, gladly sat down by the bed and supped as he bade her. He watched her the while with anxious, dark eyes, and for an hour thereafter, when all the house seemed still, he lay abed, first placidly, hopefully, then torn by dread and horror of a devil's plan that had reached accomplishment. He was just about to spring up and go to see for himself what had happened, when there came that familiar, tiptoeing creak along the passage, that intolerable slow opening of the door, and then the inevitable murmured "Are ye sleeping, Mr. Kello?"

For reply he glared at her for a second or two in silence, then :

"You look gey wauf," he said. "Does aught ail ye?"

"I have been very seeck," said Mrs. Kello; "these broth must have been owre strong for me. I was terrible griped."

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“*The cleanness of hir stomache did reject that violence,*” was what he wrote of the incident in later days. So did Mrs. Kello seal her doom.

A few days afterwards, when the children, seeing their father apparently recovered, had relaxed their rules of conduct a little, and had received from a righteously angered parent the trouncing which they doubtless deserved, an invitation for them to spend a week at a neighbouring manse arrived most opportunely. Joyously they went off with well-mended, well-washed garments, waving farewells to their mother, who watched them a little tearfully until the face of the brae hid them from sight. Now she was alone in the manse again with her husband, as in the days when he was still her lover, ere the pattering feet of the babies had come to interrupt the minister's studies and to make music in their mother's heart. She may have fancied, poor soul, now that there was nothing to anger an invalid of uncertain temper, Mr. Kello might recall those exquisite days of wedlock when she felt as one of those human women of ancient Greece when one of the Olympians condescended to come down from the heavens to woo her. Indeed in those days she seemed to have reason for her fond hopes. Her husband was gentler, more like his old self. One day, indeed, he suggested a stroll in the gloaming. She knew her place better than to venture on an

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interruption of his train of thought until he made the first overture.

A coach passing on the dusty high road was what caused a break in his apparently deep meditation. They stood aside to let it rumble past. A lady sat inside, and Mr. Kello, observing her, louted low.

"I had thocht she was in France," he said half to himself.

"The laird's sister?" said his wife. "Oh I kenned weel she was coming here. A bonny wife, is she not, Mr. Kello? She will be bringing a braw tocher to the one she weds."

That was a Friday evening. All Saturday the minister was in his study toiling over the Sabbath's sermon. On the Sabbath morning—a bright September day, when cornfields were yellow and the sea a royal blue—Mrs. Kello was in her bedroom, laying out her little store of Sabbath finery—the old brown padusoy, a bit of lace—a poor little show enough, Heaven knows!—in readiness for the kirk, when her husband entered the room. He said nothing, only looked at her, and a smile was on his face. Though he said never a word she knew the end had come, knew her sentence as surely as though she were a guilty wretch in the dock with a judge in black cap pronouncing her doom. He walked up to the wash-hand basin and took a clean coarse towel off the rail, and still smiling came close up to her, gripped her shoulder in its clean

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dimity gown, cast the towel round her neck and began to twist the ends of it.

“John!” she cried, “for God’s sake, John! Mr. Kello!—are ye gane wud?” and with terrified, struggling hands she strove to rid herself of her hideous neckerchief. “Ye mustna do it!” she gasped. “It’s a sin, John! dinna do it! oh dinna do it! for the bairns’ sake . . . and you a minister o’ the Gospel!”

For answer he twisted the tighter, and then she, panting, gasping, trying still to stay his murderous hands, told him in broken, sobbing words that she knew he bore her no evil will . . . that she loved him . . . that she would depart willingly, gladly, if her death could do him either vantage or pleasure. “God have mercy on me!” she sobbed at last when sure that of mercy from her husband she would have none . . . Only a little while did the struggle last, and then she fell prone against him, a leaden weight. He laid her on the floor, and for a short time still his relentless hands went on throttling, choking the last breath of life out of her. After all it had not taken many minutes to accomplish his task. He felt her heart, held his ear near her lips. She was dead. This ugly, lifeless thing, a thing very much like the puppets her mother made for little Bessie to play with, was Margaret his wife. He had loved her once. Even now, he told himself with a calm interest in the curious workings of his innermost

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man, were he young again and his life to live over, he would still choose his wife before all other women. "Behold thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant——" The amatory phrases of the Song of Songs had very often crossed his lips during the months of his courtship.

When he lifted her up and carried her to the passage of the front door, he was pleased to find the sentiment of those past days springing up again fresh and green. He felt very kindly towards his poor dead wife. Already he had locked the door, leaving the keys inside. Now he fetched from the kitchen a length of rope which she had used in the bleaching-green, and a common chair. A rafter close behind the door provided an excellent place from which to attach the rope. It was not so easy as he thought, to suspend her from the noose he made. More than ever like a puppet—a doll of rags—she looked now, her feet dangling against the chair. He laid the chair on its side underneath her and looked at the whole thing critically—an artist criticising his work. Then to the back door, and carefully locked it. To his room for an instant, to brush his hair and put his white bands in order, for the kirk bell was ringing, and then, very quietly, out of the door that opened direct from his study on to the grass at the side of the house and that stood locked from year's end to year's end. A strange feeling of exaltation possessed him as he

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walked up the gravel path to the church. How simple a thing it was to put out that God-given spark called Life. How ridiculously easy the whole thing had been, and how blessed it was to feel that those torturing days and nights of indecision were at an end.

His hearers afterwards declared that they had never heard Mr. Kello preach a more eloquent sermon than he did that day. The services over, he spoke to a neighbour who had listened with deep admiration to his eloquence and asked him if he and his wife would do him the favour of coming back to the manse to dine. Mrs. Kello, he said, had been for some time in a rather depressed state of mind and he felt that to have a little company would cheer her up. "She misses the bairns," he said. The neighbour gladly complied, and together he and the minister went to his house to fetch his wife, who came in a pleased flutter at the honour done her by that vessel of grace, the Rev. John Kello. He talked to them very gravely as he escorted them to the manse. He was, indeed, seriously anxious about Mrs. Kello. The Evil One was striving for that gentle soul.

The neighbours were horrified. They could scarce believe such a thing possible. Could it be that witchcraft——? Sombrely Mr. Kello shook his head. Well they knew how he had laboured to purge the land of witches and of warlocks—there

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was a freshly charred patch even then on Spott Loan. But he could only say that Mistress Kello had for some time past been tempted in the night.

“But come, come, your company will cheer her!” he said, and walked forward to open the front door for his guests.

A strange thing—a most unusual one—the door seemed to be locked. Again and again he tried, and his guests also vainly made attempt to turn the handle, to force open the door.

“Oh, sir!” said the woman, already alert for horrors, “the Lord grant no evil has come to Mrs. Kello!”

“We will try the back door,” said the minister firmly, and round to the back they trooped.

This entrance too was closed against them, and no sound was heard within, although Mr. Kello knocked with a will.

“It ill behoves me to enter my ain dwelling like a thief in the night,” said Mr. Kello, “but we maun try the windows.”

Windows too were snibbed, and it did not occur to either of the neighbours to try the disused door into the minister’s study, nor did Mr. Kello suggest it. He found a window at last, one into his study, that it was possible to open from without, and the neighbour assisted him to make an entry.

“If you will bide at the front,” he said, “I will open the door to you.”

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Round to the front they tramped, both filled with apprehension, and anxiously waited for a few minutes. Then not the door but a front window was opened, and Mr. Kello looked out—and very gash he looked, they said—and called out in a very lamentable voice: “*O my wife, my wife, my beloved wife is gone!*”

They lost no time in entering to confirm his words, and when they found the gentle, placid, good wife and good mother, for whom they and all others in the district held a sincere regard, hanging strangled behind the door, their cries were almost as anguished as were those of the bereaved husband.

That was a melancholy day in Spott. By night-fall all the parish knew that the minister's wife had hanged herself, and more than one old woman was mentioned as being better banked up with tar barrels on the Loan when the spouse of so pious a minister of the Gospel as the Rev. John Kello could commit such an unpardonable sin, while he was in the very act of preaching the word of God in his own kirk upon the Lord's Day.

When the news of the suicide became public, the afflicted minister had many sympathising visitors, and all agreed that his grief was terrible to witness. Some of his brethren even went so far as to say that they feared he was imperilling his own soul by doubting the judgments of the Almighty. For of those who sought to comfort him, the grief-stricken

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husband begged piteously if they would tell him if a suicide's soul might yet be saved—if God would not have pity on one who, under terrible temptation, had made away with herself, and who yet “could once sob for God's mercies.” A thorough man was this minister of Spott. No artistic detail was omitted, and when his brethren gave him but little hope as to his wife's eternal happiness, he horrified them by crying in agony that there was indeed no God, for if a God there were, “He could not have suffered so innocent a creature to give place to the temptation and rage of Sathan.”

In truth, in evil case was this staunch supporter of the godly Mr. Knox. Sympathisers saw with sorrow that his body suffered as well as his mind. A parishioner meeting him on the Loan at nightfall, dark eyes glowing from ashen face, went home declaring that the minister looked like a warlock.

“Sirce, the look he gied when I bade him Gude'en fair garred me grue. His een glowered like a wullcat's.”

In the graveyard by the kirk his wife lay at rest, but rest for the minister there was none. At night, when all was still and he lay alone in his room, his senses all terribly awake, the wind that blew up from the sea, rustling and whispering through the elms and the yew bushes, would seem of a sudden to stop. In the tense stillness before the dawning he would fancy he heard tiptoeing footsteps along the passage,

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then surely the slow, long-prolonged creak of the opening door. He would tightly close his weary eyes, determined not to see, would pull the bed-clothes over his ears, determined not to hear, yet ever he would wait in hideous expectation for the words he knew must surely come at last: "*Are ye sleeping, Mr. Kello?*"

During the day he would wonder that the mark of Cain was not visible to all those that he met, so conscious was he of its presence. He had thoughts of fleeing abroad, but then his guilt must at once be proclaimed, "a perpetual infamie upon the Kirk of God," and so resolved to remain and to brazen it out.

At Dunbar at that time the double office of master of the grammar school and minister of the parish was filled by a certain Rev. Andrew Simpson, a man of much learning, and also apparently one of considerable psychic power. He, it was who, seven years later, foretold the terrible disaster of the Sabbath fishing. As he went to officiate in the Kirk of Dunbar, he saw with sorrow a thousand or more of his parishioners starting off in their cobbles after herring. Moral suasion was of no avail, and from the pulpit he spoke with terrible earnestness of a disaster which he had tried to avert, but which nothing now could turn away. Before midnight a tremendous thunderstorm swept down on the fishing fleet, and next morning at Dunbar the tally of boats that were lost was one hundred and twenty, and

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two hundred and eighty widowed women were wailing for the husbands who had found graves in the North Sea.

Whether Mr. Simpson had already begun to suspect Mr. Kello ere he paid him a visit of condolence in his sickness, who knows? But the minister of Spott was by no means himself when Mr. Simpson came and sat by his bed. It had been a terrible night, for when sleep came at last to shut out the haunting phantoms of remembrance, Mr. Kello had a dream that made him awake, still trembling and with drops of sweat on his brow. The dream remained with him through the day, and when his fellow-preacher had sat and talked in kindly, sympathetic fashion with him for some time, the temptation came to him to rid his mind of the dream and see what effect its relation had upon the minister of Dunbar.

“My soul hath been sore harried by a vision of the night,” he said, his nervous hands pleating little folds in the sheet as he spoke. He looked up at Mr. Simpson with a shifty, scared look from under dark eyelids.

“I will hearken willingly, my brother,” said the minister of Dunbar, and glanced at him but once, then folded hands on crossed knees, and fixed his solemn, gentle gaze on the floor.

“Methought a great man came and carried me by force before the face of ane terrible judge,”

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said Mr. Kello, "and to escape his fury I did precipitate myself in ane deep river. But there was for me no escape. For even into the depths of the rushing river did his angels and messengers follow me, and with two-edged swords they struck at me, and swore as they struck. Siccan a terror was mine that I did decline and jouk in the water, and mony a time they strack at me as I joukit, and aye mine end seemed surely come, and yet again wad I jouk, though the stream ran fierce, as in a spate, till in the end, by ane way unknown to me, I did escape."

Then Mr. Kello lay still and looked, first furtively, then anxiously and with amazement, at the minister of Dunbar.

His hands still folded on his crossed legs, his gaze fixed at a spot on the floor, Mr. Simpson sat silently on.

For what seemed to Mr. Kello a long, long time, still he sat.

Then of a sudden he looked up. So might Daniel have looked at King Belshazzar when he interpreted to him the writing on the wall.

The big frame of the minister of Spott seemed to shrink in size and girth as Mr. Simpson stood at the end of his bed and stared at him.

"Here," said he, and his voice was as the voice of God on Judgment Day in his hearer's ears; "here is the interpretation of your vision: The

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great man who carried you before God's judgment-seat was your own conscience. He stands now in God's presence to accuse you. The messengers of God are the justice of this land. The water is your own vain hypocrisy and blasphemy. *Your deliverance shall be spiritual.* For albeit ye have other ways deservit, yet God shall pull you forth of the hands of Sathan, and cause you confess your offence to His glory and confusion of the enemy."

Mr. Kello was drawing his breath quick and hard, like a runner who has outrun himself. The sweat stood on his brow. His lips were open as if to speak, yet never a word said he. His great eyes were fixed on Mr. Simpson's face. Hard he strove, yet could not take them away. Then the minister of Dunbar, who had till then spoken in the slow, solemn, even tones of one who is fencing the tables, suddenly thrust out his arm at him who sat up, cowering, in the bed, and shot out a finger.

"John Kello," he said, in a terrible voice, "*thou art the man.*"

A few weeks later, on a bright October day in 1570, a vast congregation of people was gathered in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh to witness a hanging of more than usual interest. The partisans of Mary Queen of Scots were assembled, in gibing humour; the faces of the followers of Knox were long. Those who were able to quote from the murderer's confession were held in high repute.

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Most handsomely had he uncovered the shameful nakedness of his sin, most thoroughly expressed his dire contrition. With dignity, too, as a minister of the Reformed Kirk, he had had a parting fling at those who had committed "the abominable murtheris of Harie Stewart, king of this land, and of my lord Regent lately murdered." He had expressed the fear that the partisans of Queen Mary might ask "What mervell is it, that ane waik veschell brocht up in pleasouris had not the feare of God before hir eyes, when ane minister not of smallest reputation hes so trespassed?" Nor did he pass over the neglect of the kirk and parish of his crying necessities, nor the national sin of usury. With much warmth he called on God and His angels to witness that the *fama* that his crime had come about because of his "ingres in the wickit practices of Magicienis" was utterly without foundation. Since he had confessed his sin, he said, his illness of body and agony of mind had departed, and he ended his confession by testifying to his complete trust in Him against whom he had sinned: "So farre doe I trust in His merceys that I sal be compted amonges His elect whois names are written in the buike of life."

The law of the land had sentenced the Rev. John Kello, by his own confession, "to be hangit to the deid, and thaireftir his body to be cassin in ane fyre and brint in assis; and his gudis and geir quhatsumevir (pertening to our soveran lord)

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to be confiscat"—(these were afterwards restored to his poor little orphans, and the boy lived to be the Rev. Bartilmo Kello). But as the minister of Spott mounted his last pulpit, his terrors were all past. His was the joyous exaltation of a sick man whose grievous illness has come to an end. On the gallows he fell on his face, and "made so Godlie a prayer that made everie ane to murne." Then the hangman did his duty, and the minister "departit this life, with an extreme penitent and contrite heart, baith for this and for all other his offences in general, to the great gude example and comfort of all beholders."

Fresh October winds were blowing up from the Bass over harvested cornfields, whispering their secrets to the solemn yews that kept sentry over a green mound in Spott kirkyard. But it was no wind from the clean blue sea that swayed a vast crowd in the Grassmarket, and that great, long sigh was of the spirit, and came from human hearts. Nor was it a gale from the Forth that made the black pendent figure jerk grotesquely, then dangle and gently swing, a limp, foolish puppet whose little play was done.

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IN spring when the whins are a blaze of gold, and in summer when the hills are purple with heather, there are few breezier, healthier, cheerier places than the region of the Lammermuirs. It is in winter, when all the colour has gone from the uplands, when bitter winter winds come roaring across the grey North Sea, driving the snow in chilly clouds before them to gather deep in the solitude of dark and lonely glens; when perishing sheep seek for a kindly bield and find only the bleak hillside exposed to the fierce assault of every blast that blows, that we know why it is that so many of the tales of the Lammermuirs are sad tales of terrible snowstorms and of sheep and of men done to death out there among the hills.

High up amongst the Lammermuirs, close to the boundary between Channelkirk parish with that of Lauder, and not far from the peak of Lammerlaw, lies the farm of Tollishill. In the seventeenth century it was tenanted by three brothers named Hardie, whose landlord was none other than John Maitland, second Earl, afterwards first Duke of Lauderdale—a man whose memory has come down

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to us with but little in the way of gracious deeds to keep it sweet. That part of the farm named Mid-side was occupied by Thomas Hardie, who in 1643 married as comely, as thrifty, as hard-working, and as well-doing a lass as was to be found in all the Border—Margaret Lylestone by name. All the happiness that a good wife could bring to her husband, Midside Maggie brought, but in spite of that the years that followed their marriage were gloomy ones indeed. When sunshine and mild weather should have been greeting the young lambs at Tollishill, there were sleet and snow and cruel winds. Just when a green braird was beginning to show above the brown earth, frost followed frost, and wiped out the harvest for the coming year. For seven years Maggie and her husband did battle with evil fortune, but when the year 1650 brought them in the months of March, April, and May “weet, cold, frost, and tempest,” their hearts must nearly have failed them. That was a year when there was a great dearth all over Scotland, and in the next year the dearth continued. With such seasons no amount of skilful farming or careful management was of any avail. Most of Thomas Hardie’s remaining stock perished in the snowstorms of that winter, and when rent day came round there was no money with which to pay it. Many another Border farmer was in like case, but Thomas Hardie had always held his head high. He

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had worked early and late; he had never been imprudent, never spared himself; he was indeed black affronted when there seemed to lie before him no other prospect than that of a "roup" at the farm, and of leaving Tollishill with his wife and bairns and taking service under some farmer whose capital was large enough to enable him to gamble with the elements.

"Aweel, aweel, lass," he said, "oo've dune oor best. There's nane can say oo've wasted, or negleckit the bestial. Its been late an' early for huz yins, an' a gude wife ye've been tae me, but the siller's a' gane, an' there's an end o't."

But Midside Maggie was not one of those who sit down in the ditch of affliction and weep along with the sufferer. Before doing so she was always ready to pull with all her might with her strong kind hands.

The "Yirl"—Lord Lauderdale—who was later so terrifying a personality to those whom he sent, according to his own coarse jest, "to glorify God in the Grassmarket," was even then one of whom only the most courageous was likely to dare to ask a favour. But Maggie Hardie had made up her mind that the only thing to be done to save the situation was for her to have a personal interview with their landlord and to beg him to let the rent, for the present, "stand owre."

So off she tramped the long six miles from

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Tollishill to Thirlestane Castle, courageous indeed, for she feared no man, but very timoursome as to the result of her enterprise. Her comely face and winning manners stood her in good stead with those who were not already acquainted with "Midside Maggie" when she got to Thirlestane, and when she was ushered into the Earl's presence they won her a hearing which otherwise might not have been granted.

The Earl was sitting in his library when a gorgeously liveried servant showed her in with a solemn—"The wife from Tollishill to see you, my lord."

"Siccan a muckle graund chamber, Thomas!" she said as she afterwards recounted her adventures at home; "a' the plenishings like a royal pailis, an' the pictures on the wa's framed wi' gowd!" And in the muckle room was a muckle man, his red hair long and rough as the hair of a Highland stot, and who addressed her in a rough great voice, and with a tongue so much too big for his mouth that he spluttered and slavered as he spoke. No careful choice of words did John Maitland ever go in for. "His manner was ever rough, boisterous, and very unfit for a court," wrote Bishop Burnet of him, but Midside Maggie knew nothing of courts, and stood her ground with dignity when "the Yirl" bawled at her in language that any rough Lammermuir hind might have used.

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She told the tale of the lean years and of the last most doleful winter in a way that carried conviction with it. Many another similar story must already have been poured into the landlord's ears, but probably none of the petitioners was quite so well-favoured as Maggie of Tollishill. The Earl protested, scolded, spluttered disclaimers of any responsibility, but listened, and finally, with a loud laugh at his own wit, suggested payment in kind.

“*Snaw?* say ye, wumman!—snaw, snaw, snaw—I'm deived wi' the name o' snaw! Ye'd think it did naething but snaw on my fairms frae Martinmas till Lammas! Be *dammed* tae the snaw! I'm seek o't, I tell ye.” . . .

“But, my lord,” said Maggie, “it's just as ye say! The hale year roond there's been frost an' sleet an' snaw. If there hadnae been, ye'd hae had the rent.”

“God's wounds, then, gudewife! here's a gude offer for ye! If there's naething but sleet an' frost an' snaw at Tollishill, ye can pay the rent in the only crop ye've gotten! Bring me a snowba' on Midsummer Day, and never a penny o' siller will I tak frae ye!”

The Earl was scarcely prepared for the fervency of Maggie's thanks.

“Mind ye, lass, it's snaw or siller! an' if ye cannae raise either when Midsummer comes roond, oot ye gang—man an' bairns an' a'!”

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Back to Tollishill trudged Midside Maggie, and her goodman's anxious face grew round as she eagerly expounded her plan. Together they went off to a lonely cleuch on the farm where the snow still lay deep, and when they had collected a quantity of it they pounded it into a solid mass. This they hid in a dark gorge in the glen where neither sun nor wind could ever come, and covered it thickly up with bracken.

That spring was no more kindly than the springs that had gone before it, and often on bitter nights when the sleet drove against the windows and snow drifted down on the hills, Midside Maggie would comfort her heart with the thought of the rent that lay hidden in the lonely glen.

When the first of June came round she again took her way to Thirlestane Castle, a large bundle carried carefully in her arms. Into the great, grand room she was shown once more, into the presence of that most loutish of aristocrats. Silently she dropped a curtsy.

"The goodwife from Tollishill, my lord," said the lackey.

Down on her knees on the floor went Maggie, a clean "brat" was spread out to save the carpet, and swiftly and deftly the bundle was opened. The Earl stared in round-eyed amazement, then when Maggie looked up from her employment and he saw a large, white round object on the floor before

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him, he gave a great bellow of amusement. "God's sake!" he shouted. "*I'm domned if she hasnae brocht the snowba'!*"

There was no going back on his word, and Maggie came home a proud woman, the rent forgiven.

That was the last bad season at Tollishill for many a day. In 1653 the only snow was the blossom of the fruit-trees which flowered then for a second time. Some of them even bore fruit, "albeit not in perfection." For a second time, too, the whins and broom bloomed, and the violets came out in the glens. At Martinmas the birds had nested and were laying eggs, and "salads and sybows were cried and sold in Edinburgh on the 27th November." Equally ideal were the years that followed, and happiness and prosperity reigned at Tollishill.

Meantime the fortunes of the landlord were less sunny. Although he had been an upholder of the Covenanters and was a party to the betrayal of Charles I, he had later joined his fortunes with those of Charles II.

At the defeat of Worcester in 1651 he was taken prisoner, and for nine years, until the "King came to his own," he was confined in first one English prison, then in another. His Lauderdale estates suffered from mismanagement, and his tenants saw no reason why their rents should contribute to

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the maintenance of an absentee landlord who was being punished for his sin of rebellion against the Government.

But Midside Maggie's grateful heart had never forgotten that gracious deed of one whose virtues and graces were never very noticeable. Each year the rent for Tollishill was put carefully aside, until it had reached a goodly sum, made up of every coin in the realm. Then one fine day Midside Maggie set off to Edinburgh, walking by Soutra Hill, and in Edinburgh had the money changed into gold pieces. She got safely back to the farm with her precious burden, though those were days when Soutra Hill was a mischancey place for those who carried anything that a footpad might fancy. At Tollishill she then baked a bannock, carefully kneading into the meal the golden coins that belonged to her landlord.

Would that we had some record of the journey that followed, for, as intrepid and as loyal-hearted as Jeanie Deans, Midside Maggie took upon herself the same adventure as Sir Walter's heroine, and tramped the four hundred miles to London. The Earl of Lauderdale was then lodged in the Tower, and thither Maggie found her way, the bannock still safely carried. Outside the Tower she stood and there, so says tradition, sang a song that she knew was a favourite with the Earl. That honest Lowland voice—the Border song—it must have been a good

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thing to fall on the ears of a prisoner in that gloomy gaol by the Thames. It was not long ere the singer had orders to go inside and see the noble prisoner who liked Scots songs.

“Godsake!” said the Earl, “it’s never the gude-wife frae Tollishill! Ye’ve no’ socht us another snowba’, my lass?”

“Na, ma lord,” said Maggie, “I’ve come tae pey the rent wi’ a bannock.”

“A *bannock!*” said Lauderdale. “The woman’s no’ wyce!”

“Gin ye’ll please tae pree it, sir,” said Maggie demurely, “ye’ll see I’m wyce eneuch.”

The Earl took the bannock in his big coarse hands and roughly broke off a corner.

The bread had travelled many a mile since it smelt fresh and fragrant on the Tollishill girdle and it took a tough pull to break it, and as the broken piece came away there fell on the stone floor not only crumbs, but some objects that jingled as they fell, and shone ere they left the sunshine and hid themselves in dark corners of the room.

“A farm where the snaw aye fa’s and the bannocks are made o’ gowd!” said the Earl. “Fegs, wumman, I’m thinkin’ the hairt o’ the guidwife o’ Tollishill is made o’ the same stuff as her bannocks!”

It was not long after Midside Maggie had trudged one evening into her own kitchen, a weary

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woman with a proud and happy heart, that Lauderdale, through favour of General Monk, got his freedom.

In Holland, with his Prince, the golden guineas from Tollishill must have come in very handy, and in 1660 he returned to Britain with Charles II, to enjoy for many years the condition of being a strong power in the state. His was in no way an edifying history, and he died, twenty-two years after the Restoration, a dishonoured and a friendless man. Perhaps no man was ever better hated, or with better reason, but in one family he always remained a gracious hero—in the family of the Hardies of Tollishill. For when the Earl of Lauderdale came home from Holland he visited his Lauderdale estates, and there arranged that Midside Maggie and her family should hold the farm rent free for the term of their successive lives. With the promise he gave Maggie a silver girdle as guerdon—a girdle that the curious may yet examine in the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh.

That spluttering, rude tongue that made the presentation was probably never more gently courteous than when a blushing gudewife received, with a complete sense of her own unworthiness, this magnificent token of a nobleman's gratitude.

"Every bannock has its maik," he said with a smile, "but the bannock of Tollishill."

THE LOVER WHO RODE ON

MANY a mournful song the Tweed will sing to those whose ears know how to listen to it, and it knows few more piteous stories than that of the fair maid of Neidpath.

Once on a time the Earl of March was Lord of Neidpath, and no prouder lord than he was to be found in all Scotland. He was proud of his family, proud of his lands, proud of his feats of arms, but proudest of all was he of his daughter, the fairest maid in all Tweedside. To his father's heart she seemed fit bride for a king, and many a high castle in the air he built for her as he watched her lead in the dance or ride by his side to the chase—gayest, fairest, and most fearless of all Border maids.

Down the valley and over the hills they rode one bright autumn day, father and daughter and a goodly following of gentlemen and of servants, to the chase in the Forest of Ettrick. It was a thick, dark forest in those times, with game in plenty both for hawk and for hound, and on that day the sport was extra good. The Earl's daughter rode a horse that could outpace any there, and in her

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girlish keenness she spurred on ahead after hounds that had the finest stag of the day as quarry. For the other riders the pace was one that was too hot to last, and one by one they got left behind, until only the horse ridden by the Earl's daughter still crashed untiringly through the thick undergrowth, following the loud-baying hounds and the fast tiring stag amongst the rapidly lengthening shadows of the forest. In a bed of golden-brown bracken, under a clump of grey birches, the hounds pulled their quarry to earth, and the huntress checked her panting horse. It had been a noble run, and now the stag's race was ended and the fierce hounds were mercilessly tearing at their sobbing prey. With voice and whip the girl tried to call them back, but she might as well have tried to stem the breakers of a stormy sea. She sprang from the saddle, and at dire risk to herself strove to force her way amongst the struggling brutes, their jaws red and dripping with their victim's blood. From a jewelled case that hung by her side—dainty part of her hunting-outfit—she drew a hunting-knife. The stag must be put out of pain—it was not right that anything so noble should be allowed to suffer so. She hated the hounds—would have slain them if she could. But she was helpless, and could only cry for "*Help! Help!*" in a wail that surely none could hear above the fierce turmoil in that trampled bracken. Yet the cry was heard. As if she had

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called magic to her aid, a horseman galloped up, leapt from his horse, and ran towards her.

“You cried for help!” he said. “What harms you?”

The girl pointed to the struggling stag. Her face was white with the misery of it, her dark brown eyes had in them some of the helpless pain that a wounded stag might wear.

“Kill it!” she said; “for pity’s sake kill it quickly!” and she thrust the hunting-knife into his hand.

A man of swift action was the youth. At the sound of his voice the dogs looked up from their worry, and his sound kicks in their ribs enforced their obedience. No shameful death did that stag of many points die. It was a skilled sportsman who swiftly and surely administered the *coup de grâce*.

The hounds slunk into heel at the command of one whom they recognised as having a right to command, and the young man turned to where the fair lady in her habit of green stood beside the horses. Her face was still very white and tears were in her dark eyes.

“I thank you, kind sir,” she said. “I was sore bestead. . . . Hold me not for a cowardly maid . . . but he was so gallant a stag, and heretofore the death-stab has been dealt quickly by a strong man’s hand ere I could see the dreadful pain and shame of it all.”

The youth stood silent for a moment, cap in

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hand. He was a stalwart fellow, tall and broad-shouldered, and with a handsome face that knew no fear. To him this was the most heavenly vision that mortal eyes had ever looked upon.

“I think you must be the goddess Diana,” he said. “I have a wise clerk for cousin, and he has spoken of her as we rode to the chase. But goddess or not goddess, I am your faithful servant for evermore.”

And his blue eyes met her brown ones, and the deed was done.

He was a son of the laird of Tushielaw, in Ettrick Forest, he told her, and a cloud passed over his sky when she told him that her father was the Earl of March. But the Earl was very gracious to young Tushielaw when, a little later, they were guided by his hunting-horn to where Ettrick water was silvering in the evening light, and for many a week thereafter the laird's son was the Earl's constant and most welcome guest.

It was the Lady March whose keen sight first saw what mischief had been done, and told her angry husband that not only had the young commoner dared to lift his eyes to their daughter, but that their daughter had lowered herself so far as to look down on him with love.

Such a match by no means befitted her quality. The insolent youth must instantly be sent packing; the girl be told that her conduct was shameful for one who might mate with the highest in the land.

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In vain the girl pled. In vain did young Tushielaw try to gain a hearing from the furious Earl. It was a hopeless cause. Rather would her father see his daughter lying dead than wed to a penniless, low-born reiver.

Tushielaw, conscious of his own good birth, spoke, in the rashness of his youth, of fire and of swords. He would steal his lady-love away, would break the bolts of any prison that might hide her. But words were empty weapons with an adversary like the Earl of March.

For some months the young laird plotted and planned, ate his heart out with longing, haunted the yew forest and the long avenue of Neidpath, hoping for a glimpse, for a word. But the fair maid of Neidpath had gone, no one could tell him whither. The sunny orchard on the hillside, the garden and terraces by the river knew her no more, and the woods near the castle were too full of the Earl's armed men to be good for the health of any trespasser.

At long last Tushielaw was forced to buckle on his sword and to cross the sea to the wars in France, in the hope that a close acquaintance with the god Mars might help to rid him of the heart-aching remembrance of her whom he called his goddess Diana.

While he fought and saw fresh sights, learned new things, his goddess, in the Castle by the Tweed, dwined and pined away. All the life and laughter

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seemed to have gone out of her. She grew listless, spiritless, and pale.

Then came winter, and the winds blew shrewd and cold down the Tweed valley, and snow lay deep up Manor Water and on lonely Minchmoor. All through the dark winter days she coughed, and each cough was a stab to her mother's heart. "When spring comes she will be herself again," said her father. But ere the first primroses appeared under the sloe bushes down by the Tweed, a skilful leech from Edinburgh was brought to see the maid. Many and horrible were the prescriptions he used for her, yet she grew no better. Months dragged past until at length, honest man, he had to own that her illness was beyond his skill. No herbs nor nauseous compounds could amend her state. She was in a consumption, and love lay at the root of the evil.

Were she to be given her way and her lover restored to her, recovery might be possible. Otherwise there was no hope.

That was a bitter day for the Earl of March, but he took his trouncing like a man. Messengers were straightway despatched to France, and the young laird, who was still indeed the faithful servant of her whom he had met by the birch trees in the Forest of Ettrick, came back in all haste to Scotland, bringing with him a gallant record of prowess in the field.

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At Neidpath, once the decision had been made, the days were happy ones. The glad parents saw their daughter's eyes grow bright once more, eagerly watched the roses coming back to her cheeks, and listened joyfully to the happy laugh that had so long been silent.

"I am going to live now," she said. "When he comes back from France my heart's life will come too."

The days, the hours, the very minutes were counted until young Tushielaw should return to his own. They were autumn days now. The purple had gone from the heather on the moors; the bracken was golden and brown and amber; the rowans still flamed scarlet amongst their yellow leaves, and grey mist hung on the hill-tops and crept up the valleys.

"I am glad he will come on an autumn day," she said. "I wish him to remember the day, two long years ago, when he came to me in the Forest."

When the day of his arrival was so near that hours could measure the time to pass before they met, her impatience fretted like a restive horse.

"I must be the first to meet him," she said. "I must be the first to greet him."

And her father's pride bowed its head before love such as hers.

A happy thought came to him. He owned a house in Peebles, and through Peebles the lover

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must ride to come to Neidpath. He spoke of it to his daughter, and was rewarded for his thought by the joy with which she agreed that she should be taken there on the day that he arrived, and lie on cushions on the balcony, so that she might give him the joyous surprise of a welcome when he came riding through the town.

“Do you think he will find me changed?” she anxiously asked her mother as she looked in the little hanging glass when they had robed her in clothes fit for Court. “I look older, I think—and my face is thin and pale—but, sure, it will grow young again in the sunshine of his love.”

There came a stound at her father’s heart.

“By Saint Ronayn, you are as fair as you ever were,” he said, “as fair and as young—fair enough to be the bride of a king.”

But the Earl knew that these were false words that he spoke.

She was tired and more pale when the journey was accomplished and when she had been settled on cushions on the balcony in Peebles, and lay, with eager, beating heart, watching the riders who passed along the road. They would have had her drink some cordial, but she would have none.

“The wine I want is the light from his eyes,” she said.

The autumn day wore on, but the light was still on the silver Tweed and the rich woods by the river

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when she started up and stood, leaning with both hands on the stone of the balcony. "Hark! I hear his horse's feet!" she said. "I am not wrong. I *know*. How could I mistake when he is the one who rides?"

At first it was only she who heard. Then the ring of the hoofs came nearer, nearer. It was one who rode in haste, and as he drew near, her glad eyes saw as gallant a lover as any fair maid could desire for her own. Her father and mother, standing in the shadow behind her, felt their reluctance fade as they looked. He was no laggard lover. His horse showed traces of hard riding, and yet he pressed it harder still, for his heart had wings and for well-nigh two years he had longed with all his soul for this day when he should ride to Neidpath Castle and claim his own. Yet, hard though he rode, his eyes were drawn up to the balcony from whence a woman looked down at him, a woman pale and haggard and ill, with dark eyes, like the eyes of a dying stag, that gazed at him beseechingly. "Poor soul!" he said to himself, "she is a-dying." And then—"My beautiful goddess! my rose-cheeked Diana! At Neidpath she waits!"

And so he looked away, pressed his spurs into the sides of his wearied horse, and galloped onwards.

The Earl and Countess sprang forward to call to

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him, but ere they could call, their daughter fell back in their arms.

“She is dying!” cried her mother.

But her father said, “*She is dead.*”

And the hoofs of her lover’s horse rang on, rang on, ever getting fainter until they died away.

SUPPERSTEETIONS

“SOME folk’s unco suppersteetious,” said Mrs. Halliday, as I sat by her fire waiting for the snowstorm to abate before facing that bleak road home from the village. She sat in a high, hard-backed chair by the whitened fireplace, and the firelight glowed redly on her face that is a network of wrinkles. Mrs. Halliday wears a black cap tied under her chin, and a little black and purple knitted shawl crossed on her chest. She has a firm mouth, although her teeth are mostly gone and have made it fall in. There are dark hollows round her eyes, but her grey eyes are still keen and bright. She gazed past me and my two dogs out of the little window with the pot of geranium in front of it. Her eyes looked along the snowy road, up to the belt of fir trees on the far horizon, and watched the snowflakes dancing a wild can-can together.

“Aye, some folk’s unco suppersteetious,” she repeated. “Now, it’ll maybe sound a suppersteetious-like thing for me to tell, but it’s true for a’ that. When oor Walter was ta’en awa’, he had a bullfinch” (Mrs. Halliday pronounced it to rhyme with dull finch). “It was aye singin’, an’ better singin’, a’ the

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time he was lycin'. He lay three month or mair. It was an unco bird to sing. But the day oor Wat was ta'en awa' the bullfinch never said Peep. It just sat there, dowie-like, in the cage, and never gi'ed a cheep. An' his faither said, 'The very bird is murnin'.' It never sang after that—no' for a year. But a year after, to the very day, that oor Wat was ta'en the bullfinch begude tae sing again. . . . It may be a suppersteetious-like thing tae tell. But it's true."

Janet broke in. Janet is Mrs. Halliday's daughter, and one of the best women I have ever known.

"Oh, birds often stop singing," said Janet apologetically. "Ye canna tell what they dae't for. They often just stop. . . . But I mind my brother's bird. It was a queer-like thing."

Mrs. Halliday is a little deaf. She is frequently deaf to Janet's remarks. She gazed steadily into the storm, and there were tears in her eyes.

"Aye, that was oor Wat's bird. '*The very bird's murnin'*,' his faither said."

The snow fell fast and heavily. The collie laid his head on Mrs. Halliday's knee, and whimpered uncomfortably.

"The bease kens weel enough when death's near," said Mrs. Halliday. "It may seem suppersteetious tae believe it, but I ken that they have an instinct that folk canna understand. A dog kens far mair

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than a body. My faither was a herd up Yarrow. He was lost in a snowstorm when I was a bit bairn, and they fand him when the snaw gaed awa'. I dinna mind about it, but my mother aye telled us that his dog gaed aboot for mony a long day after that, aye murnin' an' seekin' for him, and when she gaed to the kirkyaird it ran till his grave an' wad ha howkit the corp up again. Oh, they ken fine."

"Weel, there's cats," said Janet. "They ken as weel as can be when there's gaun to be a death. When the maister was ill, the auld cat and the young yin, that were never awa' frae the hoose, an' aye needin' tae be let in at the windows, an' aye seekin' meat or sittin' on the maister's knee, or followin' like dogs, they never were seen. Ye'll mind that? Never yince, for a' thae ten days, did a body see them. An' it wasna as if they werena weel looked tae. There was meat pitten for them every day, but they never cam near the hoose. But that very day that the maister dee'd, when it was a' owre, I'd been washin' oot some things and hingin' them on the hedge at the back door, an' here comes the twa o' them, waulin' an' waulin'. They followed me into the hoose, up the stair. The door o' the maister's room was lockit, but there they sat, waulin' an' better waulin'. Oh, they kent fine."

"Oh, aye," said Mrs. Halliday. "That's a suppersteetion aboot cats. It's true eneuch."

It was a true story, I knew, and I said so.

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“Aweel, I’m no suppersteetious,” said Mrs. Halliday, “but there’s a thing that I’ve mony a time seen come true. I never like tae hear a bird come bang against the window. It means a death.”

Janet moved uneasily.

“Oh, I wadna say that,” she said. Janet’s principles are perpetually warring against her beliefs. “I wadna say that.”

Her mother ignored her. “There was Leddy Murray,” she said. “A bird played bang again’ the window the nicht she was ta’en awa’ that sudden, an’, says I, I’ll hear o’ a death the morn. There was John Tamson, tae, an’ mony anither. Auld Tibby was at her denner, when a bird near gars the window flee. ‘I doot oor John’s awa’,’ says she. An’ sure eneuch he was. It’s no’ a week till next Sabbath when I was taking a bit lesson—I was gaun ower the Revelations; there’s some gey queer things in the Revelations—when a bird plays bang again’ the glass. On the Monday we had word frae Jean Dick that Sandy, her eldest, that got mony a piece frae me when he was a bit callant rinnin’ roond the doors, dee’d o’ pewmonia on the Sabbath morning.”

“Aye,” said Janet, “there’s a lot o’ trouble aboot the noo. It’s aye the way in the end o’ the year an’ the beginning o’t, especially when we haena had ony snaw. A green Yule maks a fat kirkyaird, they say. But death’s naething when ye’re prepared tae meet it.”

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“Aye, aye,” said Mrs. Halliday, “if ye’re prepared, that’s the main thing. . . . It’s lookin’ like a feeding storm. What ails the dog? Its wheenge-ing. . . .”

I rose hastily to go.

The night was falling and the snow still whirled across the moors and fields on to the road where drifts lay deep already.

Mrs. Halliday gazed absent-mindedly into the red coals as I said good-bye.

“Aye,” she murmured to herself. “Some folk’s unco suppersteetious.”

THE COWIE OF GORANBERRY

THE days of the fairy folk are past. No longer can we see the little figures in green slipping behind the trees when we go to pick primroses in the woods. No more does the will-o'-the-wisp beguile us as we ride through the moors of bog, myrtle, and peat when the sun has fallen and before the moon has come up. There is no longer a meal left out for the Brownie at night, nor do we deck our lintels with rowan sprigs to keep tricky spirits away. The Little People have sailed far across the sea to a land we do not know. The worthy Presbyterians who warred against witchcraft swept many away. The Board Schools are responsible for most of the rest. All through the years the children would have saved them if they could. They would save them even now, though it means a harder struggle as the years go on. But we are too scientific, too commonsensical, to permit it. "When I was a little girl I believed in fairies," says the child of nine. How many of her listeners applaud her growing sense? How few sigh for the loss of which she is still most innocently unconscious?

In the olden days, Goranberry Tower, near the

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source of the Hermitage Water, and about two miles above Hermitage Castle, was the chosen home of one of the Little People. Some of the Elliot clan lived there then, and to the Brownie who had claimed their hospitality they gave the name of "The Cowie." "The Cowie of Goranberry" was no useless spirit, satisfied to expend its energy on meaningless tappings and scrapings, or to keep its hosts in a proper condition of respect by sighs and moans and heavy footsteps as they lay in bed. A thoroughly practical, hard-working, capable Brownie was the Cowie of Goranberry. That it had the good of the Elliots warmly at heart was unquestionable. Who carted in all the peats and safely stacked them one night when at daybreak the snow was drifting down in that terrible storm that lasted for a week on end? Who sheared the last little field of oats, acted as his own bandster, and stacked it safely before the autumn spates could harm it? Who sheared the sheep just when they wanted it, and when the goodman of Goranberry was unexpectedly detained on the other side of the Border on pressing business connected with some English cattle? Who chopped firewood for the goodwife? Who ground the quern so that in the morning the bairns found abundance of fresh oatmeal for their porridge? Who but the Cowie of Goranberry.

In a hundred different ways did he help on the work of the household and of the farm, and yet the

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grateful family never once saw their friend. Often at night they would hear him at work—chopping wood, sawing, spinning or rolling yarn, grinding the handmill. But they would only contentedly say to each other, "The Cowie is having a busy nicht," and go to sleep again, knowing that they would find the work well done in the morning. To only one sound that the Cowie made did they object, and yet the family took a kind of mournful pride in a thing that so distinguished them from common people. Always as Death was about to stretch out his hand and take hold of one of the Elliots, the event was foretold by the sound of bitter weeping from the Cowie of Goranberry. Many a year came and went, one Elliot made room for another—still at the old Tower up Hermitage Water the Cowie held his sway.

But there came an autumn, when Adam Elliot, the last of his family, was laird of Goranberry, that black depression seemed to have fallen upon the Cowie. When the moonlight harvest nights were past, all through the long nights of October, and in the blacker ones in the early part of November, the Cowie did not cease to make his moan. Eerie it was for all who served there, eerie for those who rode that way at night, for the laments were those of a beast that had lost her young and yet had all the human pitifulness of the wail of a woman whose heart is broken. Only one of those who listened

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hugged to a wicked heart the thought of what the wailings betokened. Many a time had Adam Elliot's false wife prayed for "a dark nicht and a toom saddle" when her husband rode abroad, and it seemed now as if her prayers were about to be answered.

It was a bright November day with sun on the hills and on the still red bracken when the laird rode off to the Martinmas Hiring Fair at Copshawholm, but it was told afterwards by those who watched him ride away, that even in the morning sunshine they could hear that piteous wail that all knew for the lament of the Cowie of Goranberry.

The bright morning ended in a stormy day, and already all the Border streams were flooded when Elliot took his homeward way across the moors in the darkening. All through that night his servants vainly and in dismal apprehension awaited his return. With every decorous semblance of anxiety his wife also kept vigil. The sleet was driven in fierce blatters against the Tower, and the flooded Hermitage Water moaned aloud, but ever above the howling gale and the thousand angry noises of the night the bitter moaning of the Cowie made itself heard. Then at length in a lull in the storm the watchers heard the whinny of a horse and the sound of hoofs on the causeway in front of the Tower. Gladly did the servants run to open the door for their master, while the heart of the

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woman, who had hoped for what she dared not name, sank within her. But the horse was riderless, and they could see that the water that dripped from its saddle came not only from the drift of the rain. It was a wild night indeed, a night no serving-man or woman there ever forgot, for through the storm the dismal keening of the Cowie sounded like the cry of a lost soul, and made even the most hardened horse-couping Borderer there, kneel and pray, while his eyes were wet with pity for something more piteous than he had ever known that the world could contain.

In the grey drizzle of the next morning they found Adam Elliot. He was sitting with his back against the wall of Hermitage burying-ground, his cloak about him, drenched through, stiff and dead. He had been swept from his horse as he forded the flooded stream, but had managed to struggle out of the water and had crept to the bield of the kirkyard wall, hoping to find shelter there.

That was the end of Adam Elliot, and that also was the last of the Cowie of Goranberry. As day dawned one of the watching women said she heard it give a last cry, like that of a little whimpering, new-born babe; then all was silence, and the place that had known it knew it no more.

BY THE NORTH SEA

It is a bleak and rugged coast. Its naked headlands catch the gales that sweep across from Denmark and the regions of snow and ice. Its ragged coast-line welcomes the storms that churn up the surf on the shore, that throw the sea-wrack up in lavish tangles, and cast wreckage and all that have wrestled with the sea and been thrown, on to its shingly beaches. In spring, when primroses star its more sheltered cliffs, and in summer, when the sea-pinks and rock-roses and wild thyme grow thickly on the turf that the spray cannot reach, the coast masquerades as a light-hearted dilettante. The little village by the shore is full of visitors. Artists are as plentiful as the blackberries in the lanes. The beach is alive and moving with nurses and children. The fisher folk are valuable only as "local colour." The brown sails of the fishing-yawls are also valuable "notes," but the fisherman has usually taken his boat and himself to Ireland for the herring. His wife and his mother have stayed behind to have their harvest. Their little rooms, with beds in improbable chests of drawers, and full-rigged ships in impossible bottles, have

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become almost worth their weight in gold. One may still often hear the voices of these owners, whose normal tone is a sea-bird shriek, defiant of any tempest, but the summer visitor is the man in possession. Edinburgh and Glasgow and London, and their wives and children and nurses, have conquered the little hold of those that go down to the sea in ships.

Only now and again during the light-hearted summer does the tragedy which is the dominant note in the homes of the fisher folk reassert itself.

The day is bright and clear, the sky is blue, and the blue waves ride high and toss up their white spray insolently to the heavens. The nurses and the children are dotted over the yellow sands. The children dig, and the women gossip, and it is all quite commonplace and entirely peaceful. Then someone runs—a boy, white and gasping—to the little hut where the lifebuoys and ropes are kept, and one by one a straggling crowd realises that there is something dreadful behind the dark rocks at the point, and follows him as he ploughs heavily along the wet sand by the sea. It is only one of the holiday-makers, they say—"A lad frae Edinburgh." He is the son of an old man in a village near, a little mechanic who has fished once too often with his heavy pole from a shelving ledge which the hungry sea has many times eyed greedily. His cap and the rod still bob about near the rock

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where he stood. There is no one to blame. No one could swim; not even the strongest swimmer could have saved him out of that turbulent maelstrom of water that is scourging the rocks and gambolling playfully, like a wild beast that has eaten its fill. As those who were on the shore when "it" happened return to the village, a dreadful importance is attached to their every word by the breathless women who have heard the news—heaven knows how—and who run down the cliff path to the sands. The youngest nursemaid swells with importance, and strains her imagination for details. The other visitors and the fisher people hang upon her lips. The village looks like a beehive that has just been assailed by the stone of a mischievous boy. The very oldest inhabitant cannot stay indoors, but hastens in an unsteady canter to the cliff. As she goes she adjusts a large and heavy telescope to bear on the scene of the disaster, lest, perchance, she may have the privilege of sighting some part of the flotsam and jetsam of the waves. Nor does the tragedy end there. Day after day men and women scan the waves and haunt the shore. They talk of "it." The little mechanic from Edinburgh and the neighbouring village has lost his identity. And in his reduction to the neuter he enjoys a fearful importance that in life he never knew. Then comes a grey evening when a boat slowly rows into the harbour, and the

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stone of the predatory boy has apparently once more struck the hive. A short bundle lies in the boat, covered by a white sail. The fisherman who found "it" tells his tale with much gesticulation, and his audience is spellbound. The sand had silted up.

"I lookit doon through the waitter. 'Is that a muckle white shell?' says I. 'Ma hostie, but it's owre muckle tae be a shell. . . .'" Without one variant, the story is passed from mouth to mouth during the next days. Even the gestures of the finder are imitated with entire accuracy.

For a little the village has ceased to pretend to be *dilettante*. It is terribly in earnest.

The evenings lengthen, and the days creep in. On the white cliff, near the harbour, guillemots and seamews, puffins and divers, and sea-birds of every sort of plumage and harsh shriek have roosted all summer. Their wailing clamour, that rises and falls all through the day and night, has been compared by listeners to many things—to a gramophone, an international football match, the screams of women in a terrible railway accident, the cries of lost souls in Hades. But the time has come for the birds to fly away. Only the seamews stay behind, to float on the crests of the waves and scream at each other across the water, and the curlews that wail along the lonelier parts of the shore. The white cliff is silent and deserted, and soon the village is silent and deserted too. For the visitors have gone, and

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the fisher folk are a silent people. Most of the men, too, have only come home from Ireland to go off to Yarmouth for the autumn fishing.

The boats that stay behind go out, on those days when the weather is not too stringent, to catch white fish. The women and boys toil amongst the slippery rocks to collect mussels for bait, and labour half the day, with chilled, wet fingers, at baiting the lines. They are not a provident people those toilers of the sea. If the season is good and the money is there, the money is spent forthwith. There is no laying by for a rainy day. They forget, when the sun shines, the existence of umbrellas. A successful season means shortbread for breakfast, and a period of riotous living on butcher meats and baked meats, and gorgeous tinned things from the grocer's. Then comes pinching poverty, and a long fast, until the good times come again. The women do not know the merest elements of cookery. Their hands, that are so skilful and quick in baiting lines, are very nearly useless where cooking a meal is concerned.

The winter winds blow shrewdly and keen in the villages by the sea. East winds vary the nor'easters. The waves sweep the shingle up the village street, and the houses near the shore have to put up their shutters and pass long days in the twilight, while the sea makes all their crockery rattle and tries to smash their windows in. On

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the days when the sea-wrack smells strong and the wind whistles shrilly down the wet streets, one notices how bloodless and pinched the children look. The women, with their inadequate little shawls over their heads, are chilly and careworn as they carry home their loads of potatoes from the patches on the cliffs, or their burdens of sticks from the lanes farther inland. The fishermen look anxious as they await at the daily auction at the harbour the sale of the night's take of haddock and whiting. The fish-curers who buy are calmly indifferent. There are mostly an opulence about the size and form of the waistcoats and a self-satisfied arrogance about the general demeanour of those buyers that place one's sympathy with the sellers, with their weather-beaten faces and anxious eyes, and sea-boots and blue jerseys still wet from the sea. Yet they who know them best say that none are better able to look after themselves and their own interests than are those East Coast fishermen. Certainly the idler ones amongst them have a lamentable fondness for a breed of slinking yellow lurcher, and a habit of contemplating the view over the gates and hedges of neighbouring preserves, which has a fatal effect upon rabbits and hares of which they are not the lawful owners. But if one joins them in their contemplation of the beauties of the scenery (while the lurcher goes wide), their neglect of the dog is so complete, and their appreciation of the land-

BY THE NORTH SEA

scape so whole-hearted, that one is forced, however unwillingly, into admiration. Few can equal those fishermen in descriptive narrative, and their action is always effectively dramatic. One may never have spent a night in a fishing-boat in the North Sea, yet for evermore one feels one has seen the beauty of the hauling in of the nets in the tender morning light, when one has heard an old fisherman tell how the nets with the herring come in, "wi' a' the tails o' the hern wavin' like silver i' the sun, for a' the warld like leeks in a kailyaird."

And there is a tale of one who was drowned in a harbour, and over whom guns were fired until the body rose, "and sailed away oot to the sea like a ship in the wind."

But it is when they talk of "the October storm" of 1881 that their tales can make one grow sick at heart from the sheer horror of it.

There are those to whom the death of a few fishermen means about as much as a horrible railway accident in Pennsylvania. But had they once heard from one of the survivors the story of that black day when, from one village alone, one hundred and twenty-nine men were drowned, they would sleep less peacefully in their beds on the nights when the nor'-easters blow. Twenty-three years have passed since that black storm, but its mark is still seen on the people of that coast. Amongst the younger folk there is a lawlessness and a disrespect

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for all authority that one can trace to the death of the bread-winner and the undisciplined upbringing of the fatherless bairns.

Gales do not go on all through the winter without a break. After a week of them, on a sunny day, when one can see, far out on the horizon, hoary-headed Proteus driving his snowy flocks, one walks along the shore. The tattered surf scuds across the sea-bitten grass like little white birds in a storm. The brown-sailed fishing-boats run into their harbour before the wind, and the Millet-like women with their loads of sticks or potatoes toil homeward to where the blue smoke hangs over the red-tiled village. Even although the spray flies high on the rocks, it is idyllic.

But there are starless nights when sleet and rain cast themselves on the windows in solid sheets, and when the winds and waves sob and shriek and howl together.

The sea of the East Coast is a cruel sea, and its thunderous roaring is wonderfully like the roar of a hungry beast. But the fisher folk have the courage of lion-tamers, and all through the long and dreary winter their courage never wavers. And with their courage they have a patient endurance that leads generation contentedly to follow generation in a grey life passed beside the breakers of the grey North Sea.

THE MURDER AT LINTHILL

ON a knoll behind some elms, a little aside from the roadway, stands the sombre, grey old house. The stone pillars of the dilapidated gate are solid witnesses of the mansion's past grandeur. Within there are staircases and oak-panellings that might make it still the most desirable of residences for anyone who could once get over the horror that years have not allowed it to lose. For centuries the house, almost a peel-tower in form, has belonged to one of the oldest families in the south-east of Scotland, and in course of time, like all thoroughly respectable family mansions, it came to possess a ghost or ghosts of its own. A mysterious carriage drove up in the darkest hours of night; unseen men, with heavy tramp, slowly mounted the stair, laid on the floor in the corner of a room the body of a man, dead or dying, and heavily tramped away again.

Legend tells us of those who have seen the man lying where he was laid, his white face stained with blood, and some identify him with one of the "Seven Spears of Wedderburn" slain at Flodden, but what is the correct genesis of the story none can tell. Be

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what it may, however, it holds its own to this day ; to this day to the dwellers in the house the night brings ghostly trampings, the rumble of wheels, the clatter of horses' hoofs, and the sound of a heavy body laid heavily down. After all, however, the tale is too nebulous to bring much horror with it. It was the year 1751 that doomed the house to remain for ever a gloomy monument of crime.

In the autumn of that year, the widow of a son of the old family was occupying the mansion-house. One day she sent her most trusted manservant, Norman Ross, to Edinburgh to bring her a sum of money. Why the man did not escape direct from Edinburgh with the booty that he coveted, only the devils that tempted him can tell. But he proved himself worthy of his trust, rode up that drive past the gnarled holly trees to the old grey house where his innocent victim awaited him, and handed over the money like a respectable, faithful serving-man. That night his mistress slept in peace. How the man, a storm of evil passions in his heart, spent the sleeping hours, who can say? Were the rumbling wheels and heavy steps extra loud that night? Did he fancy that they spoke to him of Death, that even then was drawing near? One wonders how the next day passed for him. The October sea would be grey, the river Eye, that passes so near the house, would murmur its tale of autumn rains and coming floods, the leaves dropping and whirling before the

THE MURDER AT LINTHILL

gale would tell of a summer that had died, of a year that was dying. And, all the while, Death—a cruel Death—was slowly, grimly, creeping nearer. Night fell and the victim went to her room, to bed, but not to sleep. So still did she lie that the murderer, fancying her asleep, presently crept from beneath the bed where he had concealed himself, and went softly towards the dress in whose pocket was the key of the drawer in which the money was deposited. His mistress started up, and in a moment the wild-beast in the man had asserted itself, and he was mercilessly hacking and hewing at her with his clasp-knife. Thinking her dead, he proceeded with his robbery, but the poor lady, with a courage and a fortitude that are as amazing as they are haunting, managed to struggle from her bed while his back was turned, and, leaning one blood-stained hand on the wainscotting, desperately rang the bell. On the woodwork the frantic, dying fingers have left their indelible mark. One does not know whether it was the footsteps of his fellow-servants on the narrow stair, or the sight of bloody murder of his own commission, still confronting him, accusing him, looking at him still with living, fearful eyes, that brought panic on the man. He rushed to the window, a drop of eight feet, jumped out, and disappeared into the night. His victim lived long enough to tell the name of her murderer and bid the servants look for his knife behind the bed.

NORTH AND SOUTH OF TWEED

Days passed and he was still at large, but one evening when some children were playing in a field of pease to the east of the house, they were terrified by the sight of a haggard, blood-stained, pain-stricken man who crawled out from amongst the thick crop to a spring in the field, to drink. His right leg had been broken when he took that leap to escape from his accusing victim, and when the children rushed off in terror and gave the alarm, his capture was easily effected.

Before his execution in Leith Walk, the Golgotha of Edinburgh, his right hand—the murderous hand that slew the innocent lady—was struck off, and his was the last body that, in Scotland, dangled in chains, a grim plaything for the winter winds.

No sooner was the funeral of Ross's victim over than the windows were barred up and the doors locked, everything within the house being left as it was on that day. For many a year it remained thus, a fearful thing to many who hastened their footsteps as they came to that part of the Ayton road after darkening, until it was discovered that thieves had broken into the cellar, and its proprietor had it opened to see to what extent the place had been robbed. A woman who was at work at the time on the harvest-rig close by, told Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, who repeats the tale, that she and some of her fellow "bondagers," stimulated by curiosity, left their work and entered the house to see

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what might be seen. What they saw they never forgot. Articles of the old lady's apparel still hung on pegs on the door, linen lay scattered about, and when they touched the old-world garments they fell to pieces on the ground.

The swinging skeleton in Leith Walk has been gone for many and many a day. Its horror is forgotten. But, gruesome and ghastly still, the story of the crime lives among the country folk. They have tried to plane away the bloody marks, but yet they remain. And the horror of that one night has left on that dreary house a mark as indelible as are the stains of blood.

Outside the sunbeams may play with the grey walls and grey trunked trees, and with the vivid scarlet berries with which the old hollies are laden. But inside there is a shadow that no sunshine can ever drive away—the abiding shadow of a sordid crime.

THE LADY AT SWINTON

OF all the young bucks who ruffled it in the streets of Edinburgh in the year 1716, there was none with a more swaggering, all-conquering air than one who wore the uniform of his gracious Hanoverian Majesty, King George—Captain John Cayley, Commissioner of His Majesty's Customs. Cornelius Cayley, a citizen of York, may have had some gracious remembrance of his graceless son when that son ruffled it no longer, but Captain John was not one to inspire general regard. A vain, boastful, swaggering profligate who, flushed with wine, bawled details of the success of his various dingy amours to his companions in the Change House, and who thoroughly relished the position of Government Commissioner for the Scottish estates forfeited in the '15—such was Captain John Cayley of York. To no Scottish lady or gentleman of breeding could his manners have been pleasant. To those of Jacobite leanings they must have been doubly offensive.

Now, in the year when this English Commissioner came north to see and to conquer, one of the reigning beauties of Edinburgh was the young wife of an elderly lawyer. Mrs. McFarlane was the daughter

THE LADY AT SWINTON

of Colonel Charles Straiton, a highly-trusted agent of the Jacobite party, while her husband had once been man of business to Lord Lovat, and now enjoyed a very good practice amongst various well-known families. At the many entertainments which the worthy people of Edinburgh gave to the Hanoverian commissioners by way of showing the soundness of their political principles, it was not long before Captain John met the beautiful Mrs. McFarlane, admired her, and marked her as one who was to be honoured by being chosen as his quarry. No doubt Mrs. McFarlane, who was well accustomed to a tribute of admiration from all who came her way, was at first not disdainful of the bold glances of the dashing Captain John. A reputation for gallantry did not come amiss in the society of that day, and not only in that day have pretty women found it amusing to play with fire. The English Commissioner in his red coat was quickly numbered amongst Mrs. McFarlane's respectful admirers, and the ill-natured soon began to couple the gay and thoughtless beauty's name with that of a rake whose admiration was never an innocent one.

Cayley's foul tongue, meantime, was quite unable to remain silent. It tickled his vanity to drop evil hints to his boon companions, to let the gallants of Edinburgh imagine that already his superior knowledge of the ways of weak woman, coupled with his own irresistible charm, had been entirely success-

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ful in the case of a reigning toast. Echoes of his empty boasts reached at length the ears of the lady who was their subject, and stirred her to wrath, but when one day Cayley left her no longer room for doubt as to the dishonourableness of his designs, the shame and rage of his destined victim were bitter indeed. She took the honest course and told her husband, and together, through a miserable sleepless night, they consulted over what had best be done. It was a difficult case. Mr. McFarlane was an elderly lawyer, and he did not covet the reputation nor the punishment that a sanguinary duel might bring to him. Moreover, Captain Cayley was one of King George's six commissioners in Scotland—"Dicky Steele" was another—and Mr. McFarlane had every desire to be found on the Hanoverian side of law and order. Apparently gossip's tongue, set agoing by Captain Cayley's slanders, was already wagging over-briskly, and the canny lawyer knew the safe side for his wife's reputation was that of silence. Gradually to drop the libidinous officer in public, in private to have none of him, but to say nothing on the subject to anyone—such was the course decided on by the McFarlanes. Unfortunately for his future, this was a course which Captain Cayley was quite unable to understand. Some days before he had made his evil designs clear to the angry beauty, he had lent a case of pistols to Mr. McFarlane, who was going on

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a journey and had none of his own. What was easier for an outraged husband than to bid him come and get them back from him in the Hunter's Bog or on Musselburgh Sands? No message came; nothing happened. Obviously the fair McFarlane had not confided in her old husband. In all probability she was merely coy, and had already wholly relinquished her heart to the irresistible Captain. Only a few days he waited, and then, one October afternoon, he swung along the street in all his bravery to the house of the McFarlanes. He chose his time well, for it was the hour when the busy lawyer was usually to be found discussing knotty legal points over his claret in the Change House, and Mrs. McFarlane was alone. He spared her no insult, and the girl—for she was but little more—at bay, seized the brace of pistols that lay waiting to be returned, and faced him as though he were a mad dog, with one in either hand.

“What, madam, do you intend to perform a comedy?” sneered Captain John, upset at the reception of his vehement love-making.

“You shall find it a tragedy!” she cried, and straightway fired the pistol that he tried to wrest from her. The bullet merely grazed his left hand, but ere the now furious man could do more, the contents of the other were discharged into his right breast, and he fell back, shot through the heart.

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Thus died Captain John Cayley, and so rid the world of a poisonous blackguard.

In later times the heroine of the adventure might have swooned, but those were the days of the prototypes of Flora Macdonald and of Diana Vernon, and Mrs. McFarlane showed no tremors for what she had done. She turned the key in the door of the room where Cayley lay, and at once dispatched a messenger to fetch her husband from the Change House. When he came she wanted him to send for the magistrates and for Cayley's friends and tell them the whole story.

"I judged this too rash," later wrote the worthy lawyer to one who proved himself the truest of friends, and so, ere the news of the slaying of Captain Cayley was flying like wild-fire from close to wynd, from Change House to barracks, from the Old Town to the New, Mrs. McFarlane had vanished, and for many a day to come Edinburgh saw her no more.

For twenty-four hours the body of Captain John Cayley lay where it fell, stiffening in a pool of blood, and during those hours Mr. McFarlane, as well as his beautiful wife, had disappeared from Edinburgh. At the end of a day, however, the lawyer returned, quite simply and clearly made a deposition to the Lords of Justiciary, declaring his entire ignorance of the "accident" until his wife sent for him, but not giving by one sign any inkling

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as to the place where she who was known as the murderess of Captain Cayley had found sanctuary. Whether it was murder, manslaughter, or justifiable homicide, whether Mrs. McFarlane was a false-hearted Circe or a noble Lucretia, how it happened, why it happened, where the fugitive from justice lay hidden—all these were subjects in the mouths of every lady and gentleman of quality in Scotland and out of it for many weeks on end. Even Pope, writing to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, had to quote the case of “Mrs. Macfarland.”

Meantime, so well was the secret of Mrs. McFarlane's hiding-place kept, that although she was declared outlaw—“fugitated by the Court of Justiciary”—it was only when more than half a century had passed that the details of her escape from the terrors of the law were made public property.

At the old mansion-house of Swinton, in Berwickshire, in the year that was such a stormy one for Mrs. McFarlane, lived the representative of one of the oldest of Scottish families, Sir John Swinton, a stout adherent to the Hanoverian cause. A good man and a true, apparently, was Sir John, and his wife was in all points worthy of him. With Sir John, McFarlane had had some business dealings, and Mrs. McFarlane is supposed to have been distantly related to the Lady of Swinton. One Sunday in the winter of 1716, Sir John and his

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lady had gone off to church, taking with them all their young family, save one—little Margaret, a child of seven, who had some childish indisposition. Before Lady Swinton left, she strictly enjoined the child not to go into the parlour where her parents had breakfasted, although she might have the run of the rest of the house. But the spirit of Bluebeard's wife possessed little Margaret. The parlour into which she might not go was the only room in Swinton House into which she had any desire to enter. Gently she turned the handle of the parlour door, and tiptoed into the forbidden room. And there she stopped and gazed round-eyed at an astounding vision. The most beautiful lady she had ever seen was seated at the table, and, though obviously an angel, was engaged in the surprisingly unangelic occupation of washing and drying the breakfast dishes. There was no time to run away, nor did little Margaret feel any desire to flee from one who looked so good and was so lovely, and when the lady looked up, saw the little intruder, and gently bade her come to her, the child at once obeyed. Very tenderly and lovingly did the lady talk to her, and Margaret contentedly submitted to her caresses.

“I want you to promise me something, little Peggy,” said the lady. “Let your having seen me be a secret between you and me. Do not tell any of the others—tell nobody, save your mother, but be

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sure to tell your mother, as soon as you are with her alone."

Readily did the child promise. She could have refused nothing to this exquisite angel, and even the youngest of the Swintons knew how to keep a promise. Presently the lady suggested that she should look out of the window and see if she could see her mother and the others returning. She strained her eyes but saw nothing save the wintry trees and the snowy road, and turned round to say so to her lovely new friend. But as she gazed out at the snow a wonder had happened. The parlour door remained shut—she would certainly have heard it, had it opened—and yet the lady was gone. After all, she was an angel! and Margaret scurried out of the empty room feeling that she had seen something "no' canny," and eagerly and anxiously awaited her mother's return. Thankfully she saw her arrive, and no sooner were the mother and child alone than, with bright eyes and heart a-thump, Margaret told her amazing tale.

"You are a very sensible girl, Peggy," said Lady Swinton, "for if you had spoken of that poor lady to anyone but me, it might have cost her her life. But now I will not be afraid of trusting you with any secret, and I will show you where the poor lady lives."

Her hand in her mother's, Peggy then went back to the parlour, Lady Swinton pushed away

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a sliding panel, and in a little room behind it stood the beautiful lady with a specially beautiful smile for the little child who had kept her promise.

One would gladly know more of those days at Swinton, but all we do know of the subsequent life of Mrs. McFarlane is that, after some time had elapsed, she returned to Edinburgh, where she lived and died, and that no surer proof of the guilt of Captain Cayley and of her innocence could be given than the fact that she, a declared outlaw, was never brought to trial.

There are now in the possession of the present representative of the noble old family of Swinton, letters from Mr. and Mrs. McFarlane to Sir John and to Lady Swinton which might have helped to stop the mouths of cruel scandal-mongers in the year 1716 had their contents then been known. Mr. McFarlane gives the case as it happened. "Malice and envy are now hard at work," he then says, "but to you, Sir, and to yr. Lady who know my wife so well, I need not justify this action, the good and wise are for us, the rest of the world are not much to be regarded; my wife's integrity and innocence are testified; that gives me comfort, and will make her still dearer to me."

To the woman who practically saved her from the gallows Mrs. McFarlane writes:—

Nov. 16, 1716. "As to the fatal accident, yr. Ladyship has good nature enough to believe

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that nothing less than the most unworthy provocation would have occasioned it. The story as it was written to you is too true. I am far from justifying the unlucky action or glorying in it, as my enemies falsely say. But I earnestly hope and pray that the same good God who permitted my weakness to be tried, may mercifully forgive my faulty rashness and vindicate me in as far as I am injur'd, and as to what concerns the world, I am fully convinced that if ever the virtuous part of it come to any tolerable knowledge of my case, it will find me much more the object of pity than of insolence."

Long years after the beautiful Mrs. McFarlane and the tragedy in which she was implicated had faded from the public mind, an eager little lame boy listened to the tale of the lady at Swinton as told by a very dear great-aunt whose stories were a never-ending joy to him. And it is the little Peggy's great-nephew, Walter Scott, who has kept alive for us the memory of a woman whose beauty made her reign in Edinburgh two hundred years ago, and of a blackguardly ruffian who swaggered in his red coat down the causeway in the disguise of a brave gallant, a pretty man of fashion.

MURDER, OR MANSLAUGHTER?

It all happened some years ago, and as there was no trial, no verdict was given. But this is the case, for the reader's judgment.

The road-mender slowly plodded homeward, up the road between two moors.

It was Saturday afternoon, and his work was piecework, so that he was able to take a little extra holiday when he pleased.

A sultry, thunderous day it was. A tyrannous sun beat down upon the purple heather, trying to make it brown before its time. There was no breath of air, no movement among the blue-green branches of the Scotch firs that were huddled together on the crest of the hill.

"It'll be rain afore the morn'," said the road-mender to himself, "an' I doot there'll be an oncome afore the rain."

And he did his best to quicken the hobble that came from threescore years and ten, and most of them years of strenuous labour in a climate that knew best how to be stern.

He was a lonely man, this road-mender. His wife had lain in her grave for forty long years, and

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he had never owned any "bairns." His little cottage, white-washed, and with moss-grown thatch, was as lonely and as old as he was. It stood on a moor in one of the most desolate parts of the Scottish Borderland, where curlews shrill and pewits wail unhindered, and where a tiny hamlet, seven miles away, stands as a quite adequate representative for a remote civilisation. Round the cottage was a tiny garden, gay with roses and pinks and sweet peas, fragrant with mignonette and thyme and southern-wood, and in this garden lived the old man's heart. For this it was that he gave himself an afternoon's holiday. "The gairden" was wife and child and friend to him.

"I'll get thae chrysanthemums staked the day," he murmured to himself. "They'll be rale bonny i' the backend."

And to himself he pictured with complacency the admiration of the two herds, his nearest neighbours, and of their wives and children, when they should take their annual Sabbath walk to his cottage to see how his garden grew.

"But it's gaun tae be an oncome," he said again. "The thunner's started, I'm thinkin'!"

And with the safety of his beloved flowers driving him on, he climbed the dusty road—a little insignificant figure, old and grey, bent, and shabby and toil-worn. The thunder was coming nearer, if thunder it was. But the road-mender's hearing was

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not what it had once been. The sultriness of the day, that made him mop his forehead, and think of a tropic rain that should beat down the cherished children of his own rearing, suggested only thunder to his slow old brain.

Nearer it came and nearer still.

Up the rough road between the two moors rushed a monster—red, the colour of blood. Moaning, it came like a wild beast driven to be cruel in spite of itself, and protesting against the relentlessness of the human hands that drove it on.

Only once in his life had the road-mender seen a motor, for the roads he had mended in these later days were off the beaten track. It was a danger with which he had never had to grapple. The forces of nature were the only forces which he had ever had to take into account. And so, still brooding on the coming storm, he passed, unheeding, on.

One man only sat in the great machine that rushed so easily up the incline. His eyes were hidden by motor glasses, and he looked a fitting satellite for the monstrous thing that tore onwards, regardless of all that might daunt the heart of a willing horse, and that slew the fragrance of heather and bog-myrtle and left an evil-smelling trail of dust behind it.

The man in the motor was hot and irritable. Twenty miles or more had he lost through the misdirection of what he called, with maledictory

MURDER, OR MANSLAUGHTER?

adjectives, "a yokel." He, too, felt the thunder in the air. His tour in Scotland had not been all that he had meant it to be. The motor was a new toy, and he took a pride in being able to drive it himself, but after ten days of misadventure he was getting what he called "fed up" with it, and "bored stiff" with his own company. He had no eyes for blue hills and purple moors, and banks where rabbits scurried terrified into gracious hiding-places of bracken and heather. The dust of the road was thick and white in his big yellow moustache, and the lunch he had had at his last stopping-place had been far from what his palate desired. He was making up, now, for lost time.

"The one good point in this God-forsaken place," said he to himself, "is that the peelers are as rare as the decent food."

In front of him he saw the bent, grey figure and sent an impatient hoot of warning before him. But the road-mender's head was filled with thoughts of his roses, and the sound that made a covey of grouse whirr, terrified, far away, fell upon deaf ears.

Again, the speed of the motor unabated, he sent on a loud hoot of warning.

Still the old man plodded, unheeding, on his way.

"The old fool!" said the man angrily, "I'll teach him a lesson!"

Onward rushed the great, blood-red machine.

NORTH AND SOUTH OF TWEED

“The thunder’s comin’ unco near,” said the road-mender. Yet, his future being in the lap of the gods, he did not look round.

Grimly the yellow-moustached man increased his speed. He was “travelling,” now.

“I’ll frighten him!” he said.

He waited until the motor was only some half-dozen yards behind that patient, toilworn, old figure, and then, with a malicious smile, he loudly sounded his hooter.

The result was not quite what he had anticipated. The old man did not leap aside with a look of abject terror and allow him to rush onwards, laughing. One horrified start he gave, one startled leap he took, it is true, and turned back a face of dazed and patient questioning to the man in the car. And then he fell. There was no help for it. He fell down, and the motor went on. Thirty yards it dragged him before its white-faced driver could make it stop.

Then, muttering sobbing oaths, he took It from underneath. He dragged It with loathing and sick disgust to the short turf by the roadside. Then he looked round for a cottage, or for a man to come and help.

The road-mender’s cottage was the nearest, and it was half a mile on, over the brow of the hill. There was no building of any sort in sight, no human being visible. Some Cheviot sheep on the

MURDER, OR MANSLAUGHTER ?

moor and a curlew that cried aloud dolorously, were the only living things he saw.

He looked at the Thing by the roadside, and hurriedly looked away. He glanced down at his gloves and, with a shudder, pulled them off, rolled them into a ball, and threw them far over the grey stone dike into the heather. Over and over again he said the same oath. Over and over again always the same word. His face was a very sickly white, and it was not the sun that made the drops bead his forehead.

How long he might have stood there, quite stupidly, repeating the same word, and looking away from the thing, one cannot say. But a peal of thunder, not very far off, brought him to himself. He unbuttoned his coat, and looked at his watch—"A quarter to four." With good luck he might do it—an eighty mile spin, and the night train back to London. He was sick of motors—sick of this country—sick of the quiet and the loneliness.

The curlew cried again, and he gave a frightened start; then hurried up to the great machine—still pulsing and throbbing impatiently—avoiding the marks on the dusty road where it seemed as though the motor had left some of its colour, still fresh and wet, behind it.

Next evening he was in London. He and a friend and two guests dined at Princes'. It was raining outside, and inside the restaurant the smell

NORTH AND SOUTH OF TWEED

of hot food, of wine, and of tobacco smoke, hung heavy. Two women sang, and then a tenor, and while the diners sipped coffee and liqueurs and smoked cigarettes, a cinematograph was thrown on the wall.

The yellow-moustached man, his face flushed and hot, sat with his back to it, but his vis-à-vis, a lady with masses of wonderful copper-coloured hair, and with large gold hoops in her ears, made him turn round.

“Oh, look, Charley!” she exclaimed, “what fun! Don’t miss it!”

The man turned quickly.

“It’s the motor race,” she said. “*Oh-h-h!* that man’s going to be run down! *Look! What a squeak!*”

Her host turned round abruptly. His face had grown suddenly sallow, and aloud he said a word he had said many times on a moorland road, was it fifty years ago? or only the day before?

“What’s the matter with Charley?” asked the other woman. “I don’t think that motoring in Scotland all on your own-*eo* agrees with you, dear boy.”

“Didn’t make a big enough bag, I suppose,” said the other man, with a fatuous chuckle. “He has owned to me already he was bored to tears. Tell us how many you slew, old chap—men, women, and children?”

MURDER, OR MANSLAUGHTER ?

His host's voice was quite steady when he answered : " Oh, a fair mixed bag—about five brace, all told."

The woman laughed in shrill approval of his wit.

" I say, this Fin Champagne isn't half bad. Let's have some more," said the man.

And the babble of voices and clink of glasses went on, deadened by the jingle and the roar of the traffic in the wet London street.

In a little thatched cottage in the lonely Borderland there lay, gently covered by the shepherd friends who had, early that Sabbath morning, reverently borne it there, the body of the man who had been killed so much less mercifully than the fierce thunderstorm and torrential rain had slain the flowers that he had loved, and that now lay in his garden, bruised and broken and dead.

And all the night long, and all through the day, and all through the night that followed, the merciful rain was heavily falling—falling—falling, swift and sure, blotting out and washing away from the moorland road the awful visible sign of a thing heedlessly spilt, and crying to the skies for vengeance.

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“Hast thou not noted on the lye-way side,
Where aged saughs lean o’er the lazy tide,
A vagrant crew, far straggled through the glade,
With trifles busied, or in slumber laid;
Their children lolling round them on the grass,
Or pestering with their sports the patient ass?
The wrinkled beldame there you may espy,
And ripe young maiden with the glossy eye,—
Men in their prime,—and striplings dark and dun,—
Scathed by the storm, and freckled with the sun:
Their swarthy hue and mantle’s flowing fold,
Bespeak the remnants of a race of old. . .”

In that wonderful portrait gallery of Scottish character that Sir Walter Scott has bequeathed to us—a gallery in which each portrait is vividly, splendidly alive, painted with the firmness and surety of a master’s touch—there is, perhaps, none that appealed to us so much in our childhood, and that in our older days has remained so wholly unfaded, as the terrifying figure of Meg Merrilees.

In long ago days she possessed for us all the fearful joys of a witch of fairy tale. Later on she represented all that was weird and uncanny, savage and heroic, cruel and loyal of the old gipsy race.

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On the slopes of the Cheviots, almost in the shadow of "Muckle Cheviot" itself, lies the gipsy hamlet of Kirk-Yetholm, where Meg Merrilees was born. A blue huddle of hills is behind the little white-washed cottages, with their thatched roofs; and the winds blow fresh down the hilly slopes round the village, across thick broom and whin, that on the sunny June days are a royal blaze of gold.

The village has changed but little through the centuries, and so we may take it that it looked much as it looks now on the day that Meg Merrilees—whose real name was Jean Gordon—first saw the light, about the year 1670. Jean's forbears, the mysterious, swarthy, lawless tribe that had drifted across Europe from India, and arrived in Scotland in the twelfth century there, under the name of "The Saracens," to set all law and order at defiance, had had many tribulations to face since first they landed on Scottish soil. Those "children of water," rudderless, restless, idle, dishonest, fierce, had but scant justice meted out to them in the lands they wandered through. Social pariahs they were—supposed by many to be in reality wandering portions of the lowest of all Indian castes, the Parias—and, like the pariah dogs of India, they were dogs who were given a bad name and hanged without much further ado.

Early in the seventeenth century there was almost no one to be found to say a good word for

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them. In Haddington, in 1636, a number of the gipsies were seized and imprisoned, apparently for no other specific offence than just that they were undesirable aliens, without fixed place of residence. For a month they lay in gaol; and then, it having been decreed by act of Privy Council that "the keeping of them longer there is troublesome and burdenable to the town," the sheriff sentenced all the men to be hanged; all the childless women to be drowned; and all the women with children to be scourged through the burgh of Haddington. "Vagabonds, thieves, and limmers" was the ordinary technical description of them; and they were, truly, children of Ishmael—their hands against every man, and every man's hand against them.

Jean Gordon married one of the royal gipsy line, Patrick Faa of Kirk-Yetholm, and bore him a family of twelve children. Jean herself was a queenly woman of commanding presence. "She was well over six feet high; wore a man's greatcoat over the rest of her dress; had in her hand a goodly sloe-thorn cudgel; and in all points of equipment, except her petticoats, seemed rather masculine than feminine. Her dark elf-locks shot out, like the snakes of the Gorgon, between an old-fashioned bonnet called a 'bongrace,' heightening the singular effect of her strong and weather-beaten features, which they partly shadowed, while her eye had a wild roll that indicated something like real, or affected insanity."

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Such is Sir Walter's description of his heroine; and can we wonder that during the years that Jean Gordon and her clan infested the Border, their reign was a reign of terror for the simple country folk? Not only did they help themselves to all the game on moor and in wood; and to trout and salmon in season and out of season; but no goodwife's hen-roost was safe when the gipsies were near; no pigstye was not called upon to offer up a sacrifice to their robust appetites. Of many a good healthy hog or gimmer, many a fat lamb, was the farmers' stock depleted; many a haystack went to give winter fodder to the horses and asses of the wandering tribe. Nor was the household-plenishing free from their thievish fingers. A handsomely-hung clothes-line, with a well-washed collection of the goodman's shirts, the bairns' little garments, the wife's wrappers and underclothing, the best of the napery, would be gently swaying in the spring sunshine when the first brown-faced "Egyptian," the advance-guard of the undisciplined army, put his face over the side of the brae. When the army was past, rope and all would be gone. The dangling white sheets had faded away, like snow in the sun; and the cottage, or little farm-house, would also be a sorry sight—the rafters bare of hams, the meal girdel empty, the tempting supply of scones, oatcakes, and fadges, baked that very morning, all reived away, and a

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weeping housewife, with terrified children clinging to her skirts, awaiting in helpless misery the arrival of what must have been a righteously furious goodman. In their own justification the sturdy beggars were often able to plead that they *took* nothing; they only asked, and it was given. But there were few with sufficient strength of mind to refuse the urgent request of a swarthy-skinned army, with fierce dark eyes, well-armed with cudgels and with knives, and yet better armed with a terrible reputation not only of knifing a fellow-creature upon the slightest of provocation, but of being able to work terrible spells which brought upon those who thwarted them much worse evils than sudden death. "Ah'll gie ye tae the tinklers!"—even to this day there are few worse threats that a Border woman can use to her naughty child, and it surely must be a hereditary knowledge that even now makes the threat so rapid a styptic for tears. Tales of kidnapping by the gipsies were rife in Jean Gordon's day; and child-stripping was by no means an uncommon amusement for the gipsy mothers whose own brood was in want of clothing, and who met a well-dressed child on a lonely road or moor. In spite of her royalty, tradition tells us that Jean Gordon was by no means above this, and must have brought curses upon herself from many a woman who found it hard to comfort her own sobbing, terrified, shivering, skirl-naked child, who

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had left her well-clad and happy one brief hour before. Yet, in justice to Jean be it said, although she would most light-heartedly rob a stranger, and spare no cruelty to those who had offended her, she never did an ill-turn to a friend, and never forgot a benefit.

The farmer of Lochside, near Yetholm, had often showed hospitality to Jean and her family, and for this reason Jean preserved the strictest etiquette of honesty with regard to all Lochside's property. Her nine sons had no such delicate compunctions, and a brood-sow proving too overwhelming a temptation to them, it was skilfully taken away from the farm one moonless night. Black affronted was Jean with her mannerless offspring, but all she could do to show the Lochside family her shame was to pay no visit to the farm for several years. During this time the goodman of Lochside fell on evil days—happily transient ones for him—and in order to raise his rent had to go to Newcastle. The money was forthcoming, but as he rode home with a light heart through the lonely passes of the Cheviots between Newcastle and Lochside, he was benighted and lost his way. A somewhat hopeless business it was for him in country that he did not know well, with peat-bogs gaping for strayed travellers, and heather roots ready to trip his tired horse, and black darkness on every side, and he was a thankful man when at long

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length he saw a light in front of him. He rode up to the glimmering light, and found that beside the ruins of a farm-house there still stood a gaunt, empty barn, from the window of which the light shone. He knocked at the door, and was amazed when it was opened by Jean Gordon, whom he had not seen for years. It was not with much pleasure that he saw her, for her presence there meant that her clan was not far away, and to those fidgetted by but few ethical scruples a year's rent of Lochside must certainly prove a much more irresistible temptation than even the fleshly charms of a brood-sow.

But to Jean the meeting brought only pleasure with it.

“Eh, sirs! the winsome Gudeman of Lochside!” she cried. “Light down, light down; for ye maunna gang farther the night, and a friend's house sae near.”

The weary man felt he had no alternative. He lighted down, and accepted his hostess's offer of supper and a bed. But his ease of mind was not increased by the preparations he found on foot. Savoury stews, and ample roast-game were being cooked, and a party of ten or twelve was evidently expected. With sinking heart he listened absently to Jean's conversation. She lightly touched on the subject of the stolen sow; alluded feelingly to the shame and pain that had been hers on account of the bad manners of her sons, and went on to say that

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the world grew worse daily. Like other parents, she said "the bairns got out of her guiding, and neglected the old gipsy regulations, which commanded them to respect, in their depredations, the property of their benefactors." Then, plump and plain, she asked Lochside what money he had with him, and commanded him to hand it over for her to keep for him as "the bairns" would soon be home. There was no help for it. The farmer had to tell his tale, and hand over to Jean the gold that was to have paid the rent. Black misgivings must have filled his mind as she pocketed it; returning him only a few shillings, with the remark that it would excite suspicion were he to be found travelling with never a penny in his pocket.

Having supped, the farmer was then accommodated with a heap of straw with some blankets laid over it, and lay down and shut his eyes, while stories of robbery and of bloody murder committed by the gipsies, and of cruelties on the part of his hostess herself, followed each other in dismal procession through his mind.

About midnight he heard voices, and the door opened to admit about as fine a gang of ruffians as could have been mustered that night between Thames and Tweed. They had had a successful foray, and the language in which they discussed it made the honest farmer tremble under his blankets as though he had an ague. Jean's "bairns" soon

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noticed that their mother had a guest, and of course at once demanded who he was.

“E’en the winsome Gudeman of Lochside, poor body,” said Jean. “He’s been at Newcastle seeking siller to pay his rent, honest man, but deil-be-lickit he’s been able to gather in, and sae he’s gaun e’en hame wi’ a toom purse and a sair heart.”

“That may be, Jean,” replied an astute “bairn,” “but we maun ripe his pouches a bit, and see if the tale be true or no.”

Loud were the protests of Jean against such a breach of the laws of hospitality, but, in spite of them, Lochside soon heard stealthy footsteps by the pallet upon which he lay, and stifled whispers. He gathered, in spite of his closed eyes, that they were rummaging his clothes, and presently he heard them come on the coins that Jean had made him retain lest he should be found with a “toom pocket.” Some argument took place over the money, but Jean was hot in her denunciation of their blackguardliness, and, after all, the booty was hardly worth the taking. So back in his pocket it was placed, and the gipsies returned to the good Hollands that no officer of customs had ever been within sight of; drank, fought, and made merry until sleep claimed them one by one, and they threw themselves down to sleep near their sleepless guest.

A mere glimmer of the cold, grey morning light

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was forcing its way into the darkness of the barn when Jean, treading like a cat amongst the sleepers, came and bade the farmer make haste and begone. He found his horse, which she had stabled for him, waiting behind the house, and Jean strode on by its head for some miles, until the sun that came creeping over the hilltops showed him some "kent" landmarks, and he knew that he was safely on the road for home. Ere they parted, Jean returned to him intact the rent which had passed through such perils, nor would she, in spite of his earnest entreaties, accept so much as a guinea for her guardianship.

In the year 1714 the distinguished career of Jean Gordon's husband, Patrick Faa, was brought to an untimely end.

From day to day the righteous heart of Sir William Ker of Bridgend—now Springwood Park—near Kelso, had been grieved by the evil deeds of Patrick Faa and his fellows. As a Justice of the Peace, this Border laird felt it his bounden duty to do all in his power to exterminate the children of Ishmael, who preyed upon decent Scots, and whose lightness of fingers and of morals were such an evil example to all the youth of the land.

For no specified crime, and apparently as much for future misdeeds as for past offences, Sir William caused Patrick Faa, Jean Gordon, and a following of six, mostly women, to be seized one night in a barn near Sprouston, and taken to Jedburgh for trial.

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Old Janet Stewart, Faa's mother, in terrible distress, came to Bridgend, and besought the laird to have mercy on her son. She brought with her—poor body—some testimonials of Patrick Faa's character, how obtained and from whom, who can say. But these Sir William scornfully threw away, and angrily bade the old woman begone as a "lown." Later in the day two young hinds, who met her, thought it would be fine sport to bait the half-demented mother, and did their best to be very amusing on the subject of the forthcoming hanging at Jethart of her son and the other Egyptians. Suddenly, at bay, she turned on them. "*They would hear other news of it,*" she darkly said.

Three weeks later, an eavesdropping ploughman came on old Janet praying in a barn at Hairstones, and distinctly heard her ask that "God's malison might light upon them that had put her to that trouble." Asked for her meaning, she said that she spoke of Ker of Bridgend, who had sent "her bairn" to gaol.

Had a douce, decent, Presbyterian woman asked that her enemies might be rewarded, in the subsequent happenings the hand of the Almighty might perhaps have been discerned, and the whole affair have redounded to the credit, rather than otherwise, of the petitioner. But when, on the night of March 25th, 1714, the mansion of Bridgend was burned to the ground, the entire "wyte" of the proceeding was

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laid at the gipsies' door, and Patrick Faa, leaning out of his gaol window in Jedburgh, took an in-criminatingly lively interest in all the details of the event.

A heavy price had he and his people to pay for that fire. As "notorious Egyptians, thieves, vagabonds, sorners, masterful beggars, and oppressors," and as wilful fire-raisers, they had to come up for trial.

Old Janet Stewart was scourged, bare-backed, through the town—nor was it likely to be a mere matter of form when the common hangman wielded the scourge—thereafter sent back to prison for three days to recuperate; then exhibited at the Town Cross for a quarter of an hour, with her left ear nailed to a post, an agreeable butt for all the friends of justice who wanted to make quite sure that "the auld limmer" got her deserts. Her son was also scourged, and had one of his ears nailed to a post for half an hour before both his ears were "cutted off." Then, along with six women and one man, who had also endured the law's mercies of scourging and branding, he was banished for life to Queen Anne's American plantations, never to return.

1714 was indeed a bad year for Jean Gordon or Faa. It would be interesting to know how she succeeded in avoiding the loss of her ears and a subsequent tedious voyage to America, but on this point history is silent. Gladly, one is sure, she would have given up an ear, and much more of her body,

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could she have saved the son who was murdered in the same disastrous year of his father's banishment.

A cot-house at Huntleywood, near Melrose, had been taken forcible possession of by a couple of sturdy gipsies, Johnston by name.

Whether there had been some ancient vendetta between the Johnstons and the Faas, or whether the murder of Sandy Faa was merely the result of sudden irritation, which showed itself, as was the gipsy way, in deeds, not words, we have no means of knowing. But the owner of the cot-house, as witness, deponed that when Sandy Faa arrived with his family at Huntleywood he marched boldly up to the door of the cot, which stood ajar, and demanded admission of its two occupants. Robert Johnston, the younger of the pair, held a graip in his hand, and by way of reply to this request he showed silently, but with absolute certainty, that his answer was a negative one, by driving the prongs of the graip crashing through the chest of the applicant for admission. Sandy Faa staggered back and fell on the midden near by.

"Retire for your lives!" he cried to his wife and children, "for I have got my death." And thereon he died.

Past his bleeding victim ran Johnston.

"Where are the whelps, that I may kill them too?" he bawled.

But wife and children, mindful of the dying

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man's warning, had fled in haste; and when the murderer dashed into the cottage of a hind, where one of Faa's boys had run and hidden himself behind a baby's cradle, the cries of those outside, who had found that Faa was really dead, scared him, and he rushed off. He was seen presently, running "down a balk and a meadow"; and later, witnesses saw him trying to make good his escape, riding off on a horse, shoeless, stockingless, without "coat or cape."

He was captured, years later, and sentenced to be hanged on June 13, 1737, but he succeeded in escaping from prison. There was, however, no peace for him. What fiercer, keener sleuth-hound could be found than the mother of the murdered man? To Holland she tracked him—these were the old smuggling days, when many a lugger with contraband cargo plied between Scotland and the Low Countries—from thence to Ireland, and there had him seized and brought back to Jedburgh. A holy gladness was surely hers when she saw him dangling on the gallows-hill.

Some time afterwards, so the story goes, the farmer of Sourhope, on Bowmont Water, said to her—"Weel, Jean, ye hae gotten Rob Johnston hinget at last."

"Aye, gudeman," said Jean, lifting her apron up by its corners, "an' a' that fu' o' gowd has'na dune't."

In the year 1730 the last remaining three of Jean's sons, and two of their wives, were convicted

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of sheep-stealing. The jury could not agree as to their punishment until a juryman, who had been overcome by the stuffiness of the old Court House, and by the potations necessary to see him comfortably through a criminal trial, and who had slumbered peacefully through the latter stage of the proceedings, suddenly woke up. They were only Egyptians, thieves, and sorners, and he was a decent Borderer, sickened by the pestilential closeness of the hall of judgment, and longing to be on his horse again, breathing the fresh hill air as he cantered home in the cool of the evening. There was no dubiety in his decision :

“*Hang them a’*,” he pronounced, loud and clear ; and, thankful for such a definite piece of advice, the rest of the jury speedily passed the verdict of “Guilty,” and the five prisoners were sentenced to be hanged.

“The Lord help the innocent in a day like this,” said Jean Gordon, who was present when the verdict was given.

Jean’s powers over those of her race were well known, and the verdict was far from being a popular one. The good people of Jedburgh feared that a rescue might be attempted when the afternoon of Monday, the 5th of June, came round. Forty men of the incorporated trades of Jedburgh, and twenty men of the town, had to be provided to act as guard, with Deacon Hope, who had seen some service in his day, in command. Between the hours of two

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and four these five souls had to be thrust into eternity, and the guard apprehensively watched the dark faces of the gipsy crowds, who came to see the last of their friends, when John Gray, the burgh hangman, saw the head of the first of them safe within the noose. But—as is often the case—Nature was more kind than human nature on that June day of 1730. Dark clouds that had been hanging over the Dunion suddenly broke, and a terrific thunder-storm, with torrential rain, dispersed the gloating crowds, drove the mourning gipsies to seek for shelter, and made the men and women on the gallows perhaps a little less reluctant to leave this stormy earth and seek a less unfriendly world.

Jean Gordon was childless now—a wolf with her mate and cubs reft from her, yet with her fangs and claws as strong as ever they were, an unchancy customer for any weak person to encounter. A power in her tribe was she; and with her tribe she travelled about over all the lowlands of Scotland, taking toll where she listed, leaving behind her the terror of the old grey wolf.

On Charterhouse moor, then a wild common, once on a day, Sir Walter Scott's grandfather suddenly rode into a large band of gipsies who were carousing in a deep hollow among the bushes. With shouts of welcome they seized the bridle-rein of one who had often been their host, and insisted that it was now his turn to be guest. The guest

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had too much money about him to make their hospitality wholly welcome, but he entered into the spirit of the thing, dismounted, and sat beside a glowing fire where Jean Gordon was one of the hostesses, and where many a covert, a pigstye, and a hen-roost had been plundered to supply the dainties which the party washed down with illicit waters. Some of the older gipsies warned him to leave as unostentatiously as possible before the mirth became *over* fast and furious, and so he escaped a more intimate acquaintance with Jean Gordon, which might have been of a less pleasant nature than that of the Goodman of Lochside.

As all traditions of the fierce old gipsy go to prove, Jean Gordon was a loyal friend and a cruel enemy. As a robber, she was accomplished and stony-hearted, but she never robbed a friend, nor was guilty of a treacherous deed even to an enemy. Loyalty, indeed, may be said to have been her undoing. When her bread-winners were all gone she had to fend for herself as best she might; and when, two years after the gallows at Jedburgh had claimed the last of her sons, she got into the clutches of the law and had to appear at the bar of the Circuit Court, her plea was a fairly piteous one. She was an old and infirm woman, she pled; she had long lain in gaol, and she was quite willing to leave Scotland, never to return. Sentence of banishment was accordingly pronounced on her,

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with the stern proviso that if she ever again dared to cross the Border she would be imprisoned for twelve months and scourged once a quarter. Thenceforth she wandered only on the English side of the Cheviots, coming only as near as was compatible with freedom to her native Scotland.

Jean was a faithful Jacobite, and after the '45 the air of Carlisle was no wholesome one for the friends of Prince Charlie. On a Fair Day there in 1747 the old gipsy loudly gave vent to sentiments that roused the antagonism of all the rabble of the town that so short a time before had cringed before a Jacobite army. Ducking in the Eden was the punishment they judged as fitting for her crime, and Jean was laid hold on by strong, cruel, willing hands. She might as well have struggled against Fate as against them, but struggle she did. She was an old woman, but one of magnificent physique, and as they dragged her along, and when they soused her in the chilly waters of the Eden, she fought like a tigress. Each time her head was permitted to come above water she cried aloud the confession of the faith in which she died: "*Chairlie yet! Chairlie yet!*" Her cries were only fuel to the flames of that lust of murder that inflamed the hearts of the brutes who had appointed themselves her judges. "*Chairlie yet! Chairlie yet!*"—did any one of those who died for him at Culloden win nobler place on the list of Prince Charlie's heroes

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than did that old gipsy woman? Again and again, and yet again she was plunged into the water and held down. So did her loyal voice grow faint and fainter, until it was Jean Gordon's murdered corpse that was laid to drip on the river-bank, while those decent citizens of Carlisle who had done her to death slunk silently away.

Jean Gordon left no stalwart son behind her to perpetuate her name. "The waefu' wuddie" was responsible for eight of the nine, and murder unsanctioned by the law of the land accounted for the ninth.

But on the spindle side she had at least one worthy descendant. Sir Walter writes: "A granddaughter survived her whom I remember to have seen. That is, as Dr. Johnson had a shadowy recollection of Queen Anne as a stately lady in black adorned with diamonds, so my memory is haunted by a solemn remembrance of a woman of more than female height, dressed in a long red cloak, who commenced acquaintance by giving me an apple, but whom, nevertheless, I looked on with as much awe as the future doctor, High Church and Tory as he was doomed to be, could look upon the queen."

Madge Gordon was married to a Young—one of the chief families in the gipsy race—but as "Madge Gordon" her striking personality is still remembered on the Border.

"She was a remarkable personage, of a very

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commanding presence and high stature, being nearly six feet high. She had a large aquiline nose, penetrating eyes even in her old age, bushy hair that hung around her shoulders from beneath a gipsy bonnet of straw, a short cloak of a peculiar fashion, and a long staff nearly as tall as herself. I remember her well; every week she paid my father a visit for her *awmous* when I was a little boy, and I looked upon Madge with no common degree of awe and terror. When she spoke vehemently (for she made loud complaints) she used to strike her staff upon the floor, and throw herself into an attitude which it was impossible to regard with indifference. She used to say that she could bring, from the remotest parts of the island, friends to revenge her quarrel, while she sat motionless in her cottage; and she frequently boasted that there was a time when she was of still more considerable importance, for there were at her wedding fifty saddled asses, and unsaddled asses without number."

Possibly Madge's boast of the friends who would come to revenge her quarrel had something to do with a pardon obtained for two of her kinsmen—Gordons both—convicted of murder. This was obtained for them by the famous Duchess of Gordon, to the exasperation of that uncompromising old prop of the law, Lord Braxfield, prototype of Weir of Hermiston.

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“It’s hard we cannae get a scoonrel hangit,” he growled, “however richly he deserves it, without some fule o’ a wumman interferin’ wi’ the job.”

It is not many years since there died one whose account of a race between him and Madge Gordon, her elf locks and red cloak flying behind her, and her long staff in her hand, was one well worth listening to.

Young Andrew Currie, of Howford, up Ettrick, was apprenticed to a wheelwright at Denholm, and on a lonely road between Denholm and Ettrick Water he saw the old gipsy legging it along for all she was worth. He was on the high road, she on a track above it, but in a few hundred yards the roads converged, and into the boy’s impish mind there came the notion that he would like to try a walking race with the old woman, without her consent or knowledge. That was, however, a scheme easier to think of than to carry out. Madge Gordon soon became aware that a boy with eyes as dark and gipsy-like as those of any of her own brood was taking the unpardonable liberty of racing with her on the public highway. She shouted to him, and he responded with a boyish jeer. And then the fun began. Madge ran, and the boy ran, and behind Madge came an unexpected reinforcement of a sturdy young gipsy with an ass laden with crockery. The boy, nearly winded, pounded along the high road. Could he win past

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the spot where the upper path joined the lower there was still hope for him. But he had not calculated on the pace of that fearsome old woman with muscles and sinews of steel. It was like a nightmare. He could run no more, and when a pair of brawny brown hands laid hold on him from behind, he gave himself up for lost. But Madge Gordon was not one to hang even a dog without fair trial.

“In the first place, whae are ye? and where do ye come frae?” she demanded.

“Well then, gudewife, I have come from Denholm,” said the boy.

“And whae do ye belong to at Denholm? I ken everybody there; there’s baith gude and bad in’t, frae auld Duncan to Sergeant Houston. Tell me at aince, whae are yere folk?”

“Have patience, mistress,” said Andrew Currie. “I only said I had come from Denholm. I have only stayed there since last Whitsunday, and I wish to goodness I had never seen it. My native place is in Ettrick, about the Brig-end.”

“Weel, I ken the Brig-end and everybody in’t as weel as I ken Denholm, and whae has the misfortune to own ye there? Be quick, and nane o’ yere dodging wi’ me, for I’ll hae’t oot o’ ye, and something else, afore I pairt wi’ ye.”

“Well, well, mistress, ye have a perfect right, for you’re the victor, and can impose what terms you like on me. I was born at Howford, and

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I am Andrew Currie, the son, and the oldest one, of William Currie, who again was the son——”

Amazing was the effect of this intelligence upon Madge Gordon.

“What’s that ye say, younker?” she asked, and placed her basket down on the road. “Sae nae mair, younker; I ken yere forebears baith by faither’s and mother’s side far better than ye do yersel,’ and the Lord be thankit that I ken whae ye are, for, to be plain wi’ ye, I intended to hae gien you a thrashing that ye wad hae minded to the langest day o’ yere life; but syne ye’re the grandson o’ twae gude men that aince did me and mine a gude turn—saved me and my weans frae starvation i’ the dear years—that, of coorse, alters the case entirely, and I freely forgie ye on their account yere impudent trick on an auld wife. Weel, weel, eneuch said; I see ye’re sorry for’t, and ye wadna be yere gude-haired faither’s bairn if ye wasna’. But here’s Matthew, ma son, an’ I see he has been knottin’ his whup for yere back; but fearna’, he sall ne’er lay a finger on ye.”

Up came the scowling Matthew, whip upraised, to avenge the insulted dignity of her who was practically queen of the Yetholm gipsies, but Madge stepped between him and the apprehensive Andrew.

“Haud yere hand, Matthew,” she said. “It was his grandfaither that saved your life when ye

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was a suckin' bairn, and fed and clothed yere faither and mither at Brownmuir. You and him will stop and crack here till I gae doon and hawk the herd's hoose; syne I want to hae a crack wi' him as far as we gang thegither, and that wull be to Hartwoodmyres, I'm thinkin', sae be freends."

"Freends," too, did the sturdy gipsy and the boy speedily become, the subject of dogs proving a strong bond of union.

"My mither's very muckle respeckit," proudly spoke Matthew Young, "and sae was her mither, Eppie Faa, amang oor folk, and even by mony o' the gentry. The Shirra, when he was at Ashiestiel, and huz camped about Thornilee, wud hae grannie crackin' wi' him for hoors aboot auld-wairld things, and weel read she was in a' kind o' lair and spaein'. They tell me he made a buik aboot her. Weel, I dinna ken what it was a' aboot, or what they ca'ed the buik; ma mither will likely ken; but I ken this, that he tauld her never to gang by Abbotsford wi'oot ca'ing in and getting a drink o' yill, and a feed for the yaud. He is awfu' gude, is the Shirra, to huz puir bodies."

When Madge Gordon returned from a successful interview with the herd's wife, half a crown in pocket, the cracks at once began, and young Currie was given many an item in the history of his own

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family of which he had until then been in ignorance.

“What was the good turn you said my grandfather did to you?” he asked.

“Aweel, I’ll tell ye aboot that, said the gipsy. “Afore ye was born, there was a famine in the land, and I daursay mony ane perished o’ want that winter, what wi’ cauld and what wi’ hunger, and this near happened to huz—that is, to faither and mither, mysel’, and three bairns—till hunger drave us to tak means to save oor lives, and for that we was maiched up to Selkirk Cross, wi’ oor bits o’ cuddies, and my auld faither, far gane wi’ the trouble that ended his days, harled through the snaw wi’ the handcuffs on him, to the jail; and I had to stand at the Cross wi’ my greetin’ bairns till oor bits o’ gudes was sell’t to pay expense o’ poindin’. I believe I had it on my lips to invoke a fearfu’ curse on some that shall be nameless, when auld John Lang steppit up to me and says kindly, like a ministerin’ angel, ‘Ma gude woman, ye’re at liberty to gang awa wi’ yere gudes; a freend has paid the fine for ye, and here’s five shillings to get some meat for yersel’ and bairns; after that, ye wull get lodging at Mr. Curror’s, Brownmuir.’ Afore this my heart was steeled, but at thae kind words I fairly lost the field and grat till I thoct it wad break, and I saw the gude-hearted auld man turn his back and tak oot his pocket-naipkin to dicht his een. I

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invoked a blessing on him and his, and on yere faither's faither that kept us, and fed us, and set us a' gain' again, and that blessing will be felt for time to come; I dinna say in this generation, but tent ma words, Providence wull yet reward that gude deed. I hae aye ta'en a kind interest in baith the families, and keepit masel' acquent, through my cousin Rachael at the foot o' the Kirkwynd, o' the weelfare o' their bonny family."

Thus did Madge Gordon shorten for her boy companion that walk to Hartwoodmyres. She was, he knew, a notable spaewife, and yet it was said that her powers of divination were far inferior to those of her grandmother and even those of Eppie, her mother, and so when she spoke to him of his uncle, John Lang, ensign of the 94th, who was shot as he carried his flag on to the ramparts of Badajos on the night that the town was taken, the boy felt overawed.

"I was very wae when that young lad gaed sodgering to Spain," she said, "but mair by token they used to come about the camp to get their fortunes spaed with my mither, for she was wonderfu' at the glamoury; and I mind aince, when we were campit on Bullsheugh Brae, and i' the Sunday efternoon yere grandfaither and his wife, Jean Sibbald, and a' the young folk, cam oot for their walk, and I said to my mither, 'Did ye ever see sic a bonny family?' 'Sae they are, sae they are,' says she,

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‘but there’s dule, dule for the best and bonniest o’ them a’.’ I didna’ ken what she meant, and didna’ tak muckle heed at the time, but I often thoct o’t after when the young sodger was shot through the heid.”

Andrew Currie lived to be an old man and a fine sculptor; one may see his *Ettrick Shepherd* at St. Mary’s Loch, his *Mungo Park* in Selkirk, his *Eddie Ochiltree* and others on the Scott Monument in Edinburgh, and other good work in other parts of Scotland. But long ere his race was run, Madge Gordon’s wanderings ceased. A degenerate, mongrel, “mugger” horde has taken the place of the old gipsy race, and the glories of Yetholm have passed away.

Our “tinklers” whose ancestors came from India have experienced all the benefits of civilisation and of free education, but perhaps in the process they have lost something of the magnificent forcefulness and the splendid loyalty that were such striking features in the two old gipsies—Jean and Madge Gordon.

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IN the days when India was a land of gold, a Tom Tiddler's ground where any deserving—or, for the matter of that, undeserving—lad could pick up a fortune in a few months' time and come home with bulging pockets to spend the rest of his days as an opulent nabob, there lived in North Shields a man and his wife who had to strive hard to keep the wolf from the door. The man was a decent enough fellow, slow and honest, unskilled and strong. His work lay in the harbour. On the hot summer days when the stale smell of stagnant water, of rotting seaweed, of fish and tar suffocated the fresh tang from the grey North Sea, he was carrying great weights on the straining muscles of his bowed back. On the cold winter days when the cordage on the waiting ships was sparkling with icicles, the snow lying deep on the high roofs of the town, and the chill east wind whistling shrewdly through each narrow street and battering itself in vain against the weather-stained gables, he was still to be found in the harbour, blue and pinched with the cold, many a time with an empty belly, but always toiling, labouring, carrying loads on a willing back

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and getting but little for all his toil. He had a good wife who skimped and saved and laboured even as he did, though her work was mainly done within the four walls of their little house, and with several brace of little ones "amang her feet" as she worked. Eight children of the ten she bore weathered the troublous seas of infancy, when there was often not enough food to go round, nor clothes enough to hide the nakedness of the hungry little ones. One by one as they came of an age to earn money, the eight left the parent nest. The girls went into service. The boys came of the race of those that go down to the sea in ships, and there was no gainsaying the call of the sea. One by one they went, until one little lad only was left to keep his parents company—a sturdy, chubby, golden-curled, lusty little fellow, to whom the loss of his brothers' and sisters' society was in reality pure gain. There was always food enough for one little gaping mouth, always clothes enough to cover one plump little frame.

"Fatty" the other boys of North Shields deridingly called this Benjamin, and "Fatty" he remains to the folk of North Shields even to this day. As Fatty grew up, the call of the sea came to him as it had come to his brothers. As cook-boy on a fishing-coble he made his first venture on the North Sea, and came home brown-faced and manly, with money—but a tiny fortune in truth—jingled loud

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in his pockets before he proudly handed it over to a still prouder mother. The most venturesome of all her brood was this youngest son of the North Shields woman, and in him his parents had a pride such as they had never felt for any of the others. He was generous-handed, as none of the others had ever been, and as nearly demonstrative in his affection as the reserved coldness of a Northumbrian born could ever permit him to be. His parents, old folk long before their time, with bent backs and faces wrinkled by the cares of a poverty-haunted life, and tanned and beaten by weather, had but few smiles left in them, but Fatty had the power to call these forth when no one else could. And if his jokes were rough and his manners to "the owd lass" were rude, these were points not likely to strike the world in which he moved.

Fatty was not long home from his first voyage when a great event took place at North Shields. Amongst the little traders that sought shelter in the harbour one day when the sea from Leith to Whitby was strewn with wreckage and the wind that wailed over the Farnes sang a dirge for many a drowned seaman, there came a great East India-man driven far out of her course by the storm. Every lad in the town had to have a look at her, and to them the bronzed sailors with the gold rings in their ears, the shivering Indians who gazed curiously over the bulwarks at the little Northum-

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brian town, the monkeys and parrots which the seamen were bringing home, the smell of strange spices, all spelled Romance and invited them to seek their fortunes in the Land of Gold. Fatty ran tempestuously into the house at breakfast-time next morning. The Indiaman was sailing at noon, and he with it. The cabin-boy had been washed overboard a few hours before they made North Shields, and herein was a Providence, for the cap'n had hired Fatty to take his place, and when they had discharged their cargo at Hull there would not be long to wait before they were sailing once more for the East.

“Fine jools I’ll bring you, owd mawthaw!” he said; “ye’ll be hung wi’ rubies an’ dimons, an’ have a shawl all red an’ yalla like a queen. Bags o’ gowd I’ll bring you, an’ the owd man an’ you an’ me ull nivah do a stroke moah wawk, but we’ll live in a castle an’ have black men to wait on us, an’ we’ll smoke our pipes an’ chew baccy an’ drink rum an’ eat plum-duff an’ good boiled beef all the rest o’ our days.”

Off, then, went Fatty, and the days dragged but slowly by for the lonely pair at North Shields through the months that followed. They expected no letter, but when after many weary months two North Shields men, who had sailed in the Indiaman when the lad went, arrived with the news of the ship’s safe return to Hull, they anxiously questioned them as to the fate of their boy. The men could

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give but little satisfaction to their questioners. The cabin-boy had disappeared, none knew exactly how. He had run his ship, they fancied. They knew naught about him—a wild little reckless divil.

“Ye’ve murdered him!” cried the bereaved mother. “What have ye done wi’ my bonny laddie? *Aye*, ye’ve murdered him an’ ye daurna own it!” And mutual curses and recriminations might have led to a serious riot with the half-tipsy sailors if Fatty’s father had not come and led his sobbing wife away.

For many a year thereafter the sight of a brown-faced seafaring stranger in the street would make the mother’s heart leap within her. For many and many a night as she lay waiting for the dawn the sound of a footstep drawing near the door would make her hold her breath and sit up in bed, ready to dash to raise the latch and take her boy in her arms. But gradually the anodyne of time deadened the mother’s longing, and for both father and mother the question of how to keep the spark of life alight in their own toil-worn old bodies became too urgent for them to have many thoughts to spare for their lost son. An accident in the harbour crippled the man, and of their eight children only one daughter, married to a fisherman, and with seven bairns to fend for, remained in North Shields. The wolf that had so often howled at their door when Fatty was a baby had come to stay. They were hard people,

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and their lives had been hard lives. The little sum of money they had managed to lay by had gone below the high-water mark of the decent "burying" they had schemed for both to have, and ebbed at length to the shameful necessity of paupers' coffins. Now and then the old woman got a job of work from a kindly neighbour, now and again a tiny gift of money from one of the few surviving sons or daughters struggling for their living in distant places, but the pittance from the fisherman's wife in North Shields was practically all that stood between the old pair and starvation.

And in the black times of inaction, of aching hunger, of anger that they who had worked so strenuously all their lives should come to bitter poverty at last, there grew in the hearts of the man and woman an evil passion that made the money that all through the years they had laboured so hard to gain seem to them the one thing worth having, the only thing that might bring them happiness at the last.

It was a wild December night. Fierce waves dashed high over the harbour walls, and driving sleet drenched the few who dared to face the storm in the dark streets. Over a little fire of driftwood and sea-coal the old man and woman sat silent, listening to the moan of the storm. They could afford no candle nor lamp, and dry bread, and but little of that, had served for their evening meal. In a lull

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in the storm they heard voices and laughter without, and a loud knock on the door. Ere the woman could rise to open it, it was flung wide, and with wet shawl over her head and dripping rain on the floor, their married daughter walked in. Her cheeks were red with the sleet that had stung them, and her eyes were bright. The look of anxious care that she usually wore had gone, and she looked gay and happy. "I've brocht ye a lodger, mawthaw," she said. "I ken ye like a' sailors for the sake o' poor Fatty, an' here's a man fresh frae the Indies, askin' to be taen in for the nicht. We've no' a bed in oor hoose to gie him, but I'se warrant ye'll no grudge him shelter." And in a whisper, with a merry laugh—" *He'll pay ye weel!*"—she said, "Come yere ways in, man."

The man who stood behind her was a thin, brown-faced fellow, clad in oilskins that shone with the wet, and carried the tramping sailor's usual outfit of handkerchief bundle borne on a stick, and in addition a small, but apparently heavy bag of cowhide. Some paper-covered parcels, too, he carried with him. "I've brought my rations with me, mistress," he said; "your daughter said the commissariat might be at low ebb, so if you'll be so good as to cook them we'll have a bite."

The man had evidently had had more than one dram ere he hove to in North Shields, but he was a pleasant-spoken fellow, and when he had exchanged

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a few words in an undertone with the woman who brought him, and who seemed unaccountably amused at the whole incident, she went off and left him alone with his host and hostess. Speedily he took off his oilskins and sou'wester, dumped his bag and bundle in a corner of the room, and opened his parcels.

Beefsteak such as had not been seen in that house for years, bacon, eggs, new bread, and a big bottle of rum—luxuries indeed for the old man and woman. The woman was not long in making a savoury fry, and as he praised her cookery—"Haven't tasted nothing half so good since my old mawthaw ran the cook's galley"—he pressed platefuls of food and jorums of liquor upon the old pair. They ate and drank thankfully, and always as the meal wore on the brown-faced sailor grew more and more jovial, more and more friendly. He was several sheets in the wind, and the bottle of rum nearly empty when the old woman cleared away and busied herself in putting clean bedding in the bed the guest was to occupy. "Our youngest lad slept there years ago," she said, "but he sailed to the Indies an' never came back no more."

A great joke this seemed to be to the more than half-drunken man.

"I'se warrant he is comin' home one day with lacs of rupees for ye, old lady," he laughed, "and with loot from a dozen heathen temples."

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Then nothing would serve him but that the man and woman should see what treasure he himself had brought. He took off his belt, and showed it to be crammed with gold pieces. His pouch was also full, and when he opened the cowhide bag and the red cotton handkerchief, he tumbled out of them jewels that seemed to fill the dark room with an unearthly lustre and sparkle of blood-red and of green, of the white of icicles with the sun on them, of the blue sea on a sunny day. Finally he fell asleep with his head on the table amongst the gold pieces and precious stones, and it took all the feeble strength of the pair to drag him, staggering, muttering drowsily, and leaning against first one of them, then the other, across the floor into the little inner chamber, where he fell sprawling upon the clean bed, and was instantly fast asleep. They had built up the fire, and it shone on the jewels and the gold that he had so carelessly strewn on the rough deal table. Outside the storm sobbed and whimpered and threw itself against door and window, while the sleet blattered against the glass, and the angry sea could be heard protestingly moaning and wailing, like a wild thing that beat itself vainly against imprisoning bars. To-night the man and woman had had food and drink and warmth. To-morrow their guest with his wondrous wealth would be gone, and cold and poverty and hunger would again be their lot. Not only that, but to them death must surely come soon,

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and they who had never begged, never owed the parish anything, would have the burial of paupers, and the public contempt and pity of all the neighbours before whom for so many long years they had made a piteous pretence of never requiring charity. Not a word passed between them, but both sat with eyes fixed on the sparkling heap on the table, while the fire grew lower and yet more low. Some drops of sleet fell fizzing down the chimney, and then the old man arose with a start, hobbled across the room to a drawer in a cupboard, and from it brought out something that gleamed in the firelight. He tried the edge on his thumb, and then at last his eyes met those of his wife.

“A drucken brute,” he muttered apologetically.

She bowed her head, yet spoke never a word. The door of the bedchamber stood ajar, and she walked steadily forward before her husband and opened it wide. Something familiar in the attitude of the sleeper as he lay with one arm thrown over his curly brown head made her start, and appear as if about to lay her hand on her husband's arm as he came forward. But the fire burned low at that minute and she stood aside. The old man felt about for a moment in the semi-darkness, and then his muscular arm went forward like a snake's head as it strikes its prey. From the bed came a broken sob. The sleeper seemed to shiver as with an ague, there came a long sigh, that might have been the winter wind outside,

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then all was still, but for the sound of a drip, drip, drip on the floor, as though the rain had forced its way through the old roof at last.

There was wealth for the pair beyond the dreams of avarice. Both of them had quite realised that, and in the grey dawn, when the storm had abated, they dragged the thing they had robbed of life and fortune to a place on the coast well known to them, where the sea greedily seized as plaything the body of yet another sailor-man as it fell from the cliffs right into its insatiable maw.

The bedchamber was in perfect order, the floor well scrubbed, and every betraying trace of the guest was gone, and yet it was but early when the married daughter of the old pair walked in at the door. She showed the same strange elation and excitement that she had done on the previous evening.

“Weel, mawthaw, where’s your braw lodger?” she asked, smiling.

The old man in his chair by the fireside made no reply, but stared stupidly into the embers.

“He’s awa,” said the old woman. “He went early.”

“Awa!” cried her daughter. “Hoots, wumman, he’s never awa! He canna ha’ gaen far. He’ll be doun at the quay. Has he taen his breakfast?”

“Na,” said the old woman shortly.

“But where’s he gaen?” persisted the other. “Surely he tell’t ye where he was gaun?”

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“He never said naething,” said her mother. “I ken naething about him. I didnae speir where he was for. He was fou last nicht, an’ he slippit off afore we were oot o’ oor beds this morn.”

“But, mother!” exclaimed the woman, “did ye no’ ken him? Did he no’ tell ye?”

“Tell *what*, ye fule?” said the mother fiercely; “*wha was he?*”

“It was oor Fatty, mother! an’ you no’ tae ken your own bairn! He wadna let’s let on till ye, for Fatty aye was full o’ nonsense.”

With faces like grotesques carved in ivory the wretched pair stared at their daughter.

Then, with a desperate effort, the father spoke.

“It wasna him,” he said. “Ye lee. Div ye no’ see ye’re frichtenin’ your mother? It *couldna* be him. Oor puir laddie’s been deid these five-an’-tonty ’ear.”

“But it *was* him, feyther!” she said. “Sure’s daith it was Fatty. He cam an’ telt iz a’ about it, and showed iz the belt fu’ o’ gowd an’ a’ they grund rubies an’ dimons—did ye no’ see them? He’s a rich, rich man, an’ he’s come hame as he promised, to deck mother oot like the finest in the land, and buy her a braw hoose, and gie us a’ gowd an’ to spare.”

And again she laughed gleefully. “I’se warrant he’s no gaen far. He’ll be back by denner-time. Fegs but he was a happy man last e’en. He says tae huz yins, ‘They’ll be the richest folk in North Shields, my old feyther an’ mither. I’ve keepit my

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word, Mag, an' made my fortune in the Indies an' brocht it a' hame tae them.'"

A terrible cry, like the moan of a wild beast in pain, interrupted her, and the mother fell heavily on the stone floor and lay there as if dead.

That was a dreary day, and while the daughter helped her father to tend the stricken woman she would murmur, as if to reassure herself as well as her parents, "He'll come back. Niver fear. He'll come back again."

The old woman had never spoken since she fell smitten by Heaven to the ground, but when she heard these words she would vainly try to force her twisted mouth to utterance.

The long day passed at length, and once again, before she returned to her own family, the daughter said, "He'll come back, mither. Niver fear."

"Haud yer blethering tongue," said the man. "He'll come back nae mair."

There was no sleep for either man or woman that night. The door was bolted and barred, and the wind moaned down the street and beat against the door in vain. But as the clock struck twelve there entered a visitor that neither bolt nor bar could keep out. The woman was in bed, the man in his chair by the smouldering fire, silent, with wide open eyes, waiting. It was no human form that came to them, but a great black dog that slowly entered, went up to the bed where the

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mother lay, nuzzled its head against her, and stared in her face with big, sad eyes. Next it went to the old man, laid its head on his knee, and looked up at him with human eyes full of tears. Then noiselessly it slunk away to the little inner bedchamber, and there lay at the foot of the bed, keeping watch, with its great lambent eyes shining red in the darkness as the rubies had shone only so short a time ago. At grey dawn a cock crew, and it sprang up, growling fiercely, and dashed out of the cottage with howls so wild and eerie that all those in the houses near cowered under their blankets in thankfulness that they were safe indoors.

Each night at the same hour the bolted door moved on its hinges and the dog entered and walked up to the old pair who awaited it. Each morning, at cockcrow, it left them, a mad fury, with howls that made men's blood run cold.

Gradually the old woman regained the use of her limbs, but her speech never returned, and ere next winter she had pined away and died. In poverty she died, for the wealth that now was theirs could never be spent by the murderers, but remained hidden in the spot where they had placed it on that black December night. A pauper's funeral was hers, for it had been a bad season for the herring-fishers, and there was want in the house of the daughter.

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Not for many weeks after the day when he watched the deal coffin being dumped into the chill earth and knew himself for a pauper, was the old man left to share the vigils of the midnight hours with that fearsome beast with its human eyes. On his death-bed he unburdened his soul, and his daughter and others listened with horror to the story of the terrible crime. After his death the house was regarded as accursed. The black dog kept its vigils alone, and the folk of North Shields shivered as they heard its dismal howls in the dawning. Gradually the house fell to ruins, but so long as one stone remained on another the dog haunted the place. At last the ground was cleared, and although there are those who say that in Milbourne Place, the high row of houses that now occupies the site of the old cottage, the ghost of Fatty still walks, fain would we believe that the wanderer's homeless spirit has found rest and peace at last.

TREASURE TROVE

So long as warm red blood and not a tepid and weakly substitute runs in one's veins, the very words "Treasure Trove" must bear with them a fascination. Those undiscovered pots of gold and silver! Those iron-bound treasure chests that were buried deep by pirate or miser or robber! Those bars of gold—those pieces of eight—those glittering heaps of priceless jewels hidden long, long years ago, and found at last by him who knew how to look and who had courage enough to seek and to find! Who has not dreamed of them in his youth? Who has not even clung to his dreams when of many another delicious youthful possession stern age may have bereft him?

Surely every man and woman with any romance in his or her nature is at heart a treasure-seeker. The unearned increment that may come by the route of the Stock Exchange, from the arrival of an unexpected horse at the winning-post, or from the will of an opulent relative, is certainly not without its charms, but what of a monetary nature can possibly touch the imagination as does that delightful dream of the buried treasure that comes

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with utter unexpectedness and thrilling chink and gleam into one's own exclusive possession ?

The "ship" that is going to come in one day—the treasure one is going to find—the big fish one is going to land—may the gods grant that Time is not going to bereave us of any of these dear toys before he hands us on to his elder brother, Eternity.

In all countries there comes, every now and again, an epidemic of the treasure-hunting fever. On the Border the epidemic has cause to be of fairly frequent recurrence, for even within the last hundred years spades and ploughs have turned up things well worth having. The Romans left behind them other valuables besides a half-fledged civilisation when they forsook the Wall and left the Romo-British people to their fate. All along the line of the wall, from time to time there have been rich discoveries of treasure trove. A poor man at Bremenium (now Rowchester) while digging his garden came across enough to keep him out of want for the rest of his days. The recent excavations at Newstead, near Melrose, have shown us how much rich archæological booty has lain all those hundreds of years within easy reach of the spade of any enterprising excavator. A learned professor, only a few years ago, when tramping across the Cheviots near the old "Maiden Way," sat himself down to lunch and smoke, and, as he smoked, idly prodded with his stick at the earth

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of an adjacent rabbit-hole. "Clink!" fell something to the ground, and again "Clink! clink!" as he prodded further. Handfuls and handfuls of copper coins that had come from a Roman mint did he dig out of the home of that unconsciously opulent rabbit, where Pictish thief or saving legionary had hidden them in the days when Rome still ruled the world.

More recently, in the autumn of 1910, a ploughman at Mellendean, on the Duke of Roxburghe's Sprouston estate, turned up with his plough a cache of over 500 silver Roman coins, for which he was recompensed by the Scottish Exchequer at the rate of one shilling per coin. Another tale, one that might well serve as illustration for a sermon on the text that "Money is the root of all evil," is that of Thomas Pattison, the Northumbrian quarryman, who in August 1837 found on Barcombe Hill, near the old Roman station of Borcovicus, a treasure which ruined him. He and some other labourers were quarrying stone when, hid in the cleft of a rock, they came on a skiff-shaped bronze vessel with a circular handle. There was no chance of its having been dropped there—obviously it had been hidden—and when the ancient purse was opened the quarrymen found abundant reason for the care that its owner had taken of it. It contained, closely packed together, sixty-three Roman coins, each one wrapped in green-coloured

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leather. Three of the coins were gold and the rest were silver, and the excited quarrymen proposed an immediate division of the spoil. Fortunately for archæologists, but less fortunately for himself, Pattison realised that the find was likely to bring a larger price if kept together than if sold piecemeal, and after some argument the others agreed to entrust the find to him and to share and share alike the proceeds of the sale. The public-houses of Hexham now knew Pattison as a frequent visitor, for many a toper was willing to stand a drink for the sight of the bronze purse with its hoard of Roman silver and gold. Two Hexham gentlemen, a doctor and a solicitor, heard of Pattison's exhibit and asked to see it, and were so much interested that one of them gave him a sovereign for the sight and the other five shillings. In Pattison's mind the value of the coins promptly went up with a rush. A precious treasure indeed was the one of which he was custodian if two knowledgeable gentlemen thought a sight of it worth twenty-five shillings! No gratis exhibitions now. Some dishonest spectator might rob him. Thomas Pattison rapidly grew suspicious and grasping. It was with the greatest difficulty, and only after copious libations of brandy and water that he was coaxed to show the find to Mr. Fairless, a gentleman deeply interested in all antiquarian matters. The door of the private room in the White Hart Inn at Hexham

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where they met had to be carefully locked before Pattison would show his treasure. Treasure it was undoubtedly, but that more from the point of view of the antiquarian than from that of a man who simply wished hard cash, £18 being the market-value of the entire collection. Of the three gold coins one was of Nero, one of Vespasian, and one of Claudius, while the silver coins were of Vespasian, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian.

The news of Pattison's treasure was not long in coming to the ears of the agent of the Duke of Northumberland, on whose property the find was made. By the law of treasure trove the coins undoubtedly belonged to the Duke, and the agent was not slow in informing Pattison of the fact. But Pattison was one of those men whose little amount of wit is accompanied by a dogged, unreasoning obstinacy. He would see the Duke to blazes ere he would part with the coins. If they belonged to the Duke, why, in the devil's name, had the Duke not gone himself long ago and quarried for them? Good Mr. Fairless came to try and make him listen to reason, and was told by Pattison's sister—Pattison himself being from home—under promise of secrecy, that the coins were hidden at the bottom of the village draw-well.

The sums suggested by Mr. Fairless and others as compensation for the loss of the find were hooted at by the man whose avarice had long since gone

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past reasoning point. Eighteen pounds was a mere drop in a bucket. His coins were priceless. The poor fool acquired lazy, roving habits, and when an action at the suit of the Duke was brought against him he tramped off to Wales, handing over the coins to the care of his brother, William Pattison. For some time he was a quarryman in Denbighshire, but there the law sought him out and as he would neither give up the coins nor pay the £18 with costs, which a jury had adjudged to be the proper sum at which to fix the damages to be paid by him as defendant in the case, he was promptly lodged in Denbigh gaol. He had been some time there when news of his imprisonment came to the Duke of Northumberland through his brother-in-law, Sir Watkin Wynn, on whose estate Pattison was living when he was taken to Denbigh. The Duke, who knew nothing of it, and who was one of the most generous of men, at once offered Pattison his release. But Pattison, low in intelligence although he was, had learned something of the law while he was in gaol. A statute then in force ordained that twelve months was the maximum length of imprisonment for a prisoner whose debt did not exceed £20.

So Pattison rejected the Duke's generosity with scorn, treating it, doubtless, as an underhand method of obtaining the treasure. He saw out his twelve months in Denbigh gaol and then returned to Northumberland to live with his brother, and beside

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his treasure, at a little farm near Blenkinsopp. But as far as his life was concerned, Thomas Pattison might as well have died in a debtor's prison. He never did another day's work, but wandered restlessly about the country, a surly, embittered, idle man, who believed that but for the ill-usage and dishonest greed of others he might have possessed wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. He died ere long, and the curse of the Roman coins might have been handed on to the brother who inherited the hoard, had not the combined wisdom of his wife and of a well-known antiquary, Mr. Clayton of Chesters, proved his salvation. Fifty golden sovereigns, fresh from the Mint, and backed by the antiquary's assurance that £18 was the legal price of purse and contents, and the sensible wife's advice to take the money without further palaver, did the deed, and bereft for ever the house of Pattison of the Roman treasure which for twenty-one years had been in their keeping. The Duke of Northumberland most graciously waived all claim to possession, and expressed his great pleasure that the find was at last in such worthy hands, and in Mr. Clayton's fascinating museum at Chesters—once Cilurnum—on the Roman Wall, the bronze purse and its contents may be seen to this day without any previous bribery, spirituous or otherwise, of their honest custodian.

Not only along the line of the Roman Wall,

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however, is the treasure of the Border to be found. At Warkworth, where the clear waters of the Coquet run between opulently wooded banks past the beautiful ruins of the old castle, there was found, many years ago, a buried treasure. The custodian of the castle at that time was a worthy man of whom we know that he was a believer in dreams, that he had a beautiful trust in the honour of his friends, and that his motto obviously was "Never do to-day what you can put off until to-morrow." Three nights in succession did this man dream a dream. Each night, in his dream, he went to a certain mound and there dug. In his digging he came at length to a curious round blue stone, and this he lifted, and found underneath it a pot quite full of gold pieces. "A lucky dream," he thought the first morning when he awoke, and during the day found himself eyeing with interest the mound in the courtyard. When, next night, he again found himself digging, his interest in the mound during the day was still greater, and when, for the third time, he dreamed of the blue stone and the buried treasure, he had not the shadow of a doubt that a pick and a shovel were all that were necessary to make of his golden dreams golden realities. Not in one sense only the custodian was evidently a dreamer. So sure was he of his fortune that he loved to linger over the delicious anticipation, to build for himself, with the gold that could at any moment become his own,

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castles whose minarets touched the blue sky. So exquisite a thing it was to him to feel that no longer need his life of hard toil, of pinching and of saving continue, no longer need he dree the weird of the sons of Adam and eat bread only by the sweat of his brow, but could now taste the rapturous enjoyment of unearned increment, that he could not keep his happiness to himself but confided the story to a friend. The friend was all sympathy, but, being a practical man, he asked the practical question, Why did the custodian not dig at once and put his dream to the proof? Obviously there was no poetry in the nature of this clod. The dreamer tried to explain. It was too exquisite a thing to grasp rudely, straight off. One must first revel in all the epicurean joys of anticipation. The friend quite agreed.

A few days passed and the dream did not return, but the mystic three was quite enough for the dreamer. In sleeping and waking dreams he spent one perfect night, and when the morning sun was gilding the old grey stones of the castle, he stole softly out to take the treasure that the kindly fates had given him. But the mound was a mound no longer. Great spadefuls of raw earth lay where it had been—a deep trench gashed it—and on the top of the clay lay a large round blue stone, the stone of his dream. One has no record of what the dreamer said. Probably it is just as well. But at least one is very sure that

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the feelings of his fellow-dreamer in the *Arabian Nights*, when he awoke from his reverie to find his entire stock-in-trade lying shattered at his feet, were no more bitter than were those of the custodian of Warkworth Castle. Who can blame him if he sought in haste the only one to whom his secret had been confided? And who cannot mourn with him in that he lost, on the same fatal morning, a fortune and a friend? Two curious things were noticed after the digging up of that mound. One of these was that the blue stone gradually became paler in colour. The other was that the custodian's friend had a large fortune left to him by a relation at a distance, of whose existence no one had heard up till then, and became a very wealthy man. If he had any secret, he confided it to no one. Meantime the Coquet, winding round the castle mound, also possessed a secret, and that it gave up one day when an ancient pot of large proportions was drawn out of it, and the custodian recognised the treasure chest of his dreams. It had been full of gold pieces when he saw it then. Now it was empty as his own pockets.

Such was the end of the custodian's dream, and still, lying at the side of the Lion Tower—where the lion, the emblem of the Percies, ornaments the cornice, there is to be seen a very large round blue stone which once hid beneath it a pot of gold. Round the lion's neck is the Percy badge

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of a crescent, inscribed with the family motto—Hotspur's battle-cry, *Espérance*. But though many a crescent moon shone upon Warkworth after that treasure had been found—and lost—never again could the motto of the family that he served lift up the spirits of the disappointed dreamer. He had no more golden dreams, only the exasperating remembrance of his own procrastination, and the continual reminder of a large round stone, heavy as his own heart.

In Selkirkshire, as well as in Northumberland, we have tales of still unclaimed, unfound pots of gold. The Earl of Montrose's treasure chest has more than one tale attached to it, and there are those who say that a deep brown pool in the Yarrow still hides what was cast there for temporary concealment on the headlong flight from the bloody field of Philiphaugh. Still, too, is the gold of Tamleuchar—that desolate bit of Eskdalemuir—to be discovered.

“ Atween the wat ground and the dry
The gold of Tamleuchar doth lie.”

They are haunting lines, of an age of which none can speak with authority, though some declare that the golden treasure is not minted metal but gold such as was found in Meggatdale in the days of James V, and that the skeely digger who follows the directions of the old saw is likely to come on veins so rich, that on the Stock Exchange South-Africans

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will go down with a rush and Tamleuchars come up with a run.

Up Ettrick, too, we have a tale of a treasure yet to be found, a tale told by old Andrew Currie, the Darnick sculptor, the man who did much fine work in his time, but who might have handed down a great name to posterity had his ambitions been greater, his opportunities more. Andrew Currie's father was farmer of Howford, in Ettrick. It was a serving-lad called William Murray who told him of the trove he himself had come across and who held out glittering prospects of the treasure still to be found.

William Murray was the son of a tenant of Howford Mill, and one day when he was about thirteen years of age he was sent by his father to help his aunt, Jenny White, in casting peats in a moss which is now a level meadow near Oakwood Mill. Jenny took her place with the peat-barrow down below a brae, and her sturdy nephew with his "flaughter" spade was placed above her to cut the peats and throw them down to her. They were working hard when a large stone slab, fairly near the surface, stopped their labour for a little. With some trouble they unearthed it, and William resumed his spade-work. Two or three cuts only did he make, and at the third or fourth the boy showered down on his aunt a glittering mass of silver coins—about three hundred in all. Jenny promptly took possession but did not hold it long, for the Lord

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of the Manor—Lord Polwarth—put in his claim, and, with a much better grace than Pattison the Northumbrian, the good woman handed over the find to the descendant of Wat o' Harden—who rarely had to ask twice. Apparently the coins had been in the grave of a Roman soldier, for some bones and rusty armour were found quite near. William Murray was just the right age to fully appreciate the romance and glorious possibilities of Buried Treasure. A spade wielded by his own strong hand had driven through the peaty soil *clink* into a nest of good round silver coins. The chink of them as they fell was a thing not soon to be forgotten. He kept his thoughts to himself, and in the evenings he went back to the peat moss, armed with an iron rod, and for many an evening prodded in vain near the spot where he came on the treasure. At last his search was rewarded. About fifty yards to the west of the slab he and his aunt had unearthed, he came on a second slab, much larger than the first. It was much too cumbrous for him to move without help, and so, most reluctantly, he had to cover it up again and leave it as it lay. Some inscriptions, deeply cut, were on the stone, and it lay in a direct line between two old trees, one on the south and the other on the north of the moss.

It was William Murray's dearest dream to dig up that stone and become the possessor of the treasure which, he never doubted, lay beneath it. To this

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end he confided in his master's son, the little dark-eyed Andrew, who promised to be his accomplice. But week after week, month after month, thanks to Andrew's procrastination, the project was delayed. And then came another golden dream—one that possessed the mind of many a Briton in those days. Andrew Currie's elder brother was going to Australia to seek the fortune which he undoubtedly found, and his father's serving-lad joyously went with him to see his golden dreams become realities in that land of gold. Just before he left the Ettrick valley he spoke again to his friend, Andrew, of the buried treasure, and again pointed out the spot where he was so sure that it lay. But Australia was to William Murray what it has been to many—the Land of Never-Never. Shortly after landing he died, and for Andrew Currie the land he remained behind in was a Never-Never Land as well. As a boy and as a lad he had put off from night to night, from week to week, month to month, year to year, that treasure hunt.

In older days, when Lord Polwarth, to whom he told the story, offered to send labourers to the spot to excavate under his direction, somehow, as he himself confessed, he "never found a suitable time to go." "A singularly dilatory character" he was, according to his own confession;—a singularly charming character, as all those who were privileged to know him can testify. But,

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naturally, he died a poor man, not even enriched by the sale of so many hundred Roman silver coins at a shilling apiece! And there, near Oakwood, still remains the undiscovered stone slab with its probable hundreds of coins beneath it, Treasure Trove for him who has the energy—or the romance—to seek it.

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FAR up the Tweed valley, where the Tweed is still little more than a hill-burn, running between peat hag and heathery knowe, there stands a little white farmhouse known as Badlieu. Near it, on the hill-side, there is pointed out a spot that the country people will tell you is the grave of a murdered girl, her father, and her child, and, with but few variants, all the folk of that district will tell you the tale of "Bonnie Bertha of Badlieu" who, in the old, old days, was mistress to a king.

In those old, old days before Scotland was cut up by railways, seamed with roads, disfigured by hedges and dikes, and scarred by ploughs, it was a land of great forests where every sort of game was to be had for the hunting, and where lochs and swamps and lochans—yet unmurdered by drain-pipes—harboured such flocks of waterfowl that no hawk ever needed to go hungry nor any country-man to go without kitchen to his bread. The Wood of Caledon, with its thickets of hazel and birch, covered the Tweed uplands and formed coverts fit for the

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hunting of a king. Meggatland, Ettrick, and Yarrow provided

“Hart and hynd, and dae and rae,
And of a' wilde bestis grete plentie.”

Somewhere before the year 1000, Scotland's ruler was one named Kenneth the Grim, the son of Duffus. He came to the throne in turbulent times, when violent death was the lot of most kings, and when contending factions were always ready to fly at the throats of those who opposed the claims of their special nominee for the throne. A species of tanistry still existed, and when Kenneth MacDuff was proclaimed king, it was in the face of violent opposition from the partisans of his cousin Malcolm.

He was known as the Grim—a word that then signified great strength as well as sternness of character—and as King Grim, or Grimus, he has come down to us by the unsubstantial and rather friable path of monkish legend and oral tradition. Solid history gives us little regarding him beyond the few naked facts of his accession and the place and time of his death, but kindlier legend endues him with all the qualifications of a prince of fairy tale. He was very tall and remarkably handsome, full of tact and with the most courteous and winning of manners, sternly just where stern justice was required, in battle fearless and “grim,” in the chase the keenest of the keen. For nearly eight years he ruled in peace

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and prosperity, one of the most popular monarchs of his line, and that was indeed an evil autumn day for him on which he laid aside the affairs of state to go a-hunting near Tweed's Cross.

Polmood was then a royal hunting-box, and it was not until some fifty years later that Malcolm Canmore handed it over to one Norman Hunter, whose descendants can still exhibit the original charter. This is how it runs :

“ I *Malcolm Kenmure* KING, the first of my Reign, gives to the *Normand Hunter of Powmood*, the *Hope*, up and Down, above the Earth to Heaven, and below the earth to Hell, as free to thee and thine as ever GOD gave it to me and Mine, and that a *Bow* and a *broad Arrow* when I come to hunt in *Yarrow*, and for the mair Suith I byte the white Wax with my Tooth, before thir Witnesses three,

MAY,

MAULD,

and MARJORIE.”

It was radiant September weather when Kenneth the Grim and a band of courtiers came to make holiday at Polmood. The rowan trees were brilliant with berries of vivid scarlet and amber, and the barberry bushes looked as though each branch were aflame. The heather on the hills and moors had exchanged its royal purple for a more sober hue, and the bracken had lost much of its green under

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the evening frosts and changed to gold and brown. The eagles that built up at Loch Skene and at Talla Linns were beginning to find their eyries chill at nights, but they were gallant herds of red deer that flocked down the passes of the hills in the gloaming and drank where the brown reeds bent and whispered at Gameshope, or came to Talla, like grey ghosts of the long dead, when the lonely loch was all ebony and silver and the moon came over the Muckle Knowe and mirrored her face in the water. What true sportsman could there be whose blood did not course faster as he traced the slot of a "stag o' nine" on the wet, peaty ground of the moor, and had the scent of the autumn leaves and the crisp, shrewd tang of the autumn air, that blew to him from the hill-tops, singing through his head like wine.

Day after day did Kenneth the Grim hunt—in Meggatdale, by the wan water of Yarrow, in the dangerous Annandale country where precipices were always ready traps for the unwary. But the precipice he fell over at length was one quite near his home. The morning had been bright, the scent good, and the hunt was keen, but as the day wore on a heavy mist rolled up from the east, blotting out everything, hanging trees and bushes, with grey moisture, deadening all sound. King Kenneth had thought the rest of the hunt close behind him when this chilly veil descended, but he wound his horn and hallooed in vain. Far away he fancied he could hear answering

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cries and the baying of the hounds, but it might have been the Phantom Huntsman out with his pack, for he never could come nearer them, and soon the impenetrable drow made it impossible for him to hear any sound less near at hand than the splash of his horse's hoofs on the sodden ground or the trickle of running water. Many a time it was only a hill-burn that his tired steed half stumbled into as he rode through the dense wet twilight across bogland, into the unknown, but at last the murmur of a bigger stream grew louder, and King Kenneth joyfully reined in his horse where Tweed, only a few miles old, sang between grey boulders and bracken and birches on her way to the sea. It was as though a storm-tossed mariner had come at length to a landmark on a strange coast, and as he slowly rode towards Polmood he saw a little above him on the hill-side, shining through the greyness, a light in the cottage of the herd of Badlieu. Thankfully, and unconscious of the sport he was about to furnish for the gods, Kenneth the Grim rode up to the cottage, and thundered royally at the door. She who opened to him stood for a moment gazing up in silence with parted lips and wide open eyes. The red firelight was behind her, and in her hand she bore a rude lamp that lighted up her face. "An angel," said the king, afraid, and bowed his head and crossed himself. Many a beautiful woman had he known in the land of which he was king, and his own queen was

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very fair to see, yet only in his boyish dreams of the saints and the angels had he ever seen one who seemed to him in all ways of so perfect a loveliness as Bertha, the daughter of the herd of Badlieu. When he had learned from her surprise and shy questioning that she was no angel but a very human peasant maid, the king was not long in dismounting and seeking the shelter of the hut. A bower of Paradise it was to him now, since the music of the maiden's voice and the exquisite beauty of her form and face had stolen his royal heart away. The courtiers who came in search of him received much less than Kenneth's usual courtesy and gratitude for their care, and as he rode with them to Polmood he longed for power and majesty no longer. A herd he would fain have been, and not a king, for all the kingdom he desired to rule over was the heart of Bonnie Bertha of Badlieu.

The hart and roe browsed safely on the days that followed. The wildfowl winged their way unhindered from moor to moor. The king had other game to hunt, if, indeed, it could be called a chase when the maiden's heart was given to the royal huntsman as speedily and as wholly as his was bestowed on her.

The maid's mother was dead, and the herd of Badlieu had no qualms in giving his daughter as mistress to his own royal master. Polmood was soon transfigured into a home fit for her whom

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King Kenneth loved and looked on as his own true queen, and soon it was not only his courtiers who knew the reason why the forest lodge amongst the Border hills was more often the king's home than his own royal palace.

Fidelity was a virtue that the queens of those days were unaccustomed to look for in their husbands, but soon the wife of Kenneth the Grim came to realise that this rival at Polmood was no light-o'-love, no royal toy to be played with and then tossed away. There was no gainsaying what was whispered at court, and loudly talked of elsewhere by those whose delicacy saw no need to whisper—the king had found his true mate; she who ruled his heart and swayed his councils, and who must do so as long as life should last him, was not his lawful, crowned queen, but the daughter of a Tweed-side herd—Bonnie Bertha of Badlieu.

It was no pleasant thing for any wife to know. Like poison it ate into the jealous heart of Kenneth's queen. While those who helped him to rule his kingdom grumbled because he neglected the affairs of state, her wounded pride writhed over his neglect of her, and no smile or whisper of those with whom she mingled ever seemed to her to mean anything but the mocking jest, "The king goes a-hunting at Polmood to-day." Bitterest of all was it when news reached her ears that the king's prolonged absence at Polmood was because Bertha had borne

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him a son—a beautiful child, magnificent offspring of so handsome a pair. And when Kenneth came home, bearing himself more proudly than ever before, and yet with a soft look in his eyes that till then they had never known, the queen bit her white hand till it bled, and then longed that the blood-drops might have been those of the woman that she hated and of her bastard babe.

The child was still a tiny thing that had learned to smile at his father and play with the great strong fingers of Kenneth the Grim, but was too young even to try to say his name, when the queen's opportunity came.

The red-prowed boats of the Danes were then not often far distant from the firths and river mouths of Scotland, and an incursion from them sent King Kenneth marching off with his army to repel their attack. The hunting-lodge at Polmood was shut up, for Bertha, her lord and king far away, preferred to go back with her father and little son to the cottage at Badlieu where her childhood had been spent. Kenneth's heart was leaden on the day he parted from Bertha, as he looked back to where his beautiful love with her child in her arms stood trying to smile bravely at him while she waved a farewell. He was no weakling to fear death for himself, but the two he left behind were more than life to him, and for them he feared he knew not what. The mist came rolling down from the east as on

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the day when first they met, hiding them from his eyes, chilling his very heart. For months the Tweed's silver song had been a love song to Kenneth the Grim, but now it sounded dirge-like in his ears.

Like the gallant soldier that he was, King Kenneth came triumphantly through the little campaign. Despatch was necessary. The quicker the victory was won, the sooner the King could return to his little kingdom at Polmood. More than one tawny-haired Dane learned on the day that he encountered Kenneth the Grim why the King had come by his name.

Victorious, but chafing at the etiquette that compelled him to pay his devoirs to his lawful Queen ere he hastened on to Polmood, Kenneth marched back from the north. He found a court in mourning. The Queen was dead. She had been stricken by a fever, he was told, and had died after a few days' illness, raving mad. They who told him looked one at the others as they spoke, but his thoughts were in full cry on ahead, nor did he notice aught amiss as they spoke of the madness of the Queen. He could not pretend to a grief he did not feel. He had never loved her. Only as one of his daily associates would he ever have missed her, and for more than a year now she had not even been one of his companions. He was free now, he thought—and scarcely could his face conceal his gladness from those around him—

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he was free now to marry indeed. The queen of his heart should now be queen of his throne—Queen Bertha, the fairest monarch Scotland had ever known.

The horse that took him across the hills to Badlieu was a weary and over-ridden beast indeed when the King drew rein by the Tweed. The shadow of winter's wings was over the land. The trees were bare, and the water ran chill and black. No blue curl of peat smoke rose above the trees as he drew near what was to him his home. All was still, and chill, and silent. The door of the house stood open, swinging a little in the wind, and Kenneth walked in—no conquering King entering his palace, but a man who loved with all his soul her who made home for him—a lover seeking her whom he loved. He found only a harried nest. Signs of violence were seen on every side—stains of blood—torn garments—and one of them his baby son's. Many a hideous scene of carnage had Kenneth the Grim looked on with cold eyes and steadily marching heart. A weak woman might have been stronger than he was now, as he stared at desolation and knew, with certain, hideous knowledge, that he had come too late. As one distraught he left the empty house, and as the winter wind, driving a cruel sleet before it, swept through the leafless branches and soughed round the forsaken nest, he saw an old man—one who had once fed his hounds—coming, shoulders stooped against the blast, slowly

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towards him. "Where is she?" he asked. "My son—where is he?"

The old peasant knew without farther questioning what it was that the King required. He shook his head in silence and pointed, and the King followed where he led. A little way up the hillside there were marks of where the mossy turf had been disturbed, and the brown peaty earth lay loose where a spade had not long since delved it.

"Can you not speak?" cried Kenneth the Grim, as the old man stood there in silence, the white sleet drifting and lying on his whitebeard.

"I thought ye wad ken," said the herd. "Your queen sent murderers who slew them a'—the auld man, the bit bairn, and bonnie Bertha o' Badlew. They howkit a grave for them here on the hillside, and here they lie. Hark ye to the whaups and the pewits that are murnin' owre them!"

"It was the deed of her who was my Queen?" said Kenneth the Grim.

"Aye, and they said the spirits o' them she murdered came to drive her mad and then to slay her, and to drive her soul to Hell."

"Curse her soul to Hell," said Kenneth the Grim.

A spade he got then, and while the winter night descended, gloomy and fearsome, on the Tweedside hills, and the sleet drifted down, cease-

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lessly, remorselessly, pitilessly, he threw open the grave where Bertha, her son, and her old father had been cast by those that murdered them.

That night he rode, a mad man, across the hills, while Tweed sobbed her way under the trees past Polmood, and the wind sighed dolorously down all the lonely passes of the hills.

The heart of Kenneth the man was broken. Kenneth the King was a King no longer. He did not heed what now befell him. He was sunk in deep melancholy, and public affairs were no more than foolish, childish toys to him. No longer did he believe in God as a God of mercy. The Christ was no more a blessed Lord to him. When his cousin Malcolm, profiting by his stricken state, came against him once again to try to wrest the crown of Scotland from his unsteady grasp, Kenneth led his men against him on holy Ascension Day, and on Ascension Day, 1005, he met with dire defeat at Monaghvaird, in Strathearn. He was sorely wounded in the head, and thereafter deprived of his eyes, and in all the bodily and mental anguish that man can know Kenneth the Grim passed out of life.

Gladly would one think that when the wind whimpers between the hills down the valley of the Hartstaneburn and sighs through the woods of Polmood, and—as some say—the shades of Bertha

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of Badlieu and her murdered babe are driven like wisps of mist before it, there is near the piteous ghosts a grim figure that puts fear on the hearts of men—of him whose luckless love cost him so dear—the form of Kenneth the King.

PEARLIN JEAN

I

“AND what of La Belle Jeanne, Monsieur Stewart? Thou ridest away and leavest the broken hearts behind thee, is it not, little beautiful devil of a Scotchman!”

“My faith, yes—la Belle Jeanne! Let us drink to your successor, my friend.”

“But the poor little one, she will not be so easy to console; she loves thee well, Robert, my wicked one.”

The glasses chinked, the red wine sparkled in the candle light, and the laughter and loud voices were carried out into the stillness of the night—carried out to the woman who stood in the shadow of the doorway, down in the dark street, and who held her cloak closer and shivered as though her heart had been struck by an icy hand. The light that streamed from the window lay like a broken golden column on the black water of the river that went sighing past. A sad river by night, that river of Paris, a river like the Styx, with many a willing Charon to ferry souls to Eternity should the courage

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of those sick of life prove unequal to the task of setting afloat their own frail craft.

The woman was but little more than a girl, a slight creature with pale face and great dark eyes. A lock of brown hair strayed from the lace kerchief that covered her head, and the cloak that she drew round her was of rich black silk. She took a step across the street, towards the water, shuddered, stepped back, and once more listened at the doorway. A voice deeper than those of the three Frenchmen spoke now, slowly, and with an accent that told his race.

“She is thine, and welcome, De Marne. But give her enough of the lace she loves—the bonny Mechlin and the Valenciennes, and thou’lt buy her. But, my faith, thou must not seek her until I have gone in the morn! My bonny Jean has the temper of a wulcat—as we say in Scotland—and I dare not risk telling her that I return so soon to my own land. Come, my friends!—to the *cartes* again—and another bumper!”

His friends laughed boisterously and passed some jokes that caused much merriment. And still the woman in the shadow listened.

A belated reveller, whose spurs rang on the pavement as he walked, saw her, and paused as if to accost her. The look she gave him from a great pair of dark eyes made him start back as though she had struck him. “Sacred name!” he muttered

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to himself as he hastened on, "I took her for a white lily in the garden, seen in the moonlight—but that face is of one who has walked in Hell."

And still, as the night dragged by, the woman waited, listening, while the voices in the upstairs room grew louder and until the candles guttered and sent up little trails of smoke that showed black against the grey of the morning that crept coldly up behind the dark spires of Notre Dame, and touched with a silver finger the swift-changing eddies of the Seine.

One of the players threw down his cards on the table where the white wax that crept down the side of a silver candlestick was checked by a puddle of red wine.

"By Saint Denis, 'tis day!" he cried, and pushed back his chair. "A last drink, Monsieur, before we go! A deep drink to give you courage, *mon brave!* for on this day you go to wed a Scottish bride—and on this day you say adieu to *la belle Jeanne*, and see her nevermore!"

"Nevermore!" echoed the Scotchman thickly. "Gentlemen, I give you the health of my bonny Jean that I leave behind me for evermore!"

II

The day wore on, and there was sunlight on the houses and streets of grey Paris, sunlight on the bud-

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ding green trees, sunlight on the yellow-green water of the river. In front of the house where, a few hours past, a woman had waited, a travelling carriage was drawn up. Four liveried men, two of them postilions, watched the bustling servants who carried out the luggage of Monseigneur and strapped it on to the coach, while the horses tossed their heads and jingled their harness, and the little knot of idle bystanders stared admiringly at such a handsome display of money, rank, and fashion. The great boxes, the sword cases, the cases of French wine were all in their places, and the valet of Monsieur Stewart impatiently stood by the carriage door, the fur-lined cloak of his master over his arm, and glanced up at the window above him. He started to attention as a gentleman hastened up, bewigged, gorgeous in brocade and lace, his face still pale from a *nuît blanche*, voluble curses for those of the *canaille* who dared to come near to impeding his path falling trippingly from his lips—a very fine monsieur indeed for the waiting crowd to admire.

“I am in time then, Ribot!” he said to the valet. “Monsieur is *en retard*, is it not? What delays your master?”

Ribot, half deferential, half impudent, checked a smile in the beginning.

“He takes farewell of Mademoiselle Jeanne, Monsieur le Vicomte,” he said, and cast his eye up to the window.

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The Vicomte, with raised eyebrows, also checked a smile. This was no joke for his inferiors, although for him a most exquisite jest. He hid his lips with a lace handkerchief and listened to the voices above. Only a murmur was to be heard, and then, with a suddenness that set all the waiting crowd agog with delightful expectation, came a wailing cry from a woman, and then rapid speech in the voice of a woman, frantic and desperate.

“Thou can’st not marry a cold woman of Scotland—I am thine and thou mine—Robert—Robert!”

A man’s voice answered angrily :

“It is done, I tell thee. All is ended—I have given thee money. Be wise, Jeanne.”

Then, high uplifted, the woman’s voice again.

“Thou can’st not leave me! Thou shall not! It cannot be! Take me with thee, Robert. See, I humble myself—for thee only I humble myself to my knees. From the ground I beg thee, be merciful—ah, be merciful, well-beloved! Robert, I love thee! I have loved thee so . . .”

Gladly would the eager crowd have listened for more, but the friend of Monsieur Stewart prevented all possibility. The one gesture that he made of drawing his sword on them, accompanied by some furious words of dismissal, had sent them running down the street like scared rabbits seeking a warren. But those who did not run far could hear the

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wails again, and some besides the servants had the delight of seeing the Scottish seigneur come hastily out to his waiting carriage, a black scowl on his handsome face, trying roughly to shake off from his blue velvet coat the clinging white hands of her whom they knew as La Belle Jeanne. His French was forgotten, and his oaths were good, solid curses in the uncompromising Scots tongue.

“Ye damned wullcat, let me gang!” he stormed, and pushed her furiously from him. “I’ve given ye the siller! Have I no tell’t ye I’m dune wi’ ye—and ye can gang tae Hell for a’ I care!”

Ribot stepped forward, and deftly threw the travelling cloak over his master’s shoulders. His friend, the Vicomte, smiling a little, and with shoulders ashrug, took the chance to speak.

“These tender leave-takings,” he smirked—“Pardon if I interrupt them, *mon cher*. Perhaps Mademoiselle Jeanne will do me the honour to come for a *petit déjeuner* with me, and let you depart without further harrowing of your broken heart.”

He bowed low, in insulting mockery, before the girl, but she seemed not to see him. Stewart climbed into his coach and threw himself back in the cushions, while his men banged to the door and mounted to their places behind.

“Au revoir, De Marne!” he cried to his friend. “She is mad—drag her back, can you not?”

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But Jeanne, lithe as a panther, had sprung up on one of the wheels, and again had a fold of the cloak in her grasp.

“Go! go then if thou wilt!” she said, “But, false coward as thou art, thou canst not escape my love. Go! but I shall be in Scotland before thee—*Avant!*”

With an inarticulate exclamation of rage, Stewart pushed the girl back.

“Ride on!” he cried to the postilions, “a million devils, can ye not ride on, you fools?”

With a jerk, the impatient horses started forward, and even as they did so the girl fell from her precarious perch on the wheel. There was a terrible shrill cry—the cry that a wounded hare gives when the dogs are upon it—the coach gave a great lurch, and the frightened horses galloped on. Stewart stood up in his carriage, holding tightly to the back of the swaying vehicle, and looked behind.

For one moment he saw a white figure, curled up, and looking strangely small, lying on the dusty street. There seemed to be dark stains on the robe of lace, dark stains on the dust. Then, like a swarm of flies that assail a wounded animal, coming from all quarters, surrounding and concealing the prone body, a crowd formed, dense and black. There was a great murmur, a threatening sound, and one or two ran out from the crowd

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and called, and seemed to make signs for the coach to return.

Stewart sat down, and wiped a damp, white face with his handkerchief.

“Monsieur,” said his valet, “I fear Mademoiselle Jeanne is hurt. One calls for us to return,” and the nearer postilion, hearing the words, turned round and looked at his master inquiringly. Like a furious beast, Stewart roared at the fellows.

“Go on, you dogs! A thousand thunders, *go on!* Can I not manage my own affairs without the interference of *canaille?* *Faster!* drive faster—in the devil’s name!”

They were dripping horses ere the first stage was reached, and many a peasant stopped his scythe-work in the flowery meadows that day to watch, amazed, the great blue coach that thundered along the white road from Paris to the sea, leaving behind it a cloud of dust like the smoke of a forest fire.

III

The spring was gone. Some wild months in London had ended Sir Robert Stewart’s bachelor career, and he brought with him the lady who had been for a few weeks his bride when, on an autumn day, he drove across the old bridge at Berwick-on-Tweed and once again saw the sun silvering a

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Scottish river. Seven days only had it taken the heavy travelling coach to come from London—good going, for half a dozen years later it took the stage-coach from York to London from Monday until Saturday to reach its destination. The good folk of the Border town looked on with admiration as the great carriage with its brilliant coat of arms—the hand holding a scimitar all proper, and the motto "*Avant*"—clattered next day up the steep street with its high, red-tiled houses, and made the walls of the Scots Gate echo the rumble of its cumbrous wheels and the hoof-beats of its six stout greys. Two servants in livery rode ahead of it, and everyone knew that a gallant young laird of the Merse, who had been finishing his education in foreign parts, had returned to his own, and was bringing with him a well-tochered bride—Jean, daughter of Sir John Gilmour.

The autumn day was closing in when the laird of Allanbank and his party reached his own lands. In the fading light, the water of the Blackadder looked like a bit of old Sheffield plate—silver, with the copper showing through. Already some of the trees were bare, and the roll of the carriage wheels sounded unnaturally loud in the stillness of the autumn evening, when even the fall of a dead leaf had its own little whispering echo. Lady Stewart gave a shiver as the coach left the main road and turned up the private drive into the thickly-wooded

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policies, where the fallen leaves deadened the beat of the horses' hoofs.

"'Tis not the cheerfullest of homes that you bring me to, Sir Robert!" she said with a little laugh. "I hope that the house within is more gay than the lands without."

Sir Robert made no answer. For the latter part of the journey from Berwick he had been a silent man. Little over two years since he left his mansion on the bank high above the Blackadder, and what had *not* happened since then? That gay, irresponsible, wholly unedifying life in Paris, with the *cartes*, and the red wine, and the joyous French girls, beside whom the English seemed so stolid, the Scotch so dour—what a merry time it had been while it lasted. And happiest of all his happy days had been the days that he spent with Jeanne. Jeanne . . . his "Bonny Jean." His wife was the Lady Jean, but French Jean—Pearlin Jean—he could see her now in a dress of the lace of which she was so fond—golden lights in her brown eyes and on her brown hair, looking at him tenderly. "*Je t'aime, Robert,*" she said, "*Robert . . . bien-aimé.*" . . .

But, no, that was only a beautiful girl, not the same Jean as the furious woman whose eyes burned his as she clung with frantic white hands to his velvet coat and poured upon him words of rage and of scorn. . . . "Rage and scorn," yes . . . but

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love was there as well. He had loved her dearly once, but Jean as Lady Stewart—ah, no! impossible. He almost smiled at the thought, but remembrance killed the smile. The last he saw of her—what was it? That little white figure lying in the dust, with dark stains on the dress and on the street beside it—those folk who screamed on him to stop And the letter from De Marne.

“It was not the gentlest way to do it, Monsieur,” he wrote, “nor can I and those who were your friends quite wholly excuse you. Possibly you failed to realise what you had done. The little Jeanne was quite dead. We who had been her friends in her merry days saw that she was buried as she would have chosen to be. Even the lace we did not spare. My compliments the most respectful to Madame your bride.”

A frantic hand-grip on his arm roused him from his excursion into the torturing land of remembrance. He started, as though Jeanne herself had touched him.

“*What is that?*” asked his wife, terrified, “on the arch of the gateway—see, *who is that?*”

Sir Robert looked up to the archway that the horses were just about to pass through. A slight figure, swathed in white, seemed to be kneeling on the keystone of the arch, eagerly looking down at him and his bride. He saw a white face, head and

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shoulders bloodstained, dark eyes that drew his own to meet them. "*I shall be in Scotland before thee,*" she had said.

"My God! It's *Jean!*" he cried.

It was not only the Lady Stewart who required strong cordial waters to restore her that night, and it was yet early when the gallant laird of Allanbank shrank up the dark-shadowed staircase to his room, looking fearfully behind him, like a frightened child.

IV

There was no getting away from the phantom. She had come to stay. These were days when every respectable Christian in Scotland held firm belief in witches and warlocks, in ghosts, in vampires, and in the reality of all spirits and apparitions, and very soon she who had been a fair lady of France had an unassailable place of her own in the mind of every man, woman, and child in the Merse, and far beyond it. By day and by night, and more especially at the midnight hour, doors opened and shut in the mansion of Allanbank when there was no human agency to account for them. In bedrooms and along passages were heard the rustlings of silks and the patter of high-heeled shoes. Soon there were many who laid claim to having seen Jeanne.

"Pearlin Jean,"—from "pearlin," the name in

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Scots for the lace which she wore—was the title she went by, and by which she is known in Berwickshire to this day.

All that man could do, Sir Robert did, to rid himself of the accusing spirit. He had had her portrait painted in those days when she was still his beautiful divinity, and this, to pacify her, he hung on the wall between a picture of himself and one of his lawful lady. Scarcely pleasant for Lady Stewart, perhaps, and that may have been the reason why it was moved, and the slight increase of peace that had reigned while the portrait hung in the place of honour, gave way to an increase of horrors that made the haunted man start at every little bush of white blossom in the gloaming, and break into a cold sweat when his dog walked across the hall after darkening. Seven ministers were called in at one time to lay the unhappy spirit, but Pearlin Jean was not amenable to the ministrations of the Church of the Reformed Faith.

The bride that Sir Robert brought home with him predeceased him. She bore him two sons and two daughters, and one marvels that childrens' laughter and the sound of little, merry, pattering feet did not lay the phantom at Allanbank. The widowed Sir Robert took to himself a second wife—Helen, daughter of Sir Archibald Cockburn—a brave woman, surely—strong in faith, or much lacking in imagination to become the mistress of a house so notoriously haunted by one, the circum-

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stances of whose death, so it was rumoured, were of small credit to her lord.

When death came at last to Sir Robert Stewart, Jean still stayed at Allanbank. Far off, in Paris, her poor slim little body took its rest, but for her, rest there was none. Allanbank was her home, and at Allanbank she remained.

As the years went on, it was no longer one with blood on face and shoulders that people saw, but a skeleton clad in the winding sheet covered with costly lace, and yet, when unseen, still rustling silken skirts, and tapping its way, with dainty little feet, along passages, as la belle Jeanne had done in French chateaux when Louis XIV was King.

Considerably more than a hundred years ago, Thomas Blackadder, a sturdy young labourer on the estate, made an assignation with Jenny, one of the maids in the "big hoose," to meet one moonlight night in the orchard of Allanbank. True Thomas was first at the tryst, and as he waited impatiently he saw a white figure stealing towards him across the long shadows of the trees. Gladly he ran to meet her, his arms open to embrace her, but, when they should have met, she disappeared, and, terrified, he saw her again at the far end of the orchard, where she vanished like a wisp of white mist in the sun. Jenny came in time to calm his terrors. She had seen nothing, but remembered his fears clearly enough to tell the tale, long years

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afterwards, to a little boy whose nurse she was, and who became known to the world as Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe.

About the year 1790, when the house was let, two ladies who knew nothing of the sinister celebrity of the mansion came to pay a visit to Allanbank, All night long they heard someone in their room, walking backwards and forwards, to and fro, up and down—ceaselessly, restlessly, until the dawn. They spent only one night there, and presumably never returned when they knew who had been their companion through the long, long hours.

Betty Norrie, a housekeeper of more recent times, during the many years she spent at Allanbank declared that she constantly heard, and had frequently seen, Pearlin Jean, but said that she and others in the house were so used to the noises that they had entirely lost their terrors for them.

In 18— the old house of Allanbank was taken down, and the country people watched its removal with dread.

“Where will Pearlin Jean gang now, when the house is dishmolished? I was asking the folks in the hall, but I would like to hear your ain observe upon it.” So queried an old woman of the grand-niece of Hume the historian, Miss Hume of Nine-wells.

The old house exists no longer. Even on the bowling-green which was made on its foundations,

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the trees now grow tall and thick. There are but few left of those who were alive when the "new" house which has taken its place was erected, and even the new house has stood for many years uninhabited. High on the bank above the Blackadder it stands, a big mansion surrounded by great old trees and by thick undergrowth. There is no drive up to it, and they who would make a pilgrimage thither must seek it by silent grass-grown paths. Hares and rabbits will cross the path, and pheasants will dash with a rustle through the deep carpet of dead leaves, indignant at the disturbance of their sanctuary. In autumn the trees, all copper and gold and brown, are reflected in the dark brown water of the river that flows down below, and the little bush, green-leaved and white-blossomed, that more than once has been mistaken for Pearlin Jean, is leafless. In spring it may be more cheerful. At the fall of the leaf its solitude lies heavy on one's heart.

Pearlin Jean has left a name that is still a household word in that part of the Merse that she haunted, but la belle Jeanne has gone, whither, who can tell? Haply the poor, restless spirit has found peace at last, yet there are those who still would say, as was said one century ago:—

“ For all the silver in English bank,
Nor yet for all the gold,
Would I pass through the hall of Allank
When the midnight bell has toll'd.”

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IT was the last week of the year. The sky was heavy with grey, watery clouds, the cart-ruts on the road were filled with water, and now and again a petulant little gust of cold wind from the east blew some of the sodden, muddy leaves from the roadside into the puddles.

The two pairs of horses steamed as they dragged their ploughs up the brae, turning the grey-green lea into soft, dark brown furrows. An elderly man with hard, plain features and a sandy grey beard guided one plough. His face was quite expressionless, and he might have been a mechanical toy as he stopped at the headrig, to beat his chilled red hands against his chest, and in a moment went steadily on as before. At the next rig, jogging along after an old white Clydesdale and a younger chestnut mare, one foot in the furrow, one out, was a short, slight, dark-haired lad in soiled grey tweeds, leather leggings, cloth cap, and with knitted purple comforter wound round his neck. He was a plain boy of eighteen, who, but for his budding yellow moustache, might have passed for three years younger. His mouth hung a little open, and his grey eyes stared

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ahead with a somewhat vacant look. "Wo-hup! —Wo-hi!" he called occasionally to his horses, in a voice that took surprising excursions from manly gruffness to a boy's cracked tenor—"Canny, wumman! Canny!" Now and again his eyes wandered to his father's short, thick-set figure, and when they did he looked hastily away, and his vacant look gave place to knitted-browed anxiety. Johnny was thinking hard. It was the eve of a Bannockburn for him, and he was, not unnaturally, nervous.

Johnny was an only child, the only child of parents described by the biographer of past days as "poor, but pious." His father was a ploughman—an upright, honest, godly, conscientious, pig-headed, mannerless person of high principles and narrow views. He lived too late to earn for himself a martyr's crown as an upholder of the Covenant, and also too late to take the ploughman Burns as a model. Like many of his kind, he would quote the line "A man's a man for a' that" as an excuse for bad manners, but he felt a little affronted if a cheerful friend recited *in toto* the poem of Tam o' Shanter at an otherwise decorous social gathering. Euphy Halliday, the wife he was "mairried on"—to use the Scottish expression for the burdensome matrimonial estate—was the most obedient of wives and most devoted of mothers. She was an apple-cheeked little Border belle when he married her, and even after twenty years she still possessed sufficient

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attractions to excuse her husband for showing her a little occasional tenderness. But John Halliday was a person who never unbent.

Johnny, ploughing his furrow, while the purple hills grew grey in the twilight, could never remember him as anything but stern. There was one Saturday, long ago, when John went to the Hiring and brought back with him a little blue-painted wooden wheel-barrow to the overjoyed five-year-old Johnny. The sound of its wheel on the "causey" in front of the cottage, in the early Sabbath morning, brought an indignant, unshaven, shirt-sleeved parent to the door.

"Oh, faither, may I no' just gie it ae wee *holy* hurl?" pleaded the anguished Johnny, and got a skelp for his pains. Through that Sabbath, as he pored over his catechism, his thoughts were with the little blue barrow, shut into the best room as into a gorgeous sepulchre, but he never questioned his father's wisdom. God and his father were to him of much the same nature, both very remote, rather cross, but wholly righteous.

He was a delicate, ailing child, and one night in his childhood, when he had been, as his father put it, "near by wi't," stood out clear in his memory. To the little lad, tossing feverishly in the stuffy, over-blanketed box-bed, the candle-light picture of the gaunt, black-clad minister standing with closed eyes and uplifted hands in the middle of the room—while a grotesquely

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caricatured silhouette of him moved about on the white wall by the fireplace—pleading with an unseen being—of his mother softly weeping in a corner of her apron—of his father (oh, wonder of wonders!) kneeling by the bed, his face hid in his arms, sobbing great, heart-bursting sobs—was something to be catalogued in his mind with his own ideas and pictures of the Day of Judgment.

For eighteen years Johnny had been the apple of his parents' eyes. Never had he shown any tendency to manly vices. The little urchins who smoked cutty pipes in the lee of the muckle haystack he gazed at with round grey eyes that were equally horrified by the immature consumption of tobacco and by the hideous physical upheaval that followed it. Any beverage stronger than lemonade he scunnered at. The concertina, with whose strains he occasionally enlivened "The Raw"—to give the row of white cottages in one of which he dwelt its official title—was, after the very first, when his teacher, who was a frivolous person, taught him a few worldly airs, devoted to the gasping out of hymns. He worked hard. His summer evenings were spent in grooming his horses and polishing their harness, in a harmless game of quoits, or in aimlessly strolling along the public highway. In the long winter evenings he sat over the fire in the parental cottage, reading improving books borrowed from the Free Church library, playing the concertina,

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or joining with his mother in the Psalms and Hymns which she sang with so much spiritual fervour.

To these musical entertainments John Halliday, senior, who had no ear, gave no word of commendation. A stranger might have thought him callous had he seen him sitting by the fire with morose expression and closed eyes. But to John it seemed a little heaven below, in which he was the ruling elder, and where the angelic choir was second to none.

Detractors might say that if young Johnny possessed no manly vices, neither did he possess any manly virtues. "A canny chap" was his description by his fellows. Mothers held him up as an example to their sons. Daughters looked askance at him and nudged and giggled at each other as he passed, for Johnny blushed and looked the other way at their approach. When Mrs. Halliday, in a too expansive moment, confided in the mother of a large family of bouncing daughters that Johnny's breeks were her own design and manufacture from beginning to end, the giggles waxed so loud that Johnny was known on occasion to go a mile out of his road to escape his persecutors. In the kirk there was for him no escape. When, in a pew strait and narrow as the path to righteousness, he sat between his parents—a small and nervous criminal between two sturdy moral policemen—he could not raise his eyes without encountering what seemed to his self-consciousness a mocking smile from some impudent girl. It would have been vain

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for him to try to stay away from the ordeal of Sabbath ordinances. He and his parents "sat under" (ominous words) a most powerful preacher of the Word.

"*No' gang to the kirk the day!*" repeated his horrified mother when he once proffered a shuffling excuse, "ah wadna be fit tae face ma Maker, laddie, gin ah were tae let ye miss sic sermons as ye have ilka Lord's Day. They feed the soul, and they nourish the body."

Quite clearly Johnny could date the day when the society of his parents no longer sufficed him. Vague feelings of dissatisfaction had not unfrequently been his; unformed doubts as to whether there might not be something more to be found in life than what he practically shared with the common domestic cat, that did its mousing in stackyard and barn by day with conscientious regularity, and spent its evenings purring by the fireside.

But one spring morning, when the blackthorn bushes were snowy white, the primroses beginning to show under their shelter, and the little burn that ran through the field in which he was at work sparkled and rippled and glinted in the sun, Johnny listened to a song of a blackbird on a budding birch tree, and felt a great melancholy and longing in his heart. All day the longing and melancholy clung to him, and he was a more than ever dour-looking youth as he arrived late that afternoon

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at the back door of the Big Hoose with two cart-loads of coals. He was backing his horses up to the coal-cellar when there tripped round the corner the one sent by the Fates to rob an honest lad of his peace of mind. Susan was the new housemaid at the Big Hoose—a slim little person with black eyes, a trim waist, and all the experience of nineteen years and five situations. She was not country bred, and country breeding she regarded with contemptuous pity. But the farm-house was four miles distant from the nearest town, and the other servants had each a young man, and so Susan had to make the best of what came her way. Johnny was one of the two unmarried men on the place, and the other young ploughman was already the cook's. Therefore, naturally, when Susan came round the corner she smiled on Johnny—and the deed was done.

He was not skilful in his wooing. When he told her at dusk by the stable-door that she was "a bonny lass," and she giggled and pushed him, he was bereft of speech for the rest of the evening, and blushed in silence on the parental hearth until it was time for bed.

His mother's keen eye quickly noticed a change in him. He wore his best tartan scarf on other days than those on which it was lawful—nay, almost part of a religious observance—to do so. He stayed out later in the evenings. Occasionally, even, he sang as he "cleaned himself" when

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the day's work was done, and the song was not a psalm or hymn or spiritual song as in the days gone by. Euphy Halliday watched her son with growing anxiety, but even the observant maternal eye had not seen all. To the suggestion of her neighbour that "Jock was unco taen up wi' yin o' the lasses in the Big Hoose," she had contemptuously shrugged a "Hoots, wumman, it's naething—naething ava. Johnny's nane o' your lassie kind," and Johnny, passing just then with the concertina carefully concealed under his coat, the woman had retired to her house laughing at the mother's simplicity.

The discovery that Susan was a godless girl came upon Johnny as a shock. She frankly told him she did not like going to church. As frankly she told him she loved balls and concerts and the theatre, she was scornful of him because he did not smoke, and she laughed as at a most excellent jest when the cook's young man rapped out some oaths. But she sang with all the music of a thrush in spring—Johnny knew nothing of nightingales—and when in the farm-kitchen of an evening his fellow ploughman interrupted "Robin Adair" with a "Haud yer wheesht, wumman—ye'll gar Johnny greet," he was nearer the truth than he knew.

So exquisite, so precious, so wholly worshipful and entirely desirable a creature did Susan appear in Johnny's enamoured eyes that criticism became an impossibility. When she commanded a razor

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and ordained that a "dicky" should be worn not only on the Sabbath, her victim bowed to her will, although the dicky question was regarded by his mother as an outrage, and led to some sharp words. Through spring, summer and autumn, Johnny's love idyll meandered on. And now the year was almost gone, and no longer was Johnny permitted to worship in secret. The village, a couple of miles away, was about to show that not to great cities alone were confined the gaieties of social life.

The Bowling Club announced a ball—a ball, with refreshments, with tickets that cost ladies and gentlemen alike the sum of eighteenpence. When first it was rumoured that the village was about to hurl itself into this vortex of frivolity there was much rejoicing at the Big Hoose. In the excited hen-like quality of voice peculiar to their kind, the maids joyed aloud over the festivities to come.

"Ye'll be taking Susan?" coming from the cook's young man was the first intimation which came to Johnny of his unavoidable obligations. Obviously no question arose in Susan's mind as to whether she would go, or in regard to a choice of cavalier.

"You'll have to get a new suit for the ball, Johnny—that checkit one's awful shabby," was the sentence with which she drove home her expectations.

Johnny was a wage-earning man—although hampered by a maternal purse-bearer—so that with

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some diplomacy on his part he knew the suit to be attainable. But he was aghast at the sudden realisation of Susan's stone blindness to see the moral question involved. A *ball*—to go to a *ball*—the people in Torments in the Bad Place had probably all gone to balls in their time. In the heavenly courts above there might be a repentant sinner or two who, in an unregenerate past, had danced at a kirk, but there must be dooms few. It was hideous to think of what his parents' views on the subject would certainly be. For himself he knew—and the thought braced him into a manliness to him hitherto unknown—he would march up to hell's gate with Susan on his arm and fear nor devil nor minister. For days on end Johnny's thoughts were a torment to him. For nights on end did he toss sleepless in his box-bed, and only in the dawning fall asleep to endure a nightmare of a party for which he could never get "cleaned" in time, or at which he appeared in an unseemly grey flannel night-shirt, and was chased by jeering demons. He might never have dared to lay the subject before his mother had she not herself broached it.

Johnny's father was out and the lad sat in the firelight, elbows on knees, chin in his hands, his heart torn by conflicting emotions. Euphy was washing up the tea-things with her usual brisk clatter, and when the clatter stopped, her voice broke the stillness.

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“What’s this I’m hearin’ about a ba’?” she asked. Johnny, his big grey eyes like a frightened child’s, looked up, and felt that all concealment was useless. Little by little his mother extracted all that she wished to know. Of the two tickets he had bought—of the new suit—of the light blue satin tie. Presently Johnny, his fear gone, was talking of it all quite briskly, and wondering how he could ever have dreaded a mother so patient, so sympathetic, so encouraging.

“The faither’ll be in an unco wey about it, Johnny,” she said at last. “He was never a dancer himsel’, and it seems an unco godless divairsion tae the like o’ him.”

“Ah ken that fine,” said Johnny despondently.

Euphy looked compassionately at her lamb.

“Hoots!” she said, “bairns wull be bairns—an’ David himsel’ danced afore the Ark—though ah’ve never thocht the better o’ him for’t. Faither’ll juist hae tae come roond till it. Ance in a wey ah’m no’ heedin’. But, laddie”—and her voice was wistful, for assuredly Johnny had wandered far away from the fold in secret paths during those last months—“laddie, *can ye dance?*”

Johnny grew scarlet. “Ah dinna ken,” he said, “Ah’ve never tried.”

“Megsty me, ma puir lamb!” cried the mother, “you gaun till a ba’ and no able tae dance! Siccan a like thing. But mind ye, Johnny, ah’m no sorry.

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Ah wadna hae likit ye to be dancing in the Big Hoose kitchen or the onstead at nicht. Na, na, ye're no' the dancin' kind. But ye'll hae tae learn afore ye gang tae the ba'."

"Whae'll lairn us?" demanded her son.

"Whae'll lairn ye? Ah'll lairn ye masel."

"Yersel," repeated Johnny faintly.

"And what for no'?" asked his mother. "Ah was a grand dancer afore I was mairriet on John Halliday, though I wasna as senseless as some o' thae titterin' hizzies at the Big Hoose. Aye, ma bairn, ah'll learn ye masel!"

Every night of the week that followed, a strange thing was shadowed on the window-blind of the Hallidays' kitchen when the head of the house went down to the stable in the steading to see to his horses.

Two jigging forms passed and repassed; sometimes singly, sometimes together. And when one evening John returned sooner than was his custom, he was amazed to hear a curious clattering noise on the brick floor, accompanied by an odd booming sound in what seemed to him to be his wife's voice. The kitchen table was pushed to one side, and both wife and son were red and hot and dishevelled when he opened the door.

"What ails ye?" he sternly demanded, and Johnny seized his cap and made for the steading without a moment's delay, while Euphy, with an

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asperity unusual to her, merely replied—in answer to the repeated query “*What ails ye?*”—“*T’oots, nae-thing, mon! ‘Tak off your buits. They’re a’ glaur.*”

John, unlacing his boots, grunted once or twice, but made no further effort to solve the mystery.

“Some folk,” he said, “wad speir the inside oot o’ a wheelbarrow, but I’m no’ yin o’ them. An’ I dinna haud wi’ speirin’ the road ye ken.”

Whether he kenned it or did not ken it, Johnny tried hard to discover on that December afternoon when he watched his father’s ploughshare making furrows as straight and smooth as if the substance he had to deal with was nothing harder than butter. For the day had arrived at last. That evening Johnny was to escort Susan to the Ball.

When “lowsin’” time came, Johnny fancied that his father cast a quizzical eye upon him when he showed unusual haste to get home. But surely he must be mistaken. An angry eye, an eye of reproach and of condemnation was what he expected. He had never looked on his father exactly as human, and the Deity that Johnny had mostly heard of from the pulpit was One who was angry with the wicked every day.

It was impossible for Euphy not to feel a glow of maternal pride when Johnny, his face shining with soap and his hair anointed with oil until it dripped like Aaron’s beard, his new suit on, his

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bright blue tie, his boots well blacked, and his dicky snowy white, creaked down the stair and cautiously looked round the corner of the door before going on to the Big Hoose to secure his partner for the evening's entertainment.

"Aye, the faither's doon-bye," she said; "ye're lookin' unco braw, laddie. But eh, ah'm feared ye'll no' mind your steps when the fiddle begins. Try an' coont to yoursel'—*yin*, twae, three, hop—*yin*, twae, three. . . ."

It was very palpitating to be so braw, but yet more palpitating was it for Johnny when he discovered that Susan wore a pink blouse cut a little low at the neck and a string of pearls that looked priceless. Who was he that he should be the Chosen of such an adorable sylph? He looked with scorn on the other maidens and their escorts. "Susan," he whispered as they went, "linking," down the muddy road, "ye're awfy bonny. Ye're faur the bonniest," and Susan the sophisticated was momentarily satisfied.

The village schoolroom was lit by many a lamp and candle when they arrived. Holly decorated the walls. On an extemporised platform at the end of the room sat the fiddler, who was also the local tailor, "a pairfeck fiend to play, gin ye give him eneuch whusky," according to the cook's young man. Refreshments were spread in the inner schoolroom, and were presided over by Mrs. Trummle who kept

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the bit shop in the village. Her fitness for the post of caterer was obvious, for in her shop could be purchased twopenny pies, buns, and lemonade, and the provision merchant had this evening risen to the occasion and made ham sandwiches of a size unequalled on any other public occasion by any other public purveyor.

The party from the Big Hoose was in excellent time, and Johnny, conscious that his tailor had pinched his coat under the arms and that the vest was too tight across the chest, strove to cheer up when Susan, her wraps removed, tripped in at the door and stood by his side. She was quite the prettiest girl there—of that he had no doubt—and his heart swelled within him when he overheard a man behind him ask a friend, “Whae’s the lass wi’ the pink? Yon’s the one for me.” “The one for *him*, indeed!”—his own Susan, who one day should be Mrs. Johnny. He would have turned to glare at the insolent fellow, but the Master of Ceremonies was in haste to begin. “Ready for the Grand March!” he cried, “get haud o’ your pairtners!” Johnny remembered that the last time he had seen the M.C. was at sheep-dipping time, when bleating flocks and not human beings were herded by him. His voice was just the same voice in which he had addressed the collies, and Johnny had a sudden pang of sympathy for those hustled, excited, foolish sheep that this herd

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had thumped and buffeted and pushed into taking a plunge into that most unattractive water.

At the very outset Johnny's luck was not with him. "Gang on a bit quicker, can ye no'?" shouted the M.C.—"ye're no' at a funeral"—and then, with apology, "*Oh!* it's wee Johnny! gang on, laddie." Susan grew pink and shut her mouth tight, and when the abashed Johnny trod on a frill of her cream beige skirt and the gathers gave an offended little shriek, she looked at him in a way that froze his heart. But in for a penny, in for a pound. The fiddler struck up a lively polka, and Johnny, with the courage born of desperation, laid hold of his partner as though of one with whom he had a mind to wrestle. For two desperate minutes, in fact, did he wrestle with her—and it seemed to him that every man and woman in the room was his enemy. They seemed to charge at him on purpose; they ran into him; they kicked his legs; they trod on his feet. In pairs they hurled themselves against him and Susan. Had Susan been a football and he a Rugby back, facing the concentrated energies of the opposing team, Johnny could scarcely have suffered more. Nor, it is only fair to say, could Susan. Miserably he tried to recall his mother's instructions, "One, two, *three*, hop—one, two, three——" but at the hop he landed on Susan's little toes, and, with a cry of pain and of anger together, she dragged him scrambling through the crowd.

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“Mercy on us!” she said, “I might as well dance with a cairt-horse.”

Johnny mumbled unending apologies, and suggested refreshments—“A cup o’ tea? or some leemonade?”—and Susan, knowing that Mrs. Trummle was likely to have pins with which to repair her damages, gave a curt assent. The laughter with which she greeted the sandwiches might have led her partner to think himself forgiven, but her biting sarcasm over the thickness of the bread and the solidity of the ham showed that her temper was a little gone.

“A *sangwidge!* Ca’ *thae* sangwidges? For pity’s sake dinna gang biting at *thae* muckle *pieces*: folk’ll think ye dinna get your meat at hame.”

Abundance of lemonade and some conversational peppermints slightly mended matters, and when the fiddler began a *schottische*, Johnny, observing the motions of his fellows, sprang up in readiness. The rough boards of the floor were already getting polished, and he took a quite unintentional skate and cannoned off Susan into a tall young man who stood by the door.

“Goh! but it’s sluppy!” he exclaimed.

“No’ sluppy enough, my boy,” said the man cheerily, holding him up, and Johnny realised that it was the same person who had said that Susan was the lass for him. He recognised him now, a tall ex-private of the K.O.S.B., the new postman in the neighbouring parish, and saw that he was smiling with

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entire friendship and bold admiration at Susan, who was tittering.

“Well, Sluppy, are you goin’ to dance? for if you’re no’ sluppier I’ll dance wi’ your partner masel.”

A skirl of laughter from Susan awoke every slumbering demon in Johnny’s breast. All the tales of the postman’s sinful past and of his present fondness for a dram were recalled to him.

“*C’way*,” he said to Susan, and seized her arm with the mannerless mastery of primitive man. Susan, surprised, and a little shocked, did not forget her manners. “Gruppit or lowse?” she queried. “Ah’ve *gruppit* ye,” said Johnny sternly, and essayed to begin.

And then once more did those who filled that ballroom seem to rise in enmity against an innocent youth, and this time a worse evil befell him, for first of all a titter like the wind in a plane-tree sounded in his ears above the music, then loud laughter. They were laughing at him. Everyone in the room seemed to him to be mocking and nickering at him like the jeering devils of his dream.

“Ye muckle *gomeril!*” came Susan’s furious voice in his ear, “let go; can ye no’ sit doon? Ye’re making a perfect fule o’ us.”

Loosening his clutch of her, he scrambled through the throng. Everyone seemed to be making contemptible jokes to him about himself. He hated everybody. He hated his mother; she had taught

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him all wrong. He hated Susan. And when he saw her joyously dancing *vis-à-vis* to the tall ex-soldier, whose steps were the admiration of the whole room, he understood for the first time in his life the meaning of murder. The beastly tailor-fiddler played on and on. The suit he had made was the most uncomfortable misfit in all the world. Why could not the old brute stay at home and make clothes fit to wear instead of scraping a fiddle and drinking whisky?

The schottische came to an end at last, and Johnny, the consciousness that he had paid for Susan's ticket and refreshments and that, in spite of everything, she was his lawful partner for the entire evening upholding him, stepped forward to claim her, his face pale, his hair streaked over his eyes. But the soldier's arm was round her.

"Hullo, Sluppy," he said—and Johnny hated him yet more for the folly of the name—"been enjoying yourself? Us ones have had an A1 dance."

"Ye'd better have some lemonade," said Johnny, fiercely ignoring him and laying a proprietary hand on Susan's arm.

"Just what we're going to have, my lad," said the soldier-postman; and Susan said, "For pity's sake go and sort yoursel'. Your dicky's a' burst open an' your tie's ridden up."

"Are ye no' coming wi' me? You're *ma* pairtner," said Johnny in a voice out of which it was impossible to keep a tremble.

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“*Certainly not,*” said Susan stiffly, “ye’d better gang hame. Ye’re no’ fit to be here. *Ye canna dance.*”

And then, to her confusion and to the scandal of the company, Johnny’s manhood failed him. With an unrestrained roar of grief he burst into tears, and ran out of the room sobbing like a punished child, out of the heat and the noise and the light, into the kind darkness.

The days that followed the ball were terrible days for Johnny. He was thankful when his work lay far afield, when he could be all alone with his miserable thoughts and out of reach of the taunts and jeers of his fellows. He had slunk up to bed so quietly on that wretched night that he fancied his parents had not realised his early return. But he knew very well that some variant or other of the tale of his shame was bound to reach them both. So, indeed, it did, but the tale-bearers were not those who scored. Lions protecting their young were mild compared with the Hallidays over a reference to what was supposed to be an amusing incident.

Quite definitely had Susan accepted her partner at the ball as her young man. Johnny saw her no more.

The short winter days lengthened out, and once more the blackthorn came into bloom and the birds sang love-songs from budding trees. Johnny’s evenings were again spent by the parental fireside,

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and more conscientiously than ever did he now peruse the improving books of the church library. With the spring a new interest came into his life. There arrived in the village a little band of men and women, most firm and ardent in their belief, most fervent and zealous in their desire to turn many to righteousness—a sort of little Salvation Army without bands or uniform. They called themselves “Pilgrims,” and Euphy Halliday was one of those already godly women who speedily came under their sway. Night after night she attended their meetings, and came home with radiant face to sing liting hymns all through her work the next day. John Halliday remained at home.

“Aye, I ken they’re guid folk, but I dinna haud wi’ thae revivalists. They’re faur owre sudden. Ye canna get a guid crop o’ neeps without a guid braird, an’ wi’ their wey o’ it, braird there’s nane.”

Johnny also, at first, stayed at home and silently read opposite his father by the fire, but one evening curiosity lured him to the schoolhouse in his mother’s company. It was a place of bitter memories, but there was no holly now, no refreshments, and a little American organ played by an earnest-faced woman in spectacles replaced that hateful fiddle to whose haunting strains the boy’s unhappy thoughts had jigged for many a night and day. Amongst the audience were some of those who had danced on that fateful night, but only serious thoughts were theirs now.

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That was the first evening of a fortnight of evenings for Johnny, and towards the end of that time it was rumoured amongst the unregenerate that Johnny Halliday was "converted." There were very few in that district who saw in the phrase anything to mock at. Rather did they repeat it with awe, feeling that the wind which bloweth where it listeth had touched one of their fellows, and that a mysterious importance consequently enveloped him. To Susan in the Big Hoose the tidings came—and came just after her military friend had been dismissed from his post owing to some irregularity of conduct and had left the district. "He stands up afore them a'," pursued her informant, "and he pits up a prayer as gude as ony o' them, and he gives testimony."

Susan's awed amazement was tempered with curiosity. That "Johnny Raw," as the other maids had called him—that lumpish, ignorant ploughboy—it seemed barely credible. She declined to take it second-hand. She must go and see for herself. An excellent chance, too, came in her way. The Pilgrims' last night in the district was to be celebrated by a "Sur-ree," and to this anyone could go who purchased the necessary sixpenny ticket. Susan urged on her fellow-servants the necessity for taking advantage of any sort of entertainment that came their way, and all save the cook, who honestly acknowledged that she dreaded the awkward con-

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sequences of conversion, were ready to follow her lead.

“Ye ken fine wha I mean,” said the cook: “her that I was wi’ doon near Kelso. We was a’ bapteezed in the river, an’ I had the snifters for a twalmonth, an’ the butler a hoast he never got quit o’. And it was Temperance the next turn, an’ a’ the champagne and port and auld brandy coupit intil the Tweed, an’ I’se warrant the saumon was singin’ an’ fechtin’ when they wan their way into the saumon-nets at Berwick.”

Susan, in modest black hat with white wings, walked into the schoolhouse with two other maids on the evening of the “Sur-ree.” She was accommodated with a seat on a form, and was uncertain whether to preserve the stolid blindness, deafness, and dumbness that was *de rigueur* in the village church, or to bow smiling recognitions to her friends. Finally she compromised in a smile, smothered, half-born, in gloomy decorum. Not two minutes had she been seated before she became aware of the presence of Johnny. Dressed in the same garments he had worn a bare five months ago, but with a sedate black tie replacing the giddy blue, Johnny showed people into their places like an elder in the kirk. When, the schoolhouse being more than full, tea was served from the ante-room, Johnny carried one of the large teapots and poured out into cups and mugs. He handed currant cake,

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Selkirk bannock, and buttered scones. Obviously he was on terms of equality with all the Pilgrims, and exchanged dignified jokes, provocative of godly smiles, with the chief Pilgrim there and with her in spectacles who led the psalmody and played the organ. Susan watched him, enthralled. When he passed her a plate of cake she caught his eye, and he smiled quite kindly: "Ye'll hae' a piece o' bannock?" he said, "or I'll can get ye a scone."

Susan was badly piqued. Her victim was gone. She was at a loss to account for the amazing metamorphosis.

Tea over, they had hymns—ringing, strenuous, zealous hymns. Through them all she could hear Johnny's voice—a surer tenor than when she heard it last. Then came a moment when she knew not whether to titter or to weep.

"Brother John Halliday," said the chief Pilgrim, "will now lead us in prayer."

Johnny prayed, and Susan wept. Addresses followed—moving, fiery, emotional, unreserved. And then Brother John Halliday gave testimony. No reformed burglar, no rescued murderer, no remnant of human wreckage snatched from the flotsam and jetsam of civilisation could have painted in more lurid, more terrifying colours, his previous case. Johnny Halliday had been a great sinner; no one could doubt it. And now he was snatched from the jaws of Hell—he had passed from Death unto Life.

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Susan laid her head down on the desk before her and wept bitterly. She could not tell why, and when a female Pilgrim of forbidding exterior came to whisper an inquiry as to whether she would like to remain for the After-Meeting and come to the Inquirers' Bench, Susan gave a hasty and unconsidered "Megsty, *na!*" and swiftly dried her tears. But she went home to dream of Johnny—Johnny who had gone to Vanity Fair and who had found his way on from there to the Celestial City. . . . The unconscious Johnny was avenged.

But all that happened thirty years ago. Susan's husband, a worthy carpenter, did not regret her when she left him in company with a dissipated friend. Johnny is a solid, stolid, farm-steward with an active wife and five stirring bairns. He is no longer "Brother John Halliday," nor is he an elder of the kirk, although he goes there with a fair amount of regularity, and he is wedded to a black cutty pipe and has no aversion to a dram.

But now and again, on a winter evening when he is guiding a plough over the brown loam and the twilight is turning the hills from purple into grey, the remembrance comes to himself of his visit to Vanity Fair, and the horses that are checked suddenly do not know that his smile beautifies an otherwise plain face. Nor do they understand the subtlety of the one word that he says.

"*Goh!*" he exclaims. "That is all."

THE DOCTOR

“THE old order changeth.” The parish priest of to-day is a product of the twentieth century. The parish priest of past days is almost forgotten. And because we would seek not to forget one of the old order, whose “ways were ways of pleasantness” and all of whose “paths were peace,” we write of him now.

To us he was always the “Doctor.” Once on a time a certain university bestowed on him the title of D.D., for no other reason than that anyone could discover than that for which some schools give a prize for general excellence and good behaviour. It was equivalent to a D.S.O. in worldly warfare, and we have never met anyone who grudged him his title.

In these days it may not be considered a great thing to have been the minister of a sleepy little country parish for more than half a century, yet to anyone who has lived for any time in a country parish it must, indeed, seem a great thing to be able to say that during the fifty years he lived and laboured there his name was never touched by the breath of scandal—and, like a green bay tree, does

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scandal flourish in peaceful country parishes; that he was never found to fail in his duty; never heard to say anything uncharitable of anyone, nor known to give anyone cause to say anything against him. To go for fifty years steadily on one's way, doing one's work honestly, faithfully, unselfishly, accepting any hardships or troubles that come in one's path as part of the daily service—what manner of man must he be who can attain to this? If the Doctor's prayers were extra long, and his sermons bafflingly doctrinal, and more than a trifle prosy, what then? "There maun aye be a something," as the mother of the bride said to the clergyman at the conclusion of the marriage ceremony, and went on to explain that her daughter "couldna thole the man."

It was very hard to pick a fault in the Doctor, so that the captious, naturally, gladly welcomed the error of his wig. Undeniably he wore one, once of a rich brown, in tint and texture far removed from anything human. Had we ever considered the wig to be the outcome of personal vanity we might have thought that here, at least, we had found a weak spot in his harness. But we very well recognised the truth. The Doctor had a sister, chubby and kind, and blessed with perennial youth. To her, age was a pain, and not only did she obviously feel it her duty to keep the Doctor's manse an example of polished rectitude to the whole parish, but she felt it right to make her brother wear a wig and dye his whiskers

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purple. Many a time did we deeply regret that she should have let her sense of duty go so far astray ; yet to blame the Doctor would have been an outrageous thing. We knew full well that he might have appeared a venerable and commanding figure with bald head and white whiskers, had it not been for pure obligingness and brotherly love. As it was, his whiskers, at regular intervals, appeared a rich blue-black, fading from that to a sage green of the "High Art" period. When in one's unregenerate youth one went to church, eagerly expecting them to have arrived at a vivid grassy green, one's hopes were dashed at the sight of a colour that once more vied with those of the churchyard yews.

The Doctor's pony-carriage was, during nearly all those fifty years of his labours, in a continuous state of disrepair. "Donald," his pony, in the later days when we knew him, with his shaggy, ungroomed coat, clumsy legs, and steady trot, matched it well.

One summer, when the manse was let to a family rich in children, and Donald had every day, in direct defiance of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, to drag out a father, mother, aunt, nurse, and a large assortment of olive branches, the carriage—a low four-wheeled basket vehicle—rebelled to the point of disruption, leaving the nurse, parents, and most of the children sitting on the road as well as they were able to do on a seat and two well-worn wheels ; Donald trotted sturdily on

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with the wheels that remained and the rest of the cargo.

There was no better-known equipage in all our county—nor, indeed, in the two adjacent ones—in the Doctor's day than that much-mended phaeton and its patient steed. In rain and in storm, when the roads were "siling wat," according to John, the minister's man, or heavy with snow or with mud, the Doctor and Donald were at their duty. Like the Gracious Lady who ruled when he was here, the Doctor was always "on the spot." In condolences and congratulations none could forestall him. News of accidents and of illnesses reached him with a speed that seemed little short of miraculous at a time when there were no telephones or motors, and when telegrams were little used. No matter the hour of day or night, the Doctor was sure to be on the scene of action, ready to "pit up a prayer" with the sufferer or the bereaved. In his prayers he dealt largely in detail, and left no room for misapprehensions.

"Lord, be with that member of this congregation who I did not hear until yesterday was ill, and whom I consequently could not see until last night." In such terms have we heard him pray.

A member of his congregation, in handing on after service an interesting item of local gossip to a Dissenting friend, explained that he had "got it in the Doctor's first prayer—ye get a' the clash o' the parish in the Doctor's first prayer."

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But the Doctor's "clash" was never of a nature unfit to be retailed to the Almighty. He had received, to a marvellous extent, "that most excellent gift of charity," and in deed and in word was the gift unfailingly shown. It was an ill thing to have earned a stern rebuke from one whose mercy was boundless, whose courtesy was perfect. Equally courteous was he to the countess who occupied the big square pew with its flamboyant coat of arms in his church every Sunday, and to the half-crazed, evil-tongued woman who bore the local notoriety of being a witch, and never came to church at all. For his feelings of horror with regard to the old woman, whose appearance, without any further evidence, would have hurried her to the stake had she lived two centuries earlier, the Doctor blamed himself.

"I cannot bring myself to pray *with* her," he said regretfully—"at least, not yet. I can only pray *for* her."

A casual parishioner of his who was always ready to give testimony to the excellence of the Doctor's manners was the rag-and-bone man, born in a ditch just within the parish bounds, and baptized by the minister. Many a meal, many a suit of shabby black, had this incorrigible tramp received from the manse. Two days, not more, was the period during which "Jock" looked like a mourner of dissipated countenance or a waiter out of a situation. Then,

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once again, was he seen in his familiar tatters, and the ministerial garments had vanished, whence no one knew. It was through Jock that the Doctor once put a real affront on the pride of the parish. He had been "pittin' up a prayer" for a sick woman whose cottage lay five miles from the village, and came out into drifting rain to find Donald contentedly cropping the wet grass by the roadside. But the phaeton was not, as he had expected to find it, empty. A large sack full of whitening stood on the seat, and beside it sat Jock, his little pock-marked face calm and inscrutable as usual.

"How do you do, John?" said the Doctor; "it is long since we met."

"I'm fine," said the tramp; "ye'll gie's a lift?"

"Certainly, John," said his friend, and, to the scandal of the onlookers, he picked up the reins, and Donald jogged off with the ill-assorted pair, whitening sack and all, for all the world to see.

Ten years later Jock expressed his thanks.

It was a chill October day, with white mist driving from the hills, and a smirr of fine rain falling, when the Doctor went last into his old grey church, with its ivy-covered gables.

But he was carried by men whose hearts were heavy, and when the prayers had been said over one whose warfare was ended, he was laid to rest under the old plane trees whose leaves lay deep round the grave. Seated in a dark corner of the church was

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a little misshapen, chilly figure, clad in shabby "blacks," very much too large. From what pawnshop in what corner of the kingdom Jock had retrieved them, who can say? The large assembly of mourners passed into the graveyard, and still, in his dark corner, he sat, his eyes fixed on the spot in front of the pulpit, where only one or two broken white blossoms remained to show what had lain there. The earth was thudding down on the coffin when he slouched away into the rain. The Doctor had baptized him, and who can say to what other grace had he called his soul?

More than one good parish priest has occupied the Doctor's pulpit since then. They are of the school described by the outraged old lady as having "a saft hat, a dog-collar, and nae Hell"; and bicycles, trim dogcarts, and motors have displaced old Donald and the basket-phaeton. Jock died long since of pneumonia in a casual ward. Only we old, grey-haired people remember clearly what manner of man was he whose name we read on a gravestone where stains of time and weather have taken the sharp edge from off the letters. There is green moss in those that run across the stone, low down, where dead leaves huddle against it, but we can still trace the words, "a workman needin' not to be ashamed."

HOW THE PLAGUE WAS BURIED

“ Mark, in yon vale, a solitary stone,
Shunned by the swain, with loathsome weeds o’ergrown !
The yellow stonecrop shoots from every pore,
With scaly, sapless lichens crusted o’er :
Beneath the base, where starving hemlocks creep,
The yellow pestilence is buried deep.”

LEYDEN.

“ *The Plague*,”—what do the two words mean even now in countries where the population is as dry tinder waiting for the microbe of pestilence to strike ? What was it in our own land in days when its advent was like that of the Destroying Angel on the Passover night in Egypt ? But in Britain no houses were passed over, nor were they only elder sons who died. An icy hand struck father and mother, son and daughter, the peer in his castle, the hind in his hovel. Hand in hand the Plague and Death stalked through crowded streets, crept through the fetid alleys of great cities, and brought horror to lonely cottages amongst the hills. There was no gainsaying them. They were guests who forced their way through every door. In Scotland the Plague was late in coming. Long after England’s population had been decimated by “The Black Death,” the sister country was still immune.

HOW THE PLAGUE WAS BURIED

“Gode and Saint Mungo, Saint Ronayn, and Saint Andrew, schield us this day fro Gode’s grace, and the foul death that Englishmen dien on” was the prayer of the Scots in days before the “foul death” had found its way over the Cheviots. But it came at last.

In the fourteenth century a Scottish army marched across the Border, thinking to profit by the fact of England being plague-stricken. Terrible was the enemy that greeted their advance. Five thousand of them were slain by the Black Death, nor did it leave them then, but went with the retreating army—an invisible, omnipotent, grimly merciless foe—to their own homes, there to claim its toll of victims from amongst those that the Scottish soldiers held most dear.

In 1637 and again in 1644 the Plague returned, and there are those still alive who can tell of the year when “The Cholera” came to the Border and swept off whole families at but a few hours’ warning. In some of the Border churchyards vast mounds are pointed out as the graves of those who died in one of those years of Plague, and whose bodies were huddled together under one grassy barrow. Other mounds there are, marking the site of the “Deid houses” where the corpses of those who were smitten by the pestilence were brought before interment, and which were afterwards demolished; and now and again a yet more grisly explanation of these mounds is given.

NORTH AND SOUTH OF TWEED

In a wild part of Teviotdale such a grassy hillock is to be found, gloomiest of all gloomy graves in which the victims of the Black Death lie, for here, tradition tells us, "the Plague was buried."

In olden days a shepherd's cottage stood where the mound now is, and although their neighbours were few, and the distance between their cottages great, the herd and his wife and bairns lived together in happiness and contentment through the long, bright summer days, and the short, chill days of winter. Not many strangers found their way between the treacherous peatholes across the miles of rough moorland, and great was the excitement in the cottage when one did come.

It was an August day, and a blazing sun was drawing the fragrance out of the billowing purple sea of heather on the moor. There was no sound but the hum of the bees, or an occasional crow from a grouse on the hillside. A couple of collies dozed in front of the cottage door, enjoying a well-earned rest, while two yellow-haired bairns played quietly beside them. The housewife within was busy with her daily tasks. She and her husband were simple, honest, hardworking, kindly folk, who had no enemies to fear, and so, with fearless heart, she hastened to the door when loud barking from the dogs and the hasty entrance of the children proclaimed the arrival of a stranger. Innocent visitor enough he seemed. Who could have told that a jolly-faced, glib-tongued

HOW THE PLAGUE WAS BURIED

English pedler, with not a hint of black tragedy about him, brought with him to the little cottage the enemy, Death? There was joy and interest indeed in the household when the pedler unslung his pack and displayed his wares. Not from one year's end to another did the goodwife see a shop, and here was a shop brought to her door, with all sorts of delightful things to be bought for each one in the house. Something for her goodman and for every one of her bairns did the good woman purchase with her carefully hoarded bawbees.

Then—"And what for yourself, mistress?" asked the man. "Too young and bonny by far you are not to be caring for braws. A braw string o' the blue beads, now? a lace collar like what the ladies in London are wearing? No?—then what of a cap? a cap with cherry ribbons to match your own fair cheeks? A bargain it was—a gift almost. Would the goodman look and see how fair a wife he had?"

The cap was placed on the woman's head and arranged by the pedler's clever fingers, and while she blushed and looked shy, and the bairns gaped in amazed admiration, the pedler vowed she looked like the lady of a laird, and the herd himself thought he had never seen anyone to compare with his own bonny wife. His hand sought his pocket, and the jingle of money drove the pedler to further efforts.

"A bargain indeed! Worn only once by a lady

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of quality and sold by her because the cherry ribbons made her face look pale. Second-hand, if you please, and therefore sold cheap—dirt cheap. What said the goodman?"

The bargain was easily concluded, and the pedler, well paid and well fed, went whistling across the moors, leaving a happy household behind him.

Only one day later, the woman fell ill. Burning fever, icy cold shivers, torturing pains and sickness came upon her, and she had to leave her work to the elder children and creep into bed.

But not only upon her was the Plague's cruel hand laid. The "lady of quality," victim of the Pestilence and first owner of the cap with cherry ribbons, had handed on poison enough to slay many. One by one the children were smitten, and it was a white-faced, wild-eyed man who arrived at the nearest farm-house one morning as the sun was beginning to glorify the Cheviots, and frantically begged for help.

The people of the place heard the news with terror. There was no eye to pity, no hand to save. The tidings were sent speeding to all the nearest homesteads, and soon there assembled in that lonely place a band of men, fierce and strong of purpose—as ready to deal with the raids of this invisible and most foul enemy as they would have been with a band of reivers from the English side. Their judgment was unanimous. One family must be sacrificed for the sake of many. *The Plague must be buried.*

HOW THE PLAGUE WAS BURIED

A body of stern executioners, they rode down the glens and over the moors, dumbly disregarding the herd's horrified entreaties. They shut the cottage door, and with the spades they had brought with them they proceeded to throw earth over the little house. For half a day they worked, until it was buried full five foot deep, and all through these hours the cries of the helpless victims rent their ears, if they did not tear their hearts. The shepherd, as one demented, shrieked his prayers for mercy and cried to Heaven to save his wife and little ones, but the men laboured on, paying no heed. At last a big turf was laid over the chimney, and the wailings from inside were heard no more.

Like a mad thing, tearing with shaking hands at the clods of earth, vainly striving to work a way in, the herd continued to scream prayers and curses. But, like a mad thing, he was hounded off. He, too, was unclean, a menace to his fellows. They saw him rushing over the heather that the setting sun was staining as if with blood, his arms thrown up, his ghastly face uplifted to the Heavens that had not listened to his prayers, and, dead or alive, they never saw him more.

And upon the grassy mound under which the cruel Plague lies imprisoned, the Teviotdale breezes blow sweetly, and the daisies grow.

A BORDER SAINT

MANY a year before good King David founded Melrose Abbey, there stood, three or four miles farther down the river Tweed than where the ruined abbey now stands, another monastic building, known as the monastery of Melrose. It was founded by Aidan, Bishop of Northumbria, a disciple of the holy St. Columba, and when he and his missionary monks from Iona first came there, they gave the place its name of Mailros—from *maol ros*, the naked headland in the wood. Just opposite the red scaurs of Bemersyde, within a stone's throw of the Tweed, the monastery was builded, where the trees still grow in magnificence. Still do the Eildons almost overshadow it, and still Tweed goes murmuring past, but the names of Old Melrose and of Monk's Ford are all that are left to speak to us of what was once the most important monastery between Iona and Lindisfarne, and "a when banes," dug up occasionally in a neighbouring garden, are all that testify to its having been a burial-place of the Northumbrian kings.

It was during the reign of a Northumbrian abbot, Eata, a pupil of St. Aidan, that Cuthbert,

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greatest of the Border saints, came there to claim his saintship.

At Wrangholm, a hamlet not far from Smailholm Tower — as entirely non-existent now as is the monastery of Old Melrose, and with its site marked only by a few rugged old ash-trees—Cuthbert was born. From his childhood, his was a striking personality. He was a very handsome child, very strong and active, and excelling in all games and sports, and his face was a beautiful one that in later years was described as the face of an angel. He grew up as the child of any peasant was likely to grow, leading a healthy, open-air life, seeing all the beauties of nature round him, wrestling, running, jumping, and “delighting in mirth and clamour.” “Frequently,” a biographer tells us, “when the rest were tired, he alone would hold out, and look triumphantly around to see if any remained to contend with him for victory.” Yet, quite unconsciously, perhaps, that monastery across the river was influencing the merry little lad. He lived near enough Mailros to see the monks as they started on their dangerous journeys amongst the heather—the worshippers of the cruel old gods—who dwelt high up in the passes of the Cheviots and in the Wood of Caledon. Many a tale he must have heard of their saintliness and their heroism, and sometimes the tinkle of their bell and the music of their deep voices chanting were borne to him, up there on the wooded heights, across the

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murmuring river. The sight of men tonsured from ear to ear, wearing white tunics and coarse cloaks of undyed wool, and armed only with a pilgrim's staff and the invisible power of an almighty God, setting forth on perilous journeys that would probably end in martyrdom, must have stirred the imagination and fired the zeal of a naturally intelligent and spiritually-minded boy. Even as a child, we are told, he strove to imitate the monks of Mailros, praying and keeping vigil in the night-time.

When he was still a little boy, according to his ingenuous biographer, his first call came to him. He and some others were amusing themselves with the light-hearted folly of their age, when a child of three came to Cuthbert and begged him not to be so foolish. Cuthbert answered him jestingly, whereupon the little fellow threw himself on the ground in a passion of tears, and to Cuthbert, who strove in vain to comfort him, he sobbingly said :

“Wherefore dost thou, the holy Cuthbert, elder and bishop, thus contravene thy nature and high calling? It becomes not thee, whom the Lord hath appointed to instruct in virtue thine elders, to be thus playing among babes !”

When Cuthbert's second call came, his heedless days were over. Like other shepherds of old, he was watching his flocks by night when there came to him a heavenly vision. The shepherds of those days had ever to be fighters, as well as guardians

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of their flocks. Spear in hand, they kept their vigil through the live-long night, with much to fear both from man and from beast. In the forests the wolves howled, and many another beast of prey was constantly ready to snatch a victim from a carelessly tended flock. Down from the lonelier parts of the land, too, came wild men, ready to steal, and ready to slay. So Cuthbert, the shepherd lad, was wide awake that August night, up on the hillside above the Leader whose murmur and plash, far down below, he could hear mingling with the million nameless sounds of the silent night. Miles down the valley, at Mailros, the monks kept vigil, and Cuthbert, up on the hillside, also kept vigil and spent the midnight hours in prayer.

A far cry it is from Melrose to the Holy Island in the North Sea, where foaming breakers crash unceasingly against the rocks, and that night the holy Aidan lay there a-dying. And as Aidan's spirit passed away, a wonderful vision formed itself before the eyes of the shepherd boy on the heights of the Leader. Through the darkness of the sky broke a long shaft of light, and down the glorious path angels descended, received amongst them "a spirit of surpassing brightness," and with him speedily winged their way heavenwards. In prayer and exaltation Cuthbert spent the remainder of the night. When morning came, he gave his flocks into the care of their owners and set out for Mailros. He knew that

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at Lindisfarne there were many saintly men, but "the great reputation of Boisil, a monk and priest of surpassing merit," drew him to the monastery he had known from his childhood.

When he had forded the Tweed, and reached the monastery, he sprang from his horse, handed his spear to an attendant, and was about to enter the church to pray. At the door stood Boisil the prior, who came, open-armed, to greet him: "Behold a servant of the Lord," he said, and welcomed Cuthbert with gladness. To him Cuthbert told his vision and how he had come to enlist as a servant and soldier of Christ. And Boisil, knowing that the lad had seen St. Aidan's soul leaving the earth where he had worked so faithfully, and realising that great things must indeed be in store for him to whom had been vouchsafed so miraculous a vision, speedily introduced Cuthbert to the Abbot, and thereafter took him under his own tuition. St. John's Gospel was the book he took most pains to teach him perfectly, and perfectly did Cuthbert learn the lesson taught by the Apostle whose doctrine was that of love to his fellow-creatures. The story goes, that long after Cuthbert's education was at an end, the book from which he learned was left at Durham, and "was held in such reverence, even by the moths, that none of them ever ventured to set a sacrilegious tooth in it."

A few days after his being received into the monastery Cuthbert received the tonsure and was

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enrolled among the brethren, and from that day onward he worked indeed as a worthy member of the *Milites Christi*. Very soon his power began to make itself felt upon all with whom he came in contact.

“He had such grace and skill in expression, such persuasive zeal, and such an angelic face and countenance, that no one presumed to lock up the secrets of his heart from him.” As in his boyhood, he was a wrestler and a fighter, but he wrestled now with “spiritual wickedness and with the rulers of darkness.” Even as he had excelled in sport, he now excelled his fellow-monks in all the self-denials and austerities of the monastic life. “In reading, working, watching, and praying, he fairly outdid them all.” He was, so Bede also tells us, “of a robust frame, unimpaired strength, and fit for any labour which he might be disposed to take in hand.” Well for him that his constitution was of iron, for nothing less than iron would have withstood the appalling severity of the discipline to which he subjected himself during his ten years at Mailros. When the trees on Tweedside were leafless, the brown reeds, silvered by hoar-frost, shivering in a chill night wind, and the water, of steel and ebony, almost ice-bound, Cuthbert would go at nightfall to the river, and wading deep into the stream, would stand there, chanting the Psalms of David from beginning to end. When the yellow morning light was beginning to creep

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over Bemersyde Hill, he went back to the monastery, to return, night after night, so that the flesh might be mortified, the fires of passion extinguished. His novitiate over, Cuthbert's work as evangelist was carried on with the same magnificent zeal and whole-heartedness which had always characterised him. Aidan did not know the speech of the Borderers and required an interpreter. Cuthbert was himself a Borderer and knew both the tongue and the character of the people with whom he had to deal. Sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, he went from village to village. His fiery zeal, his simple, boundless belief in the faith he preached, his fine oratory, and his own powerful, magnetic personality, were irresistible compelling forces, and the heathen of the Border hills were by him won over to Christianity. For weeks on end the monastery would not see him, while he carried on his missionary work with that splendid enthusiasm that was so striking a part of himself. He "frequented most those places, preached most in those villages which lay far in the high and rugged mountains, which others feared to visit, and which by their poverty and barbarism repelled the approach of teachers." Far up the valley of the Tweed he penetrated, deep into the Wood of Caledon, and founded Chapel Kingledoors by a lonely mountain burn. To the shores of the Solway, where Kirkcudbright (the Kirk of Cuthbert) bears his name, to

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the Forth, and even as far as Strath Tay, his love for the souls of men led him.

For a short time the scene of his labours and form of his work were changed, for as hospitaller, or guest-master, he went with Abbot Eata and some of the brethren to a monastery at Ripon. There, we are told, he entertained an angel unawares—a guest who, on departing, gave Cuthbert a gift of three loaves, “such as the world cannot produce; excelling lilies in whiteness, roses in perfume, and honey in sweetness.”

His stay at Ripon was a short one. Between the Roman and the Celtic Churches there had always been a difference with regard to the form of tonsure and the date of holding Easter, and controversy between those whose religion came from Ireland, by way of Iona, and those who got it direct from Rome, had occasionally waxed very hot. Now that the Celtic Church had dared to penetrate as far south as Yorkshire and find a footing there, the Roman party felt that strong measures must be taken, and Eata and his monks were therefore driven out by ecclesiastical jealousy and sent north again.

When, in 664, Prior Boisil—patron saint of St. Boswells—was cut off by the Yellow Plague, a terrible pestilence which was then raging, Cuthbert was appointed Prior in his stead. Besides bringing him the duties of Prior, the Plague meant many extra labours for St. Cuthbert. He himself was smitten, but the constitution that could withstand

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nightly immersion in an ice-cold river was not one that collapsed before a pestilence. The coming of the Plague seriously shook the new-found faith of the Borderers. If Christianity was not going to save their own bodies and those of their women and children from this dire scourge, then surely it was of but little avail. Most surely, too, the Plague came as vengeance from their discarded gods, and, at all costs, they must be propitiated. They quickly lapsed from the new religion and sought safety in the use of charms and of amulets, and of all the pagan rites, in the efficacy of which they had once believed. But Cuthbert, still haggard and weak, and bearing in his body traces, which he never lost, of his terrible illness, fought those lapses of faith as he had fought the Plague. The people of Northumberland, of Merse and Teviotdale, of Tweeddale, of the Wood of Caledon—the half-savage people in the hill-country, the rough fisher-folk of the eastern coast—none dared look in the face of St. Cuthbert and hope “to conceal from him the secrets of their hearts.” Again they listened, moved and ashamed, to his compelling oratory, and in penitence put away their reinstated gods.

It was while he was Prior at Mailros that he went to visit St. Aebba, Abbess of Coldingham, in her monastery up on the cliffs, high above the nesting sea-birds' dolorous clamour, and the crash and boom of the North Sea billows.

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Here, as at Mailros, the Saint subjected his body to a cruel discipline. While those in the monastery and the little village below lay asleep, he walked down the steep rocky path to the shore, returning only in time for morning prayer. An evil-minded monk—there were not a few of them at Coldingham if tradition be true—having seen the Prior of Mailros leave the monastery in the night, was minded to spy upon him. Down the path, across the short, sea-bitten grass, he followed him, to the stony beach where the tide laps over rocks, brown and slippery with clinging sea-weed, and restless waves break against rugged boulders round which has floated the flotsam and jetsam of many a wreck. But where the cold water lapped the shore, St. Cuthbert made no pause. He strode on, until the icy water was breast-high, and there halted. All through the night, until the chilly dawn, the monk could hear St. Cuthbert's voice rising above the wash and moan of the waves, singing praises to God. The monk, cowering behind a rock, watched and listened in shamed amazement, and, in still greater shame and more adoring amazement, saw, when the first pale golden streaks showed where grey sky ended and grey sea began, St. Cuthbert wade ashore, followed by two otters, that tenderly came and rubbed themselves against his wet feet, and dried them with their fur.

“A miracle,” say those who believe in such things.

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“A ridiculous monkish legend,” say others. But what greater miracle is it than that beautiful “miracle” of nature that teaches the birds and the beasts to know those who love them, and that, even with the wild creatures, is able to drive all fear away? Undoubtedly, too, there are men who possess a magnetic power over animals, and it may have been that to him who was once a shepherd lad, wise in woodcraft, this power was known.

On one of his journeyings, when he and the boy who went with him to serve the Mass had no food left and were faint with hunger, it was an eagle that ministered to him. It dropped at the Saint's feet the fish it had just caught, and the boy eagerly seized it.

“Is our fisherman to be allowed no share?” asked St. Cuthbert. So the fish was cut in two, and the eagle soared aloft with its lawful half.

In 664, at a Synod at Whitby, King Oswy decreed that the Roman date of Easter and the Roman tonsure were those that were to have the royal support, and the Columban clergy wiped the dust of Northumbria off their feet and went away in a body. The two who remained behind, Eata and Cuthbert, were probably the flower of them all. The dates of Church seasons and the forms of tonsure were but little things to men who laboured day and night to save the souls of men alive, and so they conformed to the Roman rule.

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In that year Cuthbert was made Prior of Lindisfarne, and left the opulent woods by the silvery Tweed for the flat, rocky, treeless reach of Holy Island in the bleak North Sea.

At Lindisfarne he found party spirit and dissension rife. The camp was divided into Romans and Culdees, and each party had that delightful and unshakeable certainty that one observes with admiring amazement in those who quarrel on subjects of Church Government, that their side was absolutely and perfectly right, and the other utterly and shockingly wrong. Much tact and infinite patience did it require to handle those quarrelsome brethren, but Cuthbert possessed both of these qualities in marked degree. When brotherly love seemed wilting in the tropical heat of discussion, the Prior would apply the closure, always with the same calmness of mien and "placidity of countenance" that made his biographers marvel. Inside and outside his monastery his influence was equally strong. He who was to himself so harsh, was always just, but always infinitely merciful and tender to others. "No one went away from him without consolation; no one took back with him the sorrow of mind that he had brought."

For twelve years he laboured as Prior of Lindisfarne, keeping peace, teaching by his own simple, unconscious, daily example the beauty of selflessness and of perfect charity. Nor did he confine his

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labours to those who lived on Holy Island and the near mainland, but frequently went on long missionary journeys into the Border hill-country and such other parts that knew almost nothing of civilisation and less still of Christianity. Yet at the end of those arduous, strenuous years of self-discipline and work for others, St. Cuthbert deemed himself so far from holiness, because of "the luxury and ease" of his monastic life that he felt he must in another way seek peace for his soul. At the age of thirty-nine he went to live the life of an anchorite on the largest of the Farne Islands, that we can see lying beyond Lindisfarne, purple black, far out among the waves.

It is still a favourite haunt of the sea-birds, that rise with shrieks of deafening discord from their nests on the rocks, when boats go near the island, but in the Saint's day it was reputed to be haunted not only by sea-birds but by evil spirits. Soon, however, so his ingenuous recorders tell us, he drove out the devils and tamed the screaming gulls and sea-mews and eider ducks. When some of the birds began to devour the little harvest of the tiny patch of grain he had sown, he solemnly preached them a sermon from the text, "Thou shalt not covet another's goods," and apparently drove his points so conclusively home that from that day on, his barley was untouched. When two thievish crows, presumably banished from the mainland because of their lawless

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ways, rudely tore some of the dried grass from off his roof in order to line their nests, he "cited them personally to appear before him, and so sermonised and documented them, and rendered them so penitent, that they lay prostrate at his feet for absolution, and the next day brought him a piece of pork to make him satisfaction." One can but hope that the pork was honestly come by.

So did the Saint make friends for himself amongst the only living creatures on his island, and the eider ducks which rest on the Farnes are called "St Cuthbert's ducks" to this day.

With his own hands Cuthbert built for himself a little hut of stones and turf, thatching it with dried grass, with a partition between tiny oratory and tinier living-room. In the best of weather St. Cuthbert's island is a wind-swept, storm-beaten, barren rock; but, when gales blow, it is the plaything of the waves which break against it, driving their drenching spray and tufts of salt foam from east and north, for the breakers on west and south to meet and fling back again yet more furiously. A hut of turf was an easy prey for the tempests, and soon the walls had many a chink and crevice for the shrewd winter blast to whimper through. When Cuthbert's island knew him no more, the hermit monk who succeeded him nailed a calf-skin on the inner wall, to cover the many holes and to keep out wind and wet. But such luxury did not enter St.

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Cuthbert's mind, and he stopped the chinks as best he could with mud and wisps of hay. For nine years he lived the life of an anchorite, praying and fasting, practising the presence of God, far from the world and the disputes of men. But a prophecy, made by his early master, St. Boisil, as he lay dying, had yet to be fulfilled.

"Thou shalt be Bishop," he had said to the young monk, and from the cares and responsibilities that the pontifical post demanded, Cuthbert had always shrunk.

To the see of Lindisfarne he was elected by the Synod of Alne.

A deputation waited on him and returned with the tidings that the Saint rejected the nomination and would not be persuaded to leave his cell. Then Ecgfrid, King of Northumbria, himself, with a gallant escort of nobles and church dignitaries, and with many of the brethren of Lindisfarne, sailed over to the Farnes. On their knees they besought Cuthbert to come, and Ecgfrid's tears and entreaties prevailed. Before his consecration at York, Cuthbert revisited Mailros. Many a strange path had he trod since his little playfellow prophesied his future greatness at that vanished little hamlet on the heights above the Tweed.

On Easter Day, 685, St Cuthbert was consecrated at York in the presence of the King and seven bishops, and "in testimony of the love and

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reverence they bore him," King Ecgfrid and the metropolitan Theodorus presented to the church of Lindisfarne "all the land from the walls to the Church of St. Peter in York, to the west gate of the city, and from the same church to the city wall on the south; also the village of Craike, with territories there, not less than three miles in circuit, that the bishops might have a house of rest as they should pass to and from York," and also added Carlisle, with a large district, to the see.

Pride of place had never been known to Cuthbert, and as bishop he worked with even greater humility and yet more unsparing devotion than he had done before his hermit days had carried him further still on the path to Holiness. Angles and Picts, Scots, Saxons, and Britons he ministered to, for, as of old, no place was too remote, no people too barbarous to be sought out by him. In time of plague the Bishop laboured as might have done the humblest novice who sought after sanctity.

"Is there anyone here to whom we have not yet ministered?" he would ask his chaplain when they had visited a plague-stricken village. "Or have we now seen all the sick here, and shall we go elsewhere?"

For two years only did St. Cuthbert toil and labour as Bishop of Lindisfarne. Then, feeling that the end was coming very near, he asked to be re-

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lieved of his episcopal duties, and allowed to return to his hut by the sea. He made a farewell visitation of his diocese, admonishing and consoling all the faithful, and on Christmas Day, 686 A.D., took farewell of the brethren and returned to Farne. As he stepped into the boat that was to take him there, the monks crowded round him, sorrowing as those who sorrowed when St. Paul left them to go to what was to be his martyrdom.

“Tell us, Lord Bishop,” asked one, “when we may hope for your return?”

“When you shall bring my body back here,” replied Cuthbert.

For two months only, the two cruellest months of the year on that bleak coast, St. Cuthbert lived in the retreat that he loved. As often as might be, the brethren visited him, but sometimes, for many days on end, storms would prevent them from crossing to the island.

Once, after a five days' absence, they found him lying in the little hospice he had built for them by the landing-stage, too weak and ill to move. They asked him what he had had for food as he lay helpless and untended. He showed them five onions, one of them partly eaten. “This,” he said contentedly, “has been my food for five days, for whenever my mouth became dry and parched with thirst, I cooled and refreshed myself by tasting these.

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Very soon afterwards the end came. On a March day in 687, thirty-seven years after the shepherd boy saw the vision of angels on the heights of the Leader, St. Cuthbert gained his rest. Lying on the floor of his little oratory, opposite the altar, he gave his last messages to the monks of Lindisfarne. He asked that his body might be rolled in a linen sheet that St. Aebba had given to him. "Bury me by the Cross," he said, referring to the wooden cross he had erected near his hut. "I would fain rest here where I fought my humble fight for the Lord."

But even in that he was content to give up his own will and consent to their wish that he might lie at Lindisfarne.

When they asked him for his valedictory commands he spoke to them of humility and of peace.

"Keep peace," he said, "one with another, and ever guard the divine gift of charity. Maintain concord with other servants of Christ, and do not think yourselves better than others."

All through a wakeful night he prayed, and having very early received the Eucharist he raised up his folded hands in prayer and gently passed away.

The monks at Lindisfarne were chanting matins when, on a high rock on the Farnes, two little lights sprang up. The monk who watched for the signal knew that it was one of the brethren on Cuthbert's island, with a candle in either hand. He ran to the church with the news. Cuthbert, saint and bishop,

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at the age of fifty years, had gone forth upon his last journey.

From the Farnes to Holy Island they rowed his body and buried it, with great pomp, in the cemetery of the old church, and afterwards, when the cathedral was rebuilt, on the right side of the High Altar. Immediately after his death, a fabric of miraculous legend began to be woven round his name. Miraculous cures were produced by him. Sailors who prayed to him in storms were brought safely to land—his crosier used as a rudder. When he had been eleven years entombed, the monks opened his grave to secure his bones for their museum of sacred relics, but they found the Saint lying just as he had died, peacefully asleep, rather than dead. Small wonder that the body of the Saint was one of the most precious relics possessed by the Northumbrian church. When, in June 793, the Danes descended on Lindisfarne, overthrew its altars, plundered it, and defiled its holy places, those monks who succeeded in escaping, carried with them the body of St. Cuthbert. For seven years they bore it from place to place, hunted men. As in life, so in death, St. Cuthbert went from wild moorland and deep forest to the lonely places amongst the hills. In Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumberland, Northumberland, and many another county, he found only a temporary resting-place. His journeyings may

A BORDER SAINT

be traced still in the churches and crosses that bear his name. At Mailros, for a little, the body found peace.

“O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years St Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
They rested them in fair Melrose ;
But though, alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose ;
For, wondrous tale to tell !
In his stone coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,
Yet light as gossamer it glides
Downward to Tillmouth cell.”

Under the magnificent shelter of Durham Cathedral, “in a fair and sumptuous shrine,” he was laid at last, and when, in the reign of Henry VIII, the grave was opened, the Saint was found still to be lying as he died, secure from the ugly part of mortality, asleep, in peace.

The monastery at Holy Island is in ruins, and St. Cuthbert, his rest well won, has been dead these twelve hundred odd years. Yet he who plods across the wet sand between the island and the mainland when the tide is low, may find on the shore curious fossils that are known as St. Cuthbert's beads, and that are said to be a sure protection against the spirits of evil. And there are those who say that even now the Saint is unable to cease from his labours and his care for

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the souls of his fellow-men, whom he so dearly loved, and that, if you go to Holy Island on a moonlight night and happen on the right little bay, you may hear above the surge and splash of the waves the faint "Tink, tink" of a hammer on a rocky anvil, and may see St. Cuthbert's happy face in the silver beams, as he contentedly forges the beads that are to keep the children of his bishopric from all that can hurt their bodies or harm their souls.

BAWTIE'S GRAVE

THOSE who sail the watery ways own many landmarks—here a high cliff, there a reef with a boil of surf over it, here a seaweed-covered rock of strange shape, to tell of a path leading to certain death beyond, there a rock with a tossing buoy. On the Border we, too, can guide ourselves in weather when hounds have run wide and a Liddesdale drow or a North Sea haar is turning the whole countryside into a blurred grey haze, by a lofty sentinel stationed at wide intervals from east to west, but having outlines that are unmistakable. There is the Dunion, there Ruberslaw, there the lighthouse form of Penielheugh. The three Eildons, like the three weird sisters, seem able to penetrate almost any mist. Smailholm Tower has a shape that one cannot fail to recognise, and above all the flat country of the Merse we can see, from far away, the long, low block of Home Castle, queen of Border towers.

Many a tale of a noble fight could the stones of the castle tell. Full many a time has she looked down from her throne there up on the hill, at the spilling of gallant blood.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the house

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of Home was the most powerful family in Berwickshire. During the minority of James V, the Earl of Home and two of his brothers had been treacherously done to death at the instigation of the Regent Albany. But in the popular mind the Regent was not so much to blame as was the man who had whispered distilled poison into his ear, had compassed the death of three innocent lads, and had thereby attained to the power which he coveted. When Alexander, third Lord Home, was executed on a charge of treason in October 1516, the man who was appointed his successor was Sir Anthony d'Arcy, Seigneur de la Bastie—"Governor of Lothian and Warden of the Eastern Marches" were his titles, and upon him were bestowed the estates and castles of Home and of Dunbar.

The "Seigneur de la Beauté" was the name by which Anthony d'Arcy was known in his own sunny land. So remote are we from those days when his personal beauty and personal charm won hearts that we are incompetent to judge whether he was, after all, a good man and a true, fighting for La Belle France, or a gentleman adventurer with but little honour to lose. But La Beauté—"Bawtie"—with his love-locks is a picturesque figure that cannot be forgotten in Berwickshire even in this most prosaic twentieth century of ours.

It is a far cry from the Merse to the Valley of the Isère, but thither we must journey do we wish

BAWTIE'S GRAVE

to see the château where Anthony d'Arcy was born.

Not far from the railway lines from Paris to Turin and from Paris to Marseilles, but itself off the mainline, in a sleepy hollow between wooded hills, lies the little town of Allevard. Just a peep of snow mountains is to be had from it here and there, and a steep climb is necessary before it is possible to look down on all the wide-spreading, opulent glories of the vine-clad valley, through which the stately Isère glides in gentle, silvery curves, like a magnificent serpent that has no cause to hurry. A smoky blue haze from its iron factories hangs over Allevard every evening, but high above the smoke, on a little hill at the foot of the mountain of Brame-farine, to the west of the town, are the ruins of the Château de la Bastie. Only a fragment of stonework is now to be seen, for trees and thick undergrowth have triumphed over its ruins. It would be hard to tell that once on a day it was as stout a little fortress as any in France, and the eyrie of as fierce a horde of brigands as ever terrified the land they lived in by fire and robbery, rape and bloody murder.

The Seigneurs de la Bastie were rapacious thieves, merciless reivers who were at constant war with all their neighbours, highway robbers who were the terror of all who travelled to Italy by way of Mont Cenis. No lonely farm, no inoffensive traveller was safe from them. They were the scourge of the Savoie

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and of the whole valley of the Isère. Their unhallowed memory is still green among the peasants of the district in which, so many long years ago, they lived their unedifying lives, and, to this day, these peasants will relate with solemn faces what were the happenings that led to the destruction of this corby's nest.

One very dark night, they say, a terrible storm swept over Allevard. The thunder sounded as though all the war-chariots in Heaven and in Hell were being driven furiously, and all the mountains shook. At the end of a terrific peal, a wonder was seen. From the sky, wrapped in fire, descended "Messire Satan" himself, and lighted down on the highest tower of the Château de la Bastie. As the terrified peasants gazed, they saw the castle rock, then topple down in ruins. At once fierce red flames rushed, roaring, up through the night, and when morning broke the mighty castle lay a mere heap of charred wood and blackened stone.

Such was "Bawtie's" ancestral nest, and as one of a race of reivers he was probably well fitted to deal with the turbulent Border folk. But Bawtie had stolen Home Castle and all that pertained to it from the clan Home, and he had to pay his price.

"All men groaned at so miserable a slavery under a foreigner. Themselves were insulted; the very Scottish nation was held in contempt by the French for so easily yielding to the yoke, and so

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submissively obeying a foreigner, and he, too, none of the most illustrious. The very common people were enraged at this, and lamented the degeneracy of the nobles, first, for setting over them such a man, and then for so peaceably obeying him. What increased their indignation was their lost liberty, and nobody appearing to vindicate it." So writes Hume of Godscroft, but the Homes were only biding their time.

On a September day in 1517, when bracken is golden-brown and the beech trees are reddening, De la Bastie was peacefully riding homewards to Dunbar from a court held at Kelso. As to James IV, so to him, says tradition, one from another world came to warn him that he must avoid the crossing of Corneyford (now known as Pouterlynie), a way by the narrow stream which divides the parishes of Duns and Langton, did he wish to elude a dismal fate. Presumably his visitant was more substantial than legend allows,—a friend won by the French knight's fair face. Be that as it may, "Bawtie" despised the warning and took the forbidden way, and not far from Duns an ambushade of the Home clan fell upon him.

De la Bastie was one who always valued the pomp and panoply of earthly things. He rode a fine horse belonging to the lately-executed earl, but the horse was encumbered by heavy and costly French trappings. Over the moor of Duns galloped the Seigneur. He well knew that he raced with death, and he spared

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neither whip nor spur. But on the lands of Broomhouse, in the parish of Edrom, his horse stumbled and fell. That day a "little foot page," a kinsman of Home of Wedderburn, had joined the hunt without permission, and had commandeered, as a mount for his impertinent little self, one of his master's best horses. As La Beauté's horse stumbled in a bog, the boy rode up. La Beauté fell with his horse and was held prisoner under it as it rolled back and forward in the black bog mud. Two of the house of Home rode close behind, and while the boy threatened his noble prey with his knife they came up, and the chase was ended. His head—the Greek head to which many a woman across the seas had sacrificed a bleeding heart—was hacked off.

David Home of Wedderburn seized it. And "because his Hair was long, like Womens, and plat on a Head-Lace, David Home of Wedderburn knit it on his Saddle-Bow." Through the streets of Duns rode Home the avenger, his bloody trophy dangling before him. At Duns, finally, the head was stuck upon a pole for all the enemies of the house of Home to gloat upon.

The autumn and winter winds of that year and the next bleached it as it grinned upon the battlements of Home Castle. The headless body is buried where the Seigneur fell, on the lands of Broomhouse.

Until well on in the last century, a moss-covered

BAWTIE'S GRAVE

cairn marked the place. Unfortunately the stones caught the eye of a person who had a contract for repairing the roads and the ancient landmark was carted away, yet, to this day, "Bawtie's Grave" is the name given to the spot where rests Anthony d'Arcy, Seigneur de la Bastie, of the Valley of the Isère.

ST. BOSWELL'S FAIR

JULY 18TH

“Oh dear, what can the matter be?
Johnny stays long at the fair.”

So mourned the wives and maidens of past centuries, but now they have to find other causes for complaint. Johnny does not stay long at the fair because there are so very few fairs at which to stay, and these are probably not within the reach of Johnny.

The railways are responsible for the death of many things, and they have practically killed the fairs. No longer is “Bösil's Fair” the Mecca towards which all agricultural eyes on the English and Scottish Border are turned from one July to another. No more does the brisk young herd tryst his fair one to meet him on “Bösil's Green” when the sheep are sold.

“The morn's the fair, an' I'll be there,
Me an' ma lass wi' the curly hair;
I'll meet ma lass at the fit o' the stair
An' gie her a glass, an' a wee drap mair.”

Such was wont to be the chant of all little Border boys in the early days of July, to the annoyance of all decent householders.

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The herd now brings his flocks by rail to the bustling little junction known as St. Boswells Station, where trains from north and from south puff and scream, and, some other day when he is less full of affairs, he takes Amaryllis a "cheap trip" to Edinburgh. There they wander wearily through streets, museums and waxworks, boredom in their souls. Thankfully they relax the mental strain on the homeward journey when they squeeze themselves into a third-class "smoker," already over filled by their fellow-sufferers, and silently eat stale and crumbling cakes and sticky sweets out of paper bags. They are almost able to fancy that they have enjoyed the day, when they get out at their home station and go "linking" along the country road together in the exquisite freshness of the cooler evening air.

But old institutions die hard, and in spite of the emphatic fact of the North British railway and of the decline of many a glory, Bösil's Fair still fights for its life.

Sheep and lambs come by rail and mingle their bleatings with the puff and snort of trains and the jar and clang as their couplings go together. By road, too, they travel in patient processions, their plodding little feet laying the ways by which they come deep in red dust, ready to be roused into furious dust-storms by the first motor that follows them. But they never reach "The Green" that lies

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in the centre of the English-looking little village under whose brae-heads flows the Tweed. Within sound of all the modern noises of the railway that have driven them and their attendant colliers half-demented since they left their peaceful pasturage in Tweeddale or Teviotdale, they are hustled into the whitewashed pens of the auction marts, to meet the fate that comes to them with the tap of the auctioneer's hammer.

Those who live in that district will tell you with scorn that the place where the trains shunt and the sheep are sold is no more St. Boswells than Leith is Edinburgh. It is only Newtown. *St. Boswells* is the village on the Green, a full mile away, an aristocrat amongst villages. So old is it that "St. Boswells" may be said to be the name it acquired comparatively recently, although it dates back twelve hundred years and more. What the village was called when Watling Street—the road of the Romans—ran near it, and when Roman centurions reared their altars to Jove under the shadow of the Eildons, we know not, but in the seventh century it was known as Lessudden. Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, lived there for a time, we are told, and gave to it his name — Lis-Aidan, from *Lis*, a Celtic word meaning residence. Another ingenious interpretation is given of the name, for we are told that when, in 664, Boisil, Prior of Melrose, died of the Yellow Plague—a periodic scourge in Scotland in past days

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—he died “*All-o'-a-sudden.*” To St. Boisil (for he, being “a priest of great virtue and of a prophetic spirit,” was canonised), a French monk, the teacher of St. Cuthbert, and one of the holiest of many holy men who taught the Gospel of Christ to the heathen of the Scottish Border, St. Boswells owes its present name. In Sir David Stewart Erskine's *Annals of Dryburgh* we are given a curious little sketch of him.

“Who is that tall priest, pray, in white,
Who in a book did just now write?
He looks as if from France he came,
So thin and tall, he looks so wane,
As if *soup maigre* was his food
Since the old time of Noah's flood.

That is the great Saint Boisille,
He came from Franca Abbeville,
Upon the south burn built a cell,
Just by the sainted holy well.
A church now stands upon the place,
He ran a sainted holy race.

The green he blest, and there a fair
Is held for sale of horse or mare,
A mule or cow, or crinkum crack,
Or a good coat to buy for back.
Saint Boisille died on gay May day,
On Eildon top—where he did pray.”

A charming little account of the life and death of a saint, but perhaps scarcely to be regarded as history.

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After the days of St. Boisil, his village remained a place of considerable importance, and when, in 1544, it was burned by that hammer of the Scots, Sir Ralph Evers—to whose body the hospitality of seven feet of ground in Melrose Abbey was accorded by his generous slayers—it contained sixteen strong bastel-houses, or peel towers.

Before Lammas Fair, once held on the slope of the western Eildon, close to Melrose, eclipsed it, St. Boswell's Fair was the most important in the south of Scotland. Sheep, black cattle, horses and wool were sold at it, even as late as 1866, and the gipsies drove a roaring trade in crockery. We owe to the minister of the parish, the Rev. John Scade, an account of the red-letter day of the Calendar at St. Boswells. "Great flocks of sheep of all denominations," he says—and the flippant mind wonders if denominational distinctions are confined to the sheep, while the goats are just goats with no subtle differences—"are brought from all parts of the adjacent country, and generally find so ready a market as to be disposed of early in the morning, at latest in the forenoon. Black cattle are also numerous; and the show of horses has usually been so fine, that buyers come from many places, both of England† and Scotland. Linen cloth is another article. Great numbers of people throughout the neighbouring country employ themselves during the winter in spinning; they endeavour to get their webs ready against the

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fair, where they are pretty sure of a market, though not always of a sufficient recompence of their expences and labour; nevertheless, upon the whole, they get such prices as encourage them to be industrious in the same line. The prices, according to the quality of the cloth, are from 10*d.* to 1*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* 4*s.*, and 4*s.* 6*d.* per yard. Some provide themselves with linen at this fair, alledging that they can furnish themselves better and cheaper than they could do by manufacturing it at home. This may possibly be true; for in genteel families the expence of maintaining the workers will be higher than the spinster in a cottage, while the skill and care bestowed upon the work are equal." Times and manners have changed indeed since the Rev. John Scade's day, and "genteel families" have learned to emulate the lilies of the field. The worthy minister goes on to speak of the "Booths." "Booths (or as they are called, *craims*) containing hardware and haberdashery goods, are erected in great numbers at the Fair, and stored with such articles as suit the generality. The money turned in the course of the day at this fair is guessed to be from £8000 to £10,000 stg. The Duke of Buccleuch receives a certain rate, or toll, upon sheep, cattle, and all other commodities brought into the fair for sale. Old sheep pay one merk Scots per score, lambs half a merk, and so on."

The people of St. Boswells, in 1794, were, says their minister, "in general of a sober and frugal

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turn, both of mind and manners." Nevertheless his righteous soul was sometimes vexed by them, for St. Boswell's Fair happening on a Saturday or a Monday "is very justly thought to occasion much inattention to the religious observance of the Sabbath. The evil has been complained of, but no remedy has yet been applied." Who can doubt that the conscientious shepherd of souls compelled his flock to listen to many an hour's pious exhortation on the subject of the laxness occasioned by their yearly festival?

The bodies, as well as the souls of the people of St. Boswells must have been handsomely nourished in those days, for salmon of 28 lb. were frequently caught in the reaches of the Tweed close to the village, while fish of 6 lb. to 8 lb. were thought nothing of. He who caught, kept, and the salmon was sold at 2*d.* to 3*d.* a pound. "So that, at the proper time, the neighbourhood is seldom at a loss for a small salmon, which proves a great conveniency to families." And yet we have the assurance to talk of "modern conveniences"! Who would not gladly exchange the plumber and all his works for a "conveniency" so undeniable, and nowadays so churlishly overlooked by riparian proprietors and their keepers and water-bailiffs?

The supply of fuel was then the outstanding difficulty in the simple lives of the people of St. Boswells. "This necessary of life we are obliged

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to procure at an expence which with difficulty we are able to afford," says the Rev. John Scade. The coals they burned were brought from Stal coal-hill in Northumberland, or from the collieries of the Lothians. "But," writes our reverend instructor, "the greatest part of what is used here is brought by the returning carts, which carried from home oatmeal or grain to Dalkeith market. A cart with two horses commonly brings 14 cwt. of coals, which cost the purchaser 1s. the cwt., and yet the driver is said to have but poor profits. From this almost insupportable expence, which is more likely to increase than decrease, perhaps nothing can deliver this part of the country, unless the canal which has been spoken of as intended to come to Ancrum Bridge should be carried into effect." But good Mr. Scade's scheme for the welfare of his parish came to nothing. The profane and quarrelsome bargee never penetrated the Sabbath peace of the village of Ancrum, nor has there come to pass the prophecy of an aged inhabitant of the neighbouring village of Bowden—"Gie's another fifty 'ear, an' I'se warrant ye I'd see Bowden a flourishing seaport town." Fifty years have gone since old John was laid in his grave within sound of the trickle of Bowden burn, yet the sea remains where it was.

Even thirty-eight years after Mr. Scade's account of it, St. Boswell's Fair had greatly declined. A

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gazetteer of 1832 insultingly describes the village as "consisting of little else than a single public-house" and talks of the great falling-off of the fair. Still, however, the fair was "the resort of many salesmen of goods, and in particular of tinkers." Earthenware, horn spoons, and tin cooking utensils were their chief goods. "They possess in general horses and carts, and they form their temporary camp by each *whomling* his cart upside down, and forming a lodgement with straw and bedding beneath. Cooking is performed outside the *craal* in gipsy fashion. There could not perhaps be witnessed in the present day in Britain a more amusing and interesting scene, illustrative of a rude period, than is here annually exhibited." Even in those degenerate days the Fair was still officially proclaimed open by officials representing the Fair's overlord, his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch. At the door of a barn, adjoining the present blacksmith's house, a representative of the firm of Messrs. Curle & Erskine, Melrose, the Duke's lawyers, took his stand. A few yards in front of him were two men, also supplied by the lawyers, each carrying a halberd, and between them came a drummer, gorgeous in knee-breeches, buckled shoes, green coat with brass buttons, and a lofty "lum hat." The last to hold the honourable post of drummer, and to hold it for many years, was an ex-soldier, David Stoddart by name, but better known as "Black Davie." From Nisbet, near Ancrum,

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(for five shillings and his "denner") Davie tramped to the Green in his gorgeous attire as each 18th of July came round. Punctually at 8 A.M. he appeared on the Green, and with all the dignity befitting a drummer of the Duke of Buccleuch he marched to a house in the east end of the village, where the long-shaped drum that had done duty for generations rested on all other days of the year. Back again to the barn he solemnly processed, and, having taken his place between the halberdiers and in front of the lawyer, he beat a loud tattoo, and in a voice to be heard above all the din of buyers and sellers, he made the official proclamation of the opening of the Fair. Round the Fair then marched the ducal quartette, stopping six or eight times amongst crains and horse-coupers to beat the drum and to make a solemn proclamation in a voice to overawe all rowdy tinkers and quarrelsome Border folk.

Not always did the crowds on the Green readily make way for the representatives of law and order, and a fifth man was usually enlisted at St. Boswells to clear the way for the official procession. For many years this duty fell upon "Chairlie" Lamb, who died in 1893 at a ripe old age. Chairlie acted as precentor in the Parish Church, and he was a very much bewildered member of the congregation who, Fair Day having fallen on a Saturday some fifty years ago, woke up to find himself no longer in a tent on the Green but in a straight-backed pew and yet with

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Chairlie's familiar face in front of him. How he had arrived in church with decency and decorum it is hard to say, for sleep had speedily marked him for her own, and the whisky of yesterday still confused his brain. Painful alike for minister and for congregation was it when the awakened sleeper addressed himself to the precentor in a bawl of anxious inquiry: "*Chairlie, are the tents a' doon yet?*" he asked, only too late to realise that he was a day behind the Fair.

The barn from whence the officials started in procession was a most important part of the Fair, for half of it was partitioned off for the banking business of the market, while the other half was used as a dining-room.

One who knew the Fair in those days—although it is forty years since the last of the drummers beat his last tattoo on the Green—says that roast lamb and green peas, gooseberry tarts, and all the liquids that any thirsty man could desire, were carried over from the "Buccleuch Arms" to the barn, and that gorgeous indeed was the feast that was always provided. The five officials, as was natural, were the honoured guests at the feast, and even the solemn-visaged representative of the law, as well as all the others, is said to have "turned awfu' cheery."

For outsiders who became over cheery, and for those whose tempers or honesty could not stand the strain of the long day's festivity, the stocks

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stood in readiness, on the knowe close to the barn. They could accommodate eight offenders, lying alternately head to heels, and up till 1870 they were still exhibited as a terror to evil-doers, although for twenty years or so before then they had gaped in beseeching emptiness.

One well versed in all old Border lore, and more particularly in the lore of his own village of St. Boswells, and to whom we are indebted for much interesting information, writes that "at one time rowdies at the Fair were tried and sent on to Jedburgh by cart, for a few days." Probably those were the days when there was much cracking of skulls amongst representatives of rival Border towns and amongst gipsy septs with vendettas between them. How often have the cries of "Teribus!" of "Jethart's here!" sounded on the Green? How often have the Kelso folk insulted those from Jedburgh with the shouted taunt of "Pride and Poverty," to have hurled back at them the insult, only to be wiped out by blood, of "Doo Tairts an' Herrin' Pies!" And when a party of lads from Selkirk noted a party of lads from Gala shiels and chanted aloud the horrible insult—

"Galashiels herons, lockit in a box,
Daurna show their faces
For Selkirk game cocks,"

who was to blame if many a Selkirk face was unshowable for weeks to come?

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It was in 1849 that a lively argument between a Scotchman and one of the Irish navvies, who were then engaged in making the railway that took the place of Mr. Scade's projected canal, led to grim tragedy. An Irishman, mad-drunk, was arrested by the police, but some thirty or more of his navy friends effected a rescue. It was at a late hour in the afternoon, when whisky had overcome discretion, and although the "muggers," one and all, kept discreetly aloof, the villagers and the herds at once threw in their lot with the police. Soon there were "wigs on the Green." The combatants knocked down the craims and smashed the legs off them to take the place of shillelachs. Out of Ireland a better riot was never seen.

But suddenly the fight came to an end, and half-tipsy men, and others swiftly sobered, with black eyes, broken heads, and bleeding faces, slunk away from the field of battle as quickly as might be. For a Scottish herd, a man named Lauder, lay dead on St. Boswells Green, and that black word "Murder" penetrated even the tipsiest intelligence. One who strolled along the road to St. Boswells that evening heard, afar off, sounds that made him wonder what could be happening at the Fair, and soon met men and women, white-faced and horror-struck, hurrying homeward like the frightened fugitives of a defeated army.

Next day a company of dragoons from Edin-

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burgh came clattering up to where the huts of the Irish navvies stood above a cutting, arrested some of the ringleaders, and took them off to Jedburgh. There they were tried, and one of them, protesting his innocence to the end, was the last of all the victims to "Jethart Justice"—the last man publicly hanged at Jedburgh. Years later one of his fellow-countrymen, dying in America, confessed that it was he himself who should have swung for that evil day's work at "Bösil's Fair."

Even in our own degenerate times there are still fights and drunken men to remind us that the good old days are not yet quite gone, and that whisky is still the national beverage, but there are no longer sheep and lambs and black cattle, and the horses for sale are neither in number nor in quality what once they were. Eight hundred to a thousand horses were frequently at the Fair, but in 1911 their numbers were down to five hundred. Ten years ago the valued rental of "The Customs of St. Boswell's Fair," was £4, 4s. 9d., and the "tenant"—the Duke of Buccleuch being proprietor—held the right of putting a chalk mark on the forehead of each horse, mule, or pony brought within the Fair ground for sale, and charged its owner twopence for doing so. The rent may have been reduced since then. If not, Bösil's Fair Day must be an anxious one for that special tenant of the Duke. In Parson Scade's

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day, as much as £53 was paid by the tenant for the day's rent of the "Customs," and presumably it was an investment that paid him handsomely.

The class known by respectable cottagers as "ganging folk" are now the chief patrons of the Fair. "Muggers," as the degenerate, hybrid descendants of the gipsies are called, are all still, like their more worthy forbears, thorough-bred horse-coupers, and gallop their sorry crocks out with much noise and a running accompaniment of blasphemy. Brown-faced lads clatter their steeds along the highway as though they were riding a Derby finish, to the terror of all quiet foot-passengers. A few broken-down cart horses, dejected and drooping-headed, looking as though their destination should be that Home for the horse whose day is done—the Duke's Kennels on the Green—are chaffered for by carters and gipsy folk. A string or two of horses brought forward by a Cumberland horse-couper probably slightly raises the dismal average of horseflesh displayed.

There are still craims, but linen, hardware, and even crockery are no longer the wares sold there. Gimcrack watches, "swagger sticks," toys, and ornaments, and sweets of rich aniline colours are the chief commodities on the stalls. The "kisses" of one's youth—dumpy, three-cornered things like pincushions, striped in pink and white, or in more sober cream and brown—have given place to modern

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confections. No longer can they aid the bashful ploughman to make his declaration, and he has to trust to "reading sweeties" (whose amatory conversationalism possesses none of the subtleties or symbolisms of the triangular confection of olden days) to do his love-making for him. Gingerbread horses and horsemen, speckled with coloured caraway seeds, or richly gilded, no longer abound. The lover and his lass are forced to exchange tokens of affection of a less edible nature.

In a Roxburghshire family there is a tale of a virtuous married lady of property who, being near death, caused a relation to disinter from amongst the most sacred of her Lares and Penates a gingerbread man on horseback. He and his steed were pale and attenuated with age, and much of the gilt was rubbed off. But, for the dying lady, the gilding still remained. Many years had passed since the young lover who first rode into her heart—the man she did not marry—brought it to her from St. Boswell's Fair. Many fairs had come and gone since he was laid in his grave, yet for her the gingerbread cavalier still remained the symbol for Love's young dream.

Vendors of potato chips and of penny ices now ply a busy trade. Shooting galleries and Aunt Sallies—"Penny a throw, gentlemen! Penny a throw!"—enliven the proceedings. Merry-go-rounds, their pawing horses all a-snort, driven by

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steam, and urged on in their mad career by the raucous strains of a gramophone, gladden youthful hearts. Swinging - boats, like their rivals the Channel steamers, take on board rosy - cheeked "bondagers" and their swains, and eject them after a brief but stormy passage, during which the pea-hen quality of the fair passengers' screams have made even the gramophone appear pianissimo. They are pallid past recognition, but their courage is dauntless. Half an hour for recovery, and back they come.

Now and again, at the fringe of the Fair, one may come on a fortune-teller—"An Epping gipsy, my lady"—who, in the privacy of her exquisitely clean caravan, will tell the blushing maiden all about the dark man who wants to marry her, and the fair man that she loves; the dark woman who wishes her ill, the fortune coming across the seas, and the fourteen children that are to crown her joys. But the Law is down on fortune-telling, and those who wish to pry into the future may hunt amongst the brown-faced families who are eating savoury, onion-scented stews by the fires in front of their caravans, and find never a man, woman, or child who has ever heard of a gipsy fortune-teller. Occasionally, but by no means always, the gift of a shilling may accelerate the search. The decadent "mugger" knows no necromancy. His conjuring tricks are

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of a lower order, and are confined to the acquisition of unconsidered trifles and to the safe disposition of mixed bags of game brought to him by his lurcher, which is a member of the criminal classes, a dog entirely devoid of morals.

Most popular of the entertainments on the Green is probably the Penny Music Hall. Up steps and down again, while a drum is thumped and a gramophone brays, we walk into a tent where there is barely standing room and where we are fairly seethed in heat. It is there that we find the evergreen lady with very red cheeks and very golden hair, with whom all the callowest amongst the young hinds and shepherds are in love, as their fathers were before them. When she has sung the very latest popular song—and she pioneers the vocal fashions of London—and has received an encore fit to warm the most hardened diva's heart, she picks kisses from her mouth and throws them at the audience with such force and with such an appearance of their being something hard and tangible, that her admirers intuitively duck their heads. Her voice may not be of the same order as that of Madame Tetrassini, but she sings with all her might. Moreover she is audible, much more than audible, to the children who bestride the horses of the merry-go-round in the immediate vicinity and who take their giddy exercise to the strains of "Stop your ticklin', Jock," delivered by the most brazen and unabashed of gramophones, and she

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wears short skirts, and delightful high-heeled boots, and flowers in her hair, and can do clog dances. What more would you? In the same variety entertainment we have the trapezists and low comedians. The carping might say the very low comedians, but they have measured the wit of their audience, and a very red-painted nose gives a point to the flattest of jokes.

“D’ye mind yon yin at Codlin’s last Bösil’s Fair?” asks one ploughman of another during the ensuing winter, and the cachinnation that follows, throws even the tale of old Grouse in the gun-room into the shade. The jest is probably no broader, if as broad, as those of the royal jesters who in bygone days set courts a-roar.

Such a jester rode through St. Boswells on a September day in 1310, when Edward II of England marched across the Border, by way of St. Boswells and Selkirk, on his way to humble Robert the Bruce, bringing his court fool and tame lion in his train. But the Bruce it was who, four years later, humbled the English king, and the Eildons looked down on haggard fugitives falling before the iron-tipped Jethart staves of the men of the Border.

They have looked down on many a shifting scene, have those three crests that rule the Border plain. The march of civilisation has gone steadily on, and old things have been swept away as the advancing

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tide sweeps the fragments of stick and seaweed on the shore. St. Boswell's Fair is there still, but the lap of the waves is very close to it. In another couple of generations, perhaps even in one, the place that knew it shall know it no more for ever. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

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