

## CHAPTER XI.

*A Narrow Escape—The Old Irishwoman and her Grandson—  
Their Murder—Hare's Horse rising in Judgment.*

STILL the wholesale slaughter of weak human beings went on. The murderers never sought a strong, able man upon whom to try their fatal skill ; they always chose the old and the silly in body or in mind, those who could be plied with drink.

Burke, one day in June, 1828, was wandering about the streets of Edinburgh looking for another "subject." In the High Street he came across a frail old man whose physical condition bespoke him an easy victim, and whose bleared eyes and drink-sodden face showed he would quickly respond to the fatal bribe of a glass or two of whisky. The two men were just becoming fast friends, and were about to adjourn to the den in Log's lodging house, when an old woman, leading a blind boy of about twelve years of age, came up to them. She asked if they could direct her to certain friends for whom she was seeking. Burke then discovered her to be an Irishwoman, who had walked all the way from Glasgow, sleeping at nights by the roadside or in farm-yards, and whose simple question showed that she was entirely strange to Edinburgh. This was a better opportunity, he thought, and he parted with the old man to make friends with the newcomers. He soon found out from the woman's own statement who she was, and for whom she was in search ; and on the strength of a common nativity he undertook to befriend her, professing that he knew where her friends resided and that he would take her to them. The boy, it seemed, was her grandson, and he was deaf and dumb ; Burke even thought he was weak in his mind. So he took them to Hare's house at the West Port, feeling certain that he had obtained a prize, if not two of them. He knew that being strangers there would be less chance of an inquiry after them, should they disappear, than if they had been denizens of Edinburgh, though experience had shown him that even the best-known figures in the district could drop out of sight without any serious search being made for them. Again the bottle was set on the table, and the old Irish woman was invited to take a drop until her

friends should come in, for it was told her that they resided there. It is the old, sickening story. The whisky operated quickly on the wearied brain, the woman lay down on the bed, and at the dead hour of the night she was murdered by the human ghouls. How truly can Poe's lines be applied to them:—

“ They are neither man nor woman—  
They are neither brute nor human—  
They are Ghouls.”

The dreadful work completed, they stripped the body, and laid it on the bed, covering it with the bed-tick and bed-clothes. All this time, unconscious of the tragedy going on in the little room, the poor boy was in the one adjoining in the charge of the women, who were, in their peculiar way, looking to his comfort. He was becoming anxious at his grandmother's prolonged absence from him, even though she was in the same house, and he gave such expression to his anxiety as his dumbness would permit. The men wondered what they should do with him. It would be imprudent, they thought, to slay him also and take his body with that of his grandmother to Surgeon's Square. Yet what could they do with him? They might wander him in the city, and there would be little fear that he would be able to tell how or where his grandmother had disappeared, for he was deaf and dumb and “weak in his mind.” On this point, however, they could not agree, and they parted, Hare to get something to put the body into, and Burke to consider the whole bearings of the important matter under discussion. Burke, in his second confession, says, “They took the boy in their arms, and carried him to the room, and murdered him in the same manner, and laid him alongside of his grandmother.” Leighton, however, obtained some further information, and in the light of it the tragedy becomes even more horrible:—“The night passed,” he says, “the boy having, by some means, been made to understand that his protectress was in bed unwell; but the mutterings of the mute might have indicated that he had fears which, perhaps, he could not comprehend. The morning found the resolution of the prior night unshaken; and in that same back-room where

the grandmother lay, Burke took the boy on his knee, and, as he expressed it, broke his back. No wonder that he described this scene as the one that lay most heavily upon his heart, and said that he was haunted by the recollection of the piteous expression of the wistful eyes, as the victim looked in his face."

The bodies of the old Irishwoman and her poor grandson lay side by side on the bed for an hour, until their murderers could get something into which they could be packed. The tea-chest so often used had gone astray, or been used up, so it was no longer available, but they obtained an old herring-barrel, which "was perfectly dry; there was no brine in it." Into this receptacle the two bodies were crushed, and it was carried into Hare's stable, where it remained until the next day. This cargo for the doctors required much more careful handling than any that had yet taken to Surgeon's Square, and Hare's horse and cart—which he had used in his hawking journeys throughout the country—were pressed into the service. But an extraordinary occurrence took place, nearly ending in discovery. The barrel was carefully put into the cart, and the old hack owned by Hare started for Dr. Knox's rooms with its loathsome burden. At the Meal-Market, however, it took a "dour" fit, and move it would not. A large crowd had gathered round the stubborn animal, and assisted the drivers to lash and beat it, but all to no effect. Burke thought the horse had risen up in judgment upon them, and he trembled for exposure—conscious guilt made a coward of him. Fortunately for them no one made any inquiry as to the contents of the barrel, for attention was directed mainly to the horse, and the murderers were safe. They engaged a porter with a "hurley-barrow," and the barrel was transferred to his care. The man had less scruples than the horse, and dragged his vehicle after him to Surgeon's Square. Hare accompanied him, and Burke went on in advance, fearful lest some other awkwardness should occur, and the stubbornness of the horse had made him doubtful if they would manage safely through the transaction. Arrived at Dr. Knox's rooms, Burke lifted the barrel and carried it inside. Another drawback took place in the unpacking of the bodies. They had been put into the barrel when they were in a

comparatively pliable state, but now they were cold and stiff, having been doubled up in it for nearly a whole day. The students gave a helping-hand in the work, and when it was accomplished and the bodies laid out, sixteen pounds were paid down to Burke and Hare. But was it not strange that no questions should have been asked? or that no suspicions of foul play should have been raised? The horse, it turned out, was fairly used up. Hare had it shot in a neighbouring tanyard, and it was then found that the poor animal had two large dried-up sores on his back, which had been stuffed with cotton, and covered over with a piece of another horse's skin. No wonder, then, that the brute refused to go further.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*Jealousy—An Undeveloped Plot—Hare Cheats Burke, and they Separate—The Foul Work Continued—Murder of Ann M'Dougal.*

WHILE all this was going on, these four persons, bound together, as they were, by the joint commission of terrible crimes, had their little disagreements among themselves. The women were jealous of each other, and there is every reason to believe that each man was suspicious that his neighbour, in the case of discovery, would turn informer, as the result afterwards proved. To those around them they all appeared to be in a most prosperous condition. The women dressed themselves in a style that was considered highly superior in the locality in which they lived; the men also were better clad than members of the same class usually were; and their mode of living—the extent of their drinking, too—showed that somehow or other they had plenty of money in their possession. These things attracted the attention of the neighbours, but if they had any suspicion that matters were not altogether right, they did not give expression to it. Under all this outward appearance of comfort and well-doing there was a canker. The women, as already said, were jealous, the men were suspicious, and these feelings joined to produce the plan for another

tragedy in their own little circle, which was prevented either by the intervention of an accident, or by the fact that Burke had still a little kindness left in his blood-stained heart. Hare and his wife could not trust Helen M'Dougal to keep their secret, because, as Burke himself expressed it, "she was a Scotch woman." It is difficult to reconcile this statement with another made by Burke, that the women did not know what was going on when the murders were being committed. Besides, as we have seen, the women helped towards assisting the poor victims into a state in which they could be easily operated upon, and though they may not have been active participants in the taking away of life, or witnesses of the last struggle between the men and the creatures whom they so quickly ushered into eternity, there can be no reasonable doubt that they were aware of the dreadful adventure in which they were all to a greater or less extent engaged. Had the women been ignorant of all this there would have been no need—it would, indeed, have been impossible—for the one to urge that the other should be put out of the way, on the principle that "dead men and women tell no tales." However, notwithstanding these minor discrepancies in Burke's confessions, we have his own definite statement that Mrs. Hare urged him to murder Helen M'Dougal. The plan suggested was that he should go with her to the country for a few weeks, and that he should write to Hare telling him that his wife was dead and buried. No more of the plan is given, but it is to be presumed that the murder would actually take place in the little back room which had been the scene of so many tragedies—the little human shambles in Hare's house—and that the body should be sold like the rest to Dr. Knox and his fellows. This plan, as has been indicated, was not carried out. Burke says he would not agree to it. That may have been, but it is rather strange that about this time Helen M'Dougal and he should go to Maddiston, near Falkirk, to visit some of her friends there.

The time at which this visit to Maddiston was made was when the villagers made a procession round a stone in that neighbourhood—Burke thought it was the anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn. This would fix the date as the 24th of June, 1828. They were away for some time, but whether

through scruples of conscience, on the part of Burke, or because no fitting opportunity of putting her out of the way occurred, Helen M'Dougal returned to Edinburgh with him. Arrived there they found a very different state of matters than had existed when they went away. Before, Hare and his wife were sadly in want of money, some of their goods having been laid in pawn; but now they were in the possession of plenty of money, and were spending it freely. There must be some reason for this change, and a suspicion was raised in Burke's mind that Hare had taken advantage of his absence to do a little business on his own account, without making him any allowance from the proceeds. The agreement among them, according to Burke, was that if ten pounds were obtained for a body, six went to Hare, and four to Burke, the latter having to pay Mrs. Hare one pound of his share, for the use of the house, if the murder took place there. This arrangement was in itself scarcely equitable to Burke, assuming it to be correct, and it was therefore all the harder on him when he found that his colleague was attempting to rob him of his due. He consequently taxed Hare with endeavouring to cheat him, but this was indignantly denied. Not satisfied, however, Burke paid a visit to Dr. Knox's rooms, and was there informed that during his absence Hare had brought a subject and had been paid for it. Returning to the house he upbraided his partner, charging him with unfairness and breach of honour. Hare still denied the accusation, and from high words they got to blows. They fought long and fiercely, so that the neighbours, attracted by the noise, gathered round the door to witness what was going on; but neither of the combatants allowed a word to escape them as to the cause of the quarrel between them. At last they were exhausted—possibly Hare was worsted, for Burke, without mentioning the fight, stated in his *Courant* confession that "Hare then confessed what he had done." He does not say whether or not he received any portion of the proceeds from the sale of the body of the victim murdered during his absence.

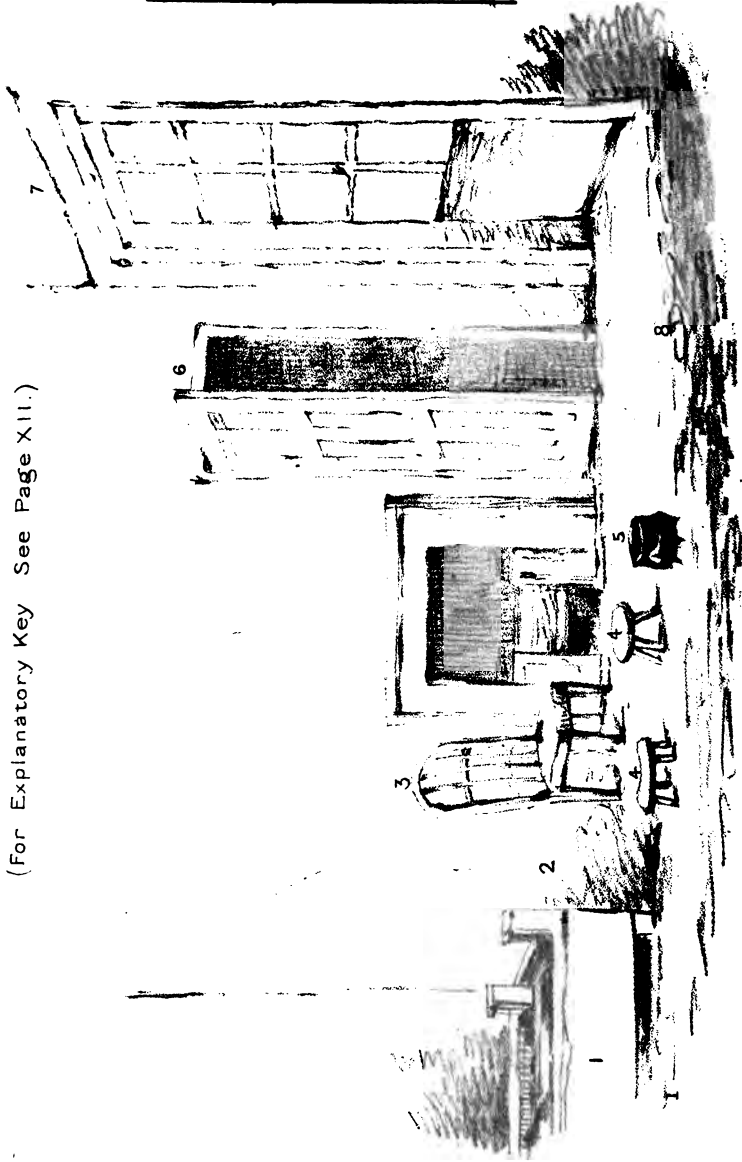
It was probably owing to this quarrel that Burke and Helen M'Dougal removed from Hare's house in Tanner's Close to that of John Broggan, whose wife was a cousin of Burke.



SIGNATURE.

Wm. Burke

INTERIOR OF BURKE'S HOUSE.  
(For Explanatory Key See Page XII.)





This house was not far from their old lodgings, being but two closes eastward in Portsburgh. Grindlay's Close was between it and Tanner's Close, and it was entered from a back court to which admission could be gained from the street either by an unnamed passage, or by Weaver's Close, still further east. Leighton was able to gain a detailed description of this place, and it is well worth quoting:—"In a land to the eastward of that occupied by Hare, in Tanner's Close, you reached it after descending a common stair and turning to the right, where a dark passage conducted to several rooms, at the end and at right angles with which passage there was an entrance leading solely to Burke's room, and which could be closed by a door so as to make it altogether secluded from the main entry. The room was a very small place, more like a cellar than the dwelling of a human being. A crazy chair stood by the fire-place, old shoes and implements of shoemaking lay scattered on the floor; a cupboard against the wall held a few plates and bowls, and two beds, coarse wooden frames, without posts or curtains, were filled with old straw and rugs." It was in this house that Mrs. Hostler, as already described, was murdered, and it was in this house that the last of the long series of tragedies was to be enacted. The criminals were gradually approaching their doom, but they had become reckless and bold. They had been so successful in the past, that they hoped to be equally so in the future, forgetful that the mills of God grind slow, but sure.

We have seen that while Burke, according to his own declaration, had murdered Peggy Haldane in this house off Weaver's Close, unaided by his old accomplice (though both these details are doubtful), yet they were united in the suffocation of Mrs. Hostler. They really could not work separately—they were so bound together by the crimes they had committed that an ordinary quarrel, though it should have at first made them live in different houses, could hardly disjoin their interests. This could only have been done by one of them informing on the other. But they were again united in their horrid labours.

In the course of the autumn there arrived in Edinburgh to visit Helen M'Dougal a cousin of her former husband. This was a

young married woman named Ann M'Dougal, who probably came from the district around Falkirk. There is no doubt she would be received in the most friendly manner, which she would heartily reciprocate, for it is more than probable that her visit was consequent upon an invitation given her by Helen M'Dougal and Burke when they were in Stirlingshire during the summer. But may not that invitation, given in all apparent kindness, have been simply a snare to draw the poor woman from her home so that she might be a more convenient victim in Edinburgh? may Burke not have given it so that he might make Ann M'Dougal a sacrifice instead of his paramour, as had been suggested to him by Mrs. Hare? But whether this was a premeditated plan, or whether the young woman came to Edinburgh on a genuine invitation or of her own accord, is quite immaterial. It is at least certain that once she was in the house of her relatives her fate, so far as they were concerned, was sealed. After she had been coming and going for a few days, Hare and Burke plied her with whisky until she was in an incapably drunken condition, and had to be put to bed. Burke then told Hare that he would have the most to do to her, as he did not like to begin first on her, she being a distant relative. What an amount of feeling this displays! It would have been interesting to have known how Burke argued with himself in coming to this decision. However, relative or not, he was not at all averse to allow Hare to kill her when she was supposed to be under his protection, and what was more, he was willing to help Hare once a beginning had been made; he was even anxious to share the price her body would bring at the dissecting-rooms. Hare then set about his portion of the work. He held the woman's mouth and nose to stop the breathing, and Burke threw himself across the body, holding down her arms and legs. Of course life could not long continue under these conditions, and Ann M'Dougal lay murdered in the house of a friend, and by the heart and hand of a friend—"a distant friend," as Burke put it to his accomplice. The murder was committed in the afternoon. It is surely a remarkable thing that if Helen M'Dougal knew nothing of the work in which her reputed husband and Hare were engaged, she should have allowed her relative to

be murdered; or that if this was the first she learned of it, she should have been so ready to let the matter rest. But of course she was cognisant of it all along. Burke was at no regular employment, and yet the money was to hand in larger quantities than they could ever have expected from the cobbling of shoes.

The two men next set about making arrangements for the transfer of the body to Surgeon's Square. They saw Paterson, Dr. Knox's porter, who gave them a fine trunk to put it in. When this was done Broggan, who had been out at his work, came home, and made inquiries about the trunk standing on the floor-head, for he knew that neither he nor his lodgers possessed an article like it. Burke then gave him two or three drams, "as there was always plenty of whisky going at these times," to keep him quiet. He went out again, Burke and Hare carried the trunk and its contents to Surgeon's Square, receiving ten pounds for it. On their return they each gave Broggan thirty shillings, and he left Edinburgh a few days afterwards for Glasgow, it was thought. This money payment brings out the duplicity of Hare in a remarkable manner, and shows that the cunning by which he afterwards saved himself from the scaffold was no new development. Broggan, it would seem, had practically discovered that there was something wrong. The murderers saw that it would be necessary to give him "hush-money," and to endeavour to get him to leave the city. But Hare was cautioner for Broggan's rent, which amounted to three pounds, so that if the man left the city there was every probability that the payment of the rent would fall on him. He therefore proposed to Burke that they should each give thirty shillings to enable Broggan to pay the rent, and to this Burke readily agreed, as he was glad to see the man out of the way. Broggan, however, spoiled this plot by going away with the money, and, as Burke said in his second confession, "the rent is not paid yet." But Burke was victimised all the same, as he was afterwards at the trial, by his more astute colleague who should have accompanied him to the gallows.

The relatives of Ann M'Dougal made inquiries about her, but they could find no trace; though it is recorded that on

seeking her at the house of Burke's brother, in the Canongate, Helen M'Dougal, under the influence of drink, no doubt, told them they need not trouble themselves about her, as she was murdered and sold long before. They did not seem to have taken much notice of the remark, or if they did they must have concluded that the disappearance of Ann was due to the workings of the band of resurrectionists, to whose existence the people of Edinburgh were gradually being awakened by the numerous and frequent disappearances. But suspicion had not yet alighted on Burke and his associates.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

*James Wilson, "Daft Jamie"—Some Anecdotes concerning him  
—Daft Jamie and Bobby Aul.*

PERHAPS none of the murders committed by Burke and Hare caused so much popular regret as that of James Wilson, known as "Daft Jamie." He was one of those wandering naturals known to everybody, and being a lad who, while deficient in intellect, was kind at heart, he was a universal favourite, only the very small and the very impudent boys troubling him. Here is a quotation from a small publication issued shortly after the mystery of his death was cleared up, which gives us some knowledge of his manners:—"He was a quiet, harmless being, and gave no person the smallest offence whatever; he was such a simpleton that he would not fight to defend himself, though he were ever so ill-used, even by the smallest boy. Little boys, about the age of five and six, have frequently been observed by the citizens of Edinburgh going before him holding up their fists, squaring, and saying they would fight him; Jamie would have stood up like a knotless thread, and said, with tears in his eyes, that he would not fight, for it was only bad boys who fought; the boys would then give him a blow, and Jamie would have run off, saying, 'That wiz 'nae sair, man, ye canna catch me.' Then about a thousan' gets (young brats of children), hardly out o' the egg-shell, would have taken flight after him, bauling out, 'Jamie, Jamie, Daft

Jamie.' Sometimes he would have stopped and turned round to them, banging his brow, squinting his eyes, shooting out his lips (which was a sign of his being angry), saying, 'What way dae ye ca' me daft?' 'Ye *ir*,' the little gets would have bawled out. 'I'm no, though,' said Jamie, 'as sure's death; devil tak me, I'm no daft at a'.' 'Ye *ir*, ye *ir*,' the gets would have bawled out. He then would have held up his large fist, which was like a Dorby's (mason's) mell, saying, 'If ye say I'm daft, I'll knock ye down.' He would then have whirled round on his heel and ran off again, acting the race-horse."

Such was Daft Jamie Wilson. He was born on the 27th November, 1809, in Edinburgh. His father died when he was about twelve years of age; and his mother being a hawker, he was left, during her absence, pretty much to his own devices. He generally wandered about the streets, getting a meal here and a few pence there, eking out a livelihood by the good-will of the people, who as a rule were very kind to him. Many stories are told of him, and a few are well worth repeating.

One afternoon in the summer of 1820, Jamie set off with a number of boys in search of birds' nests. He stayed so long that his mother became alarmed, and went out to look for him. During her absence Jamie arrived at the house, ravenous with hunger, and he was so impatient that he could not wait until his mother returned, so he broke open the door. Once in, he sought every corner of the house for food. In a moveable wooden cupboard he found a loaf, and when reaching up to lay hold of it he overbalanced himself, bringing cupboard and its contents to the floor. The dishes were all broken, and a great amount of damage was done. When the mother came in and saw what Jamie had been about, she was so angry that she attacked him with a long leather strap, and gave him such a beating that he left the house, and would not reside in it afterwards. He preferred to sleep on stairs, or behind walls, except when some one offered him accommodation for the night.

Jamie, like other people, had his likes and dislikes. He was very fond of some of the students attending the University, and to them he would talk readily, even offering them a pinch out of his "sneeshing mill." This article was a curiosity, and

along with it he carried a brass snuff-spoon in which were seven holes, the middle hole being Sunday, and the others round it the days of the week. He was of a statistical turn of mind, and could tell how many lamps there were in the city, how many days in the year, and such like. Many little conundrums he considered his own particular property, and he was highly offended if any one anticipated him in their answer. He liked best when they replied, "I gie it up," and left him to supply the solution himself. What a pleasure it gave Daft Jamie to be asked—"In what month of the year do the ladies talk least?" for he could say—"The month o' February, because there wiz least days in it." When he was asked—"Why is a jailer like a musician?" he replied, "Because he maun tak' care o' his key;" and the question, "What is the cleanest meat a dirty cook can make ready?" gave him the opportunity of saying, "A hen's egg is cleanest, for she canna get her fingers in't, t' tak' a slake o't."

"I can tell ye a' a guess," Jamie would have said to a crowd of idlers who might have gathered round him, "I can tell ye a' a guess, that nae body kens, nor nae body can guess't." "What is't, Jamie?" would be the eager question, and highly pleased, the poor fellow would repeat, what most of his audience had often heard before:—

" Tho' I black an' dirty am,  
An black, as black can be ;  
There's many a lady that will come,  
An' by the haun tak me."

"Now," he would continue, "no nane o' ye guess canna that." "Ah no, Jamie," some one would reply, "we canna guess that fickly ane, wha learned ye a' thae fickly guesses?" "It wiz my half step-mither," he usually answered, "for she's a canty body, for she's aye as canty as a kitten when we're a' sittin' beside her round the fire-side, she tells us heaps o' funny stories, but I dinna mind them a'." "Ah! I ken your guess, Jamie," some tantalising bystander would remark, "its a tea kettle." Jamie was fairly discomfited, and he would run away crying, "Becuz ye ken, becuz somebody telt ye."

Half-witted and all as he was, Jamie was wonderfully

ready at repartee. A gentleman once said to him—"Jamie, I hear you have got siller in the bank; why do ye keep it there?" "Because I'm keepin it," replied Jamie, "till I be an aul' man; for maybe I'll hae sair legs, and no can gang about t' get ony thing frae my nineteen friends." Another person asked him, "Why do the ladies in general not carry Bibles to church?" "Because," said Jamie, "they are ashamed o' themselfs, for they canna fin' out the text." "That is very true," said an old schoolmaster, "for I observed twa governesses sitting in a front seat in a church that I was in last Sabbath, and the text was in Ecclesiastes, and neither of them could find it out." Jamie was in the habit of frequenting the house of an old lady in George Street, Edinburgh, where the flunkey and the cook were very good to him. The man often shaved him, and on one occasion, when the flunkey was about to lather his customer he remarked:—"I dinna think I'll shave ye ony mair, Jamie, unless ye gie Peggy a kiss." "But maybe mem wad be angry," said Jamie. "No, no," said the flunkey, "she'll no be angry, for hoo can she ken? She'll no see." Laughingly, Jamie turned round to Peggy, and made to kiss her, but she stopped him and said, "A twell a wat no, Jamie, ye'll no kiss me wi' that lang beard, it wid jag a' my lips." With this repulse Jamie resumed his seat, and when the shaving process was finished he looked at himself in the glass. Peggy now claimed her kiss, but Jamie clapped his hands over his mouth, and replied, "Ye're no a bonny lass, ye're no bonny eneuch for me, and since ye was proud, I'll be saucy, I'm a dandy now." "Weel, then," said Peggy, "let me see how the dandies walk," and Jamie walked through the kitchen with as proud a gait as that of a Highland pipe-major. On another occasion, when Jamie was a little touched with the whisky he had imbibed, he met a woman whose eye had been blackened in some brawl. "Oh! fy, fy, Jamie, it is a great shame to see you, or ony such as you, tak' drink," was her greeting. "A weel," answered Jamie, "what I hae in me, you, nor nane like ye, can tak' out; an' what way hae ye got that blue eye? Hae ye faun on the tub, nae, when ye was washin'?" The woman explained that she got it by coming against "the sneck of the door last night." "Ou aye," said Jamie, "ye ken ye maun

tell the best story ye can, but I ken ye hae been fou when ye got it, an' by yer impudent tongue t' yer gudeman, he had ta'en ye through the heckle pins; I saw ye yesterday whare ye sid nae ha'e been." This was enough for his reprover, and she left him.

An instance of Jamie's carefulness has already been given in the reply he gave to the gentleman who asked him why he put his "siller" in the bank, but two others bearing on the same point have also been preserved. He was on very friendly terms with the porters on Adam's Square stance, and one of them asked him why he did not wear an article of dress which had been given him by one of his friends. "It was owre guid for me to wear," replied Jamie, "for when I hae guid claes the fook dinna gie me onything." Once a gentleman accosted him in George Street with the remark, "Come along with me, Jamie, and I will give you an old coat." "I thank ye, I thank ye," said Jamie, "but I've got plenty o' auld yins at hame." The gentleman passed on, but he was not far away when Jamie ran up to him and said, "Is it a guid ane?" The reply was favourable, and Jamie accompanied his friend to his house, where he was given a coat, a hat, and a pair of shoes. Jamie never wore a hat or shoes, and although the day was very cold and dirty, he could not be persuaded to don the articles given him by the gentleman, and he explained that he did not want to wear them in "sic hard times."

Like many of his poor brethren in misfortune, Jamie was a regular attender at church, and he was never known to be absent from a sermon in Mr. Aikman's chapel. He was very fond of the singing, and lilted away in his own peculiar fashion. An attempt was made to induce him to go to the Gaelic Chapel, next door to Mr. Aikman's, but he said he "wad gang to nae body's kirk but his ain." He had a preference for Sundays, as on that day he was in the habit of visiting a kind friend who gave him "meat and kail." Jamie's fondness for singing, such as it was, supplied a coachman in Hunter's Square with an opportunity of playing a practical joke on him. The man asked him to sing King David's anthem, and he would give him his coach and horses, and make him provost. Jamie said the people would hear him, but the facetious Jehu



said he would shut him in the coach. Having been snugly ensconced in the vehicle, Jamie began the singing, and roared so loudly that the whole neighbourhood was alarmed. Among those attracted to the spot was Robert Kirkwood, another half-wit, a great friend of Jamie, familiarly known as Bobby Awl. Bobby saw his companion through the window of the coach, and cried out, "Eh! it's Daft Jamie, I ken him, I see him." Jamie came out, and shook hands with Bobby, who asked, "Did ye get a ride, Jamie?" "Ay," said Jamie, "but no far." The coachman then induced the pair to dance on the street, but the crowd became so great that a policeman had to put a stop to the performance.

Jamie and Bobby were fast friends, and no one could get them to fight, though frequent attempts were made to do so. They seemed to have a fellow-feeling for each other, and each of them firmly believed that his companion, and not himself, was "daft." In the Grassmarket, on one occasion, they joined together to purchase a dram. On their meeting, Jamie accosted his friend with, "It's a cauld day, Bobby." "Aye is't, Jamie," was the reply; "wadna we be the better of a dram? Hae ye ony siller, man?—I hae tippence." "An' I hae fourpence," said Jamie. "That'll get a hale mutchkin," answered Bobby; and the pair adjourned to a public-house, where their liquor was served over the counter. Bobby, on the pretence that Jamie should go to the door to witness a dog-fight that he said was going on when they came in, got his companion out of the way, and drank up the whole of the whisky himself. When Jamie came back he said he saw no dog-fight, but when he noticed the empty measure he said to Bobby, "What's cum o' the whisky?—ha'e ye drunk it a', ye daft beast, and left me nane?" "Ou aye," said the delinquent; "ye see I was dry, and couldna wait." When Jamie was afterwards asked why he did not revenge himself on Bobby for this piece of treachery, he answered, "Ou, what could ye say to pair Bobby? He's daft, ye ken." Once, and only once, did these two lads come to blows, and it was then through the mischievous workings of an Edinburgh cadie, or errand-boy. They were together in the slaughter-house, when Wag Fell, the cadie, gave Bobby a putrified sheep's head. He then induced him to turn his attention

to something else, and slipped the head to Jamie, with the remark that he was to run away home and boil it. Jamie started on his mission, but he was not far gone when Bobby, who had been told by Fell that Jamie had stolen his sheep's head, made up to him, crying, "Daft Jamie, gie's my heid." They both claimed it, and in the struggle Bobby struck Jamie so violently on the nose that it bled profusely. Jamie, however, did not retaliate, though he retained possession of his "heid."

It is a strange fact that these two lads both met with a violent end. Bobby Aul was killed by the kick of a donkey, and his body was disposed of in Dr. Monro's dissecting-room. The circumstances of Jamie's death, as being connected more directly with the narrative of this book, had better be told in another chapter.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### *Daft Jamie Trapped into Hare's House—The Murder—The Body Recognised on the Dissecting Table—Popular Feeling.*

THE murder of so well-known a character as James Wilson, by Burke and Hare, can only be regarded, from their point of view, as an act of the most egregious folly, and, like that of Mary Paterson, it courted discovery. So long as they confined their attention to tramps and others who were strangers in the city, or to persons regarding whom there was no probability of much inquiry being made, they were comparatively safe; but now they were treading on absolutely dangerous ground. It may have been, as Burke asserted in his confession, that so far as he could remember he had never seen Daft Jamie before he met him in Hare's house. But that is in no wise probable. During his residence of many years in Edinburgh he must frequently have come across the poor half-witted lad, who was known by sight to almost every resident of the city, especially as the Grassmarket was a favourite haunt of both of them. But though Burke might plead ignorance, some of his accomplices

could not, for it was owing to their very acquaintance with Jamie that he fell into their hands. That they should have made such a supreme error is something more than remarkable.

On a day late in September, or early in October, 1828, Daft Jamie was wandering about the Grassmarket, asking all he knew if they had seen his mother. What set him upon this tack it would be difficult to say. His mother, perhaps, had been away from home, and the poor lad had taken a sudden longing to see her; or perhaps it was simply one of those strange vagaries that poor mortals like Jamie occasionally take. During his search he was met by Mrs. Hare, who asked him what he was about. "My mother," he replied, "hae ye seen her ony gait?" Mrs. Hare was ready with her answer, for she had quickly formed a plan. Yes, she had seen his mother, and if Jamie went with her he would find her in her house in Tanner's Close. Jamie, in all innocence—and what could he suspect?—followed the woman to Log's lodgings, where Hare was himself sitting idle. Of course the visitor was welcomed in the most kindly fashion, asked to sit down until his mother should appear, and to keep him from wearying he was invited to partake of the contents of the whisky bottle. Jamie was chary about this, for although he was fond of an occasional dram he had a great fear of "gettin' fou." At last he was induced to taste, and he sat down on the edge of the bed with a cup containing some liquor in his hand. In the meantime, Mrs. Hare went down to Mr. Rymer's shop near at hand, to purchase some provisions. She there found Burke standing at the counter talking to the shopkeeper, and, taking advantage of the opportunity, she asked her old lodger to treat her to a dram. This he did, and while she was drinking it off she pressed his foot. Burke understood the signal—as he said himself, "he knew immediately what he was wanted for, and he went after her." When he arrived at the house, Mrs. Hare told him he had come too late, for the drink was all done, but that defect was soon remedied by another supply being brought in. Jamie was again offered more whisky, and was prevailed upon to take it. Then they managed to get him into the little room where so many tragedies had been enacted. The drink began

to take Jamie's weakly brain, and he lay down on the bed in a half-dazed state. Hare crept beside him, and the two men watched his every movement to see when it would be safe for them to attempt to carry out their diabolical design. Mrs. Hare, meanwhile, had been acting with her usual caution. She knew it was not for her to stay in the house when "business" was being transacted, so she went out, carefully locking the door behind her, and placing the key in an opening below the door. The two men were eagerly watching their victim in the back-room, but they felt that this case would not be as easy as most of the others in which they had been engaged. Jamie was young and physically strong, and he had not taken enough of their liquor to render him absolutely helpless, even in the hands of two robust, desperate men. Burke at last was tired of waiting, and he furiously threw himself on the prostrate body of the sleeping lad. Jamie was no sooner touched than the natural instinct of self-preservation made him endeavour to defend himself. He closed with his assailant, and after a furious effort threw him off. He was now standing on the floor ready for another onslaught. Burke's blood was up, and he renewed the attack, but Jamie was likely to be more than a match for him. Hare, in the meantime, was standing aside, idly watching the contest, and it was only when Burke threatened to "put a knife in him" that he roused himself and threw his strength in the scale against the man who was fighting for his life. Jamie had nearly overcome Burke when Hare entered the lists and tripped him up. The poor lad fell heavily on the floor, and before he had time to recover himself the two men were upon him—Hare, as usual, holding his mouth and nose, and Burke lying over his body keeping down his legs and arms. Still Jamie struggled, but to no advantage. His murderers had him too securely beneath them, and gradually his strength waned, until at last the tragedy was completed. Burke and Hare, when they saw the end coming, watched him anxiously, for even yet they were afraid their prey might escape them. But they had done their work too thoroughly. They had not, however, come off unhurt. It was reported at the time of the trial that during the struggle Jamie bit Burke so severely on

the leg that, if the laws of the country had not promised to hang him by the neck, he would likely have died from the cancered wounds received in the conflict. This was found not to be the case, but there is no doubt that the two murderers received several painful bruises from the dying man.

When it was certain that Daft Jamie was dead, Hare searched his pockets, and found in them the snuff-box and spoon that were about as well known as the simpleton himself. To Burke he gave the spoon, retaining the box himself. A box was libelled among the productions at the trial, but Burke in his confession says that the one in the possession of the authorities was not Daft Jamie's, which had been thrown away, but was his own. Before it was taken to Surgeon's Square the body was stripped of its clothing, and here another fatal blunder was made. In all the other murders the clothes of the victims were destroyed to prevent detection, but in this case Burke gave Daft Jamie's clothes to his brother Constantine's children, who were then going about almost naked, and it is said that a baker who had given the murdered lad the pair of trousers he wore at the time of his death, recognised them on one of Burke's nephews. When stripped, the body was put into Hare's chest, and in the course of the afternoon it was conveyed to Dr. Knox's rooms, when the sum of ten pounds was obtained for it. No questions seem to have been asked as to how Burke and Hare became possessed of the body of Daft Jamie, though there can be little doubt that the students recognised it. The public then wondered at the matter, and it may be wondered at still. In a popular work, published at the time, there was this very pertinent sentence:—"Certainly, those scientific individuals who attend the class in which he was dissected, must be very hardened men, when they saw Jamie lying on the dissecting-table for anatomy; for they could not but know, when they saw him, that he had been murdered; and not only that, the report of his being amissing went through the whole town on the following day; there could not be any one of them but must know him by sight." That some of them did know him by sight is certain, for shortly after he was missed the statement was commonly circulated that one of Dr. Knox's students had

affirmed that he saw Jamie on the dissecting-table. Mrs. Wilson and her friends went here and there looking for the poor lad, but no trace could they find of him, and there seemed to be a tendency to treat the statement of the body having been seen on a table in the rooms in Surgeon's Square as a mere idle rumour, arising out of the uneasiness and suspicion which the quiet and unknown operations of Burke and Hare were causing among the inhabitants of the country in general and Edinburgh in particular. A sense of insecurity had gone abroad, and it was not dispelled until the final clearing up in the trial of Burke and Helen M'Dougal.

The mysterious fate of Daft Jamie, as we have said, took a most remarkable hold on the public mind. It was the talk all over the country, and when the mystery was solved the murder of the poor natural bulked larger than all the other crimes put together. The hawkers and pedlars, and patterers of the time carried about with them all over the country coarsely-printed chap books containing accounts of the crimes of the greatest murderers of the age, or biographies of Daft Jamie, to which in some cases were added the efforts of sympathising poetasters. The poetry as a rule was execrable, but the feeling displayed in them was but a reflex of the public mind. One aspiring genius spoke of

“ The ruffian dogs—the hellish pair—  
The villain Burke—the meagre Hare,—”

while another composed the following acrostic :—

“ Join with me, friends, whilst I bewail  
A while the subject of this tale ;  
Many a mind has often been  
Engaged with Jamie's awkward mien ;  
Such pranks will ne'er again be seen.

We may bewail, but 'tis in vain,  
It will not bring him back again :  
Lost he is now—this thought imparts  
Sad comfort to our wounded hearts ;  
Oh ! may such crimes nowhere remain,  
Nor ever more our nation stain,”

## CHAPTER XV.

*The End Approaches—Proposed Extension of Business—Mrs. Docherty claimed as Burke's Relative—The Lodgers Dismissed—The Murder of Mrs. Docherty.*

BUT the end was near. This wholesale slaughter of human beings in the metropolis of a civilised country was almost finished. The only marvel was that it had lasted so long.

The work had been conducted with so much impunity, however, that the prime movers in this dreadful conspiracy against human life had made arrangements for the extension of their operations. They found a ready market for their goods, and when they took a body to Surgeon's Square they were always encouraged to bring more. Their efforts in the cause of science were thus appreciated by the scientists themselves, and it matters little whether these scientists were aware of the diabolical means their favourite merchants used to obtain possession of the bodies they brought for their use. To rob a churchyard of its ghastly contents was as much a crime, though it was certainly not so serious, against the laws of the country and the public sense of morality, as the murder of a fellow-creature for his mortal remains. And then Burke and Hare found their work comparatively easy, and very remunerative, though perhaps a little risky. It was much easier than the cobbling of boots and shoes, or travelling about the country as a pedlar. They enjoyed themselves looking for victims, and the process of getting one into a fit state for "disposal" was quite suited to their tastes. When it came to the point—when the person to whom so much attention was paid was stupid and helpless—there was, as a rule, little to be done. Burke described the method very simply in his *Courant* confession:—"When they kept the mouth and the nose shut a very few minutes, they [the victims] could make no resistance, but would convulse and make a rumbling noise in their bellies for some time; after they ceased crying and making resistance, they [the murderers] left them to die by themselves; but their bodies would often move afterwards, and for some

time they would have long breathings before life went away." And every one can re-echo the sentiment of the remark by Burke, made almost in presence of that death he had so often invoked on others:—"It was God's providence that put a stop to their murdering career, or he did not know how far they might have gone with it, even to attack people on the streets." All these circumstances, then, added to the freedom from suspicion which Burke and Hare hitherto enjoyed, render it not at all surprising that these desperate men should have laid their plans for an extension of their business. Burke and another man, with whom they had arranged, were to go to Glasgow or Ireland, and "try the same there," forwarding the subjects to Hare in Edinburgh, who was to dispose of them to Dr. Knox. The "other man" was popularly believed to be David Paterson, Dr. Knox's porter, and he was openly charged in the public prints of the time with being in complicity with Burke and Hare, although he strenuously denied it. But more of that at the proper time. The contract with Dr. Knox, also, was highly satisfactory. They were to receive ten pounds in winter and eight pounds in summer for as many subjects as they could supply. This scheme, however, was not carried into effect, for the end came suddenly.

The last of the West Port tragedies was the murder of Mary Campbell or Docherty, an old Irishwoman who had come to Edinburgh to look for her son. On the morning of the 31st October—the Friday of the Sacrament week—Burke was in Rymer's grocery store near his own close-mouth, talking to the shop-boy while he sipped a tumbler of liquor. As he was doing this an old woman entered the shop, and asked for assistance. Burke, ever on the outlook, saw the poor beggar was in every way suitable for his purpose—she was an old and frail stranger who would never be missed because she was not known, and her very frailty would make her a sure and easy victim. He soon got into conversation with her, asked her name, and what part of Ireland she came from. She answered him readily, and he, having thus got the cue, said she must be some relation of his mother, whose name was also Docherty, and out of what appeared to be pure friendliness—out of a feeling of patriotism



or kinship—he invited her to his house to partake of breakfast with him. The poor woman was thus offered what she most needed, and delighted to find she had met a friend, she accompanied him to the house once occupied by Broggan, but which, since that person had left the city, had been tenanted by Burke and Helen M'Dougal. Mrs. Docherty was made welcome by M'Dougal, who seemed to understand everything. Burke set the breakfast, but the stranger would not touch it until noon, as it was Friday. Leaving Helen M'Dougal to look to the comfort of their guest, Burke went in search of Hare, whom he found in Rymer's public house. They had a gill of whisky together, and Burke then told his colleague that he had at home "a good shot to take to the doctors." Hare, of course, was ready to participate in the work, and went with his colleague. By the time they arrived at the house they found that M'Dougal and the old woman had, after their breakfast, set about cleaning up the room, and had everything as neat and tidy as the ill-furnished, tumble-down structure could well be. Burke again visited Rymer's for some provisions, and preparations were made for a night's junketting, to be followed by the usual tragedy.

But there was a serious difficulty in the way, and that must be got rid of before anything further was done. At that time there were lodging with Burke an old soldier named James Gray and his wife. The man was a native of the Grassmarket, who, after an attempt to learn his trade as a jeweller, had enlisted in the Elgin Fencibles, transferring afterwards to the 72nd Regiment, and who had returned with his wife to Edinburgh after an absence of about seventeen years. He met Burke in the High Street about a fortnight before the affair with Mrs. Docherty, and had lodged with him for nearly a week. The difficulty, therefore, was to get this couple out of the house without creating suspicion, for they could not be trusted. Burke explained to them that he had discovered the old woman was a relation of his mother, and certainly the animated conversation carried on in Irish by him and the woman seemed to confirm the statement that some relationship, however distant, existed between them. Of course it would not do for Mrs. Docherty to seek accommodation any-

where else than in her relation's house, and it would be a matter of obligation if Mr. and Mrs. Gray would find quarters in some other place for a night or two. Gray and his wife readily acquiesced in the suggestion, and Burke went out to look after lodgings for them. These were easily obtained in Hare's house, and the unwelcome couple, towards evening, left for their new abode. Thus far the arrangements had worked admirably, and now that the way was clear the tragedy could begin at once.

In the evening Mrs. Hare joined the company, and the fun began. The whisky circulated rapidly, Burke indulged his musical tastes by singing his favourite songs, and the old woman crooned over some of the Irish ballads she had learned in her youth. Dancing, too, was engaged in; and once or twice visits were paid to the house of a neighbour, where the revelry was continued, and where Docherty hurt her foot when endeavouring to emulate the sprightliness of her more youthful companions. As the night wore on they kept more to their own house. The neighbours, between ten and eleven o'clock, heard a great disturbance proceeding from Burke's dwelling, and some of them, though used to the sounds of drunken riot from that quarter, had the curiosity to look through the key-hole of the door to see what was going on. One of them, a woman, saw—or thought she saw—Helen M'Dougal holding a bottle to the mouth of Docherty, pouring the whisky down her throat. After a while the disturbance ceased, but not for long. About eleven o'clock Hare quarrelled with Burke, and the dispute could only be settled by an appeal to blows. Whether this was a real quarrel or not it would be difficult to say, for, though Burke himself declared "it was a real scuffle," it has been pointed out as a suspicious circumstance that this "quarrel" is in a sense the counterpart of the one that took place between Burke and M'Dougal immediately before the murder of Mary Paterson. While the two men were fighting, Mrs. Docherty, tipsy though she was, tried to interfere. She rose from the stool on which she had been sitting by the fire-side, and asked Burke to sit down, as she did not wish to see him abused. The fight, however, still continued, and Hare, whether by design or not, knocked the old woman over a stool,

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She fell heavily, and, owing to the amount of drink she had taken, was unable to rise. Whenever this had been done the fighting ceased, Mrs. Hare and Helen M'Dougal slipped out of the house, and Burke and Hare set to work on the prostrate, helpless woman. It was after the old method, but a fatal mistake was made. One of them grasped her violently by the throat, leaving the mark of the undue pressure. Soon the woman was dead. Burke undressed the body, doubled it up, and laid it among a quantity of straw beside the bed. The women then returned to the room, and Burke went to see Paterson, Dr. Knox's porter, brought him to the house, and, pointing to the place where the body lay, told him that there was a subject which would be ready for him in the morning. When Paterson left, the four human fiends resumed their debauch, and for the last time together they spent a riotous night. The murder was committed between eleven and twelve o'clock on Hallowe'en night; and they brought in the month of November with heavy drinking. About midnight they were joined in their cups by a young fellow named Broggan, a son of the man to whom the house had once belonged, and who, as we have seen, was bought off when the first murder—that of M'Dougal's cousin, was committed in it. At last, when the morning was far advanced, they were all overcome by sleep, and the party lay down to rest, with the body of the murdered woman beside them.

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