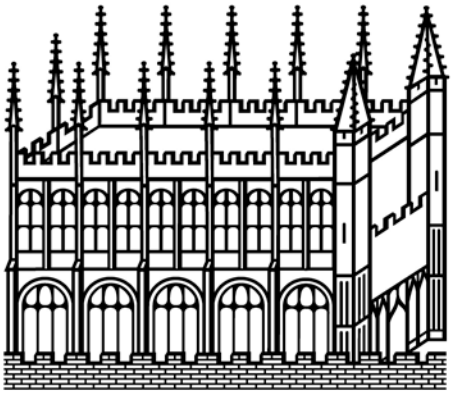

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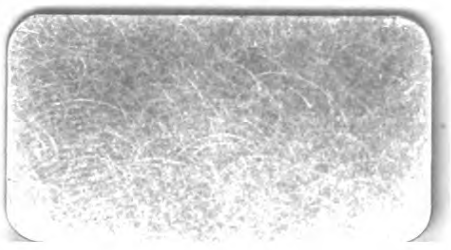

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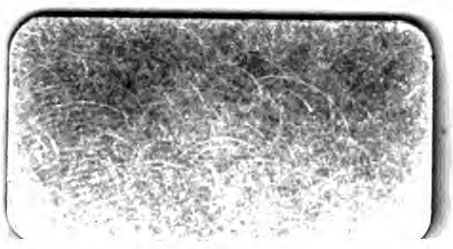

CASTLE WARLOCK

A HOMELY ROMANCE

BY

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"ALEC FORBES," "MARY MARSTON," "THE VICAR'S DAUGHTER,"
"GUILD COURT," "SIR GIBBIE," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

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CASTLE WARLOCK.

CHAPTER I.

HOME AGAIN.

Early the next day, while the sun was yet casting huge diagonal shadows across the wide street, Cosmo climbed to the roof of the Defiance coach, his heart swelling at the thought of being so soon in his father's arms. It was a lovely summer-morning, cool and dewy, fit for any Sunday. But the eyes and mind of Cosmo turned to the remnants of night that banded the street, and thence he sank into the workshop of his own peculiar metaphysics, where the twilight of his thinking was shaken by the champing clank of the bits, the voices of the ostlers, passengers, and guard, but sustained by

the perpendicular silence of the coachman, who sat like a statue in front of him.

How dark were the shadows the sun was casting!

Absurd! the sun casts no shadows—only light.

How so? Were the sun not shining, would there be one single shadow?

Yes; there would be just one single shadow; all would be shadow.

There would be none of those things we call shadows.

True; all would be shade; there would be no shadows.

By this little stair was Cosmo landed at a door of deep question. For now *evil* took the place of *shadow* in his solo-disputation, and the law and the light and the shadow and the sin went thinking about with each other in his mind. He saw for the first time clearly how the Jews came to assign evil to the hand of God as well as good, and what St. Paul meant when he said that the law gave life to sin; for by the sun is the shadow; where no light is there is no darkness,

where no life, no death. He saw too that in the spiritual world what we need is a live sun strong enough to burn up all the shadows by shining through the things that cast them, and compelling their transparency—and that sun is the God who is light and in whom is no darkness at all—which truth is the gospel according to St. John. And where there is no longer anything covered or hid, shall sin be able to live? Can it go on without dens and caves and shadows? These and such like thoughts held him long—till the noisy streets of the granite city lay far behind. Swiftly the road flew from under the sixteen flashing shoes of the thoroughbreds that bore him along.

The light and hope and strength of the new-born day were shining, mounting, swelling in the heart of the sad lover—even there! In every *honest* heart, more or less, whether it be young or old, feeble or strong, the new summer-day stirs, and will stir while the sun has heat enough for the life of men. Surely the live God is not absent from the symbol and birth

and garment of his glory! the resurrection, the reviving strength, and the hope are not there without him! When conscious power awakes in my heart, shall I be the slave to imagine it comes only as a sap rising in the stem of a human plant, or the mercury in the tube of the thermometer? that there is no essential life within my conscious life, no spirit within my spirit? I will accept the figure only if you grant the bulb of my thermometer infinite and filled with Godhead. If my origin be not life, I am the poorest of slaves!

Cosmo had changed since first he sat behind such another four on his way to the university. It was the change of growth, but he felt it like that of decay—felt that he had been young and now was old. Little did he imagine what genuine age means! He had not an idea how much more than he his father felt his dependence on, that is his strength in God, therefore how much stronger was his father. Years many had yet to pass ere he could know the splendour of an

existence rooted in changeless life, and but ripening through the gathering weaknesses of the body. It is the strength of God that informs every muscle and arture of the youth; but that strength is so much his own—looks so natural to him—as well it may, being God's idea for him—that, in the glory of its possession, he does not feel it as the energy of the present God. But when weakness begins to show itself—a shadow-back-ground against which the strength is known and outlined; when every movement begins to demand a distinct effort of the will, and the earthly house presses, a conscious weight, not upon its own parts only, but upon the spirit within, then must a man *have* God, believe in him with an entireness independent of feeling, and going beyond all theory, or be devoured by despair. In the growing feebleness of old age, a man may come to accept life, not for its own sake, only because it is the will of God; but the weakness of such a man is the matrix of a divine strength, whence a gladness unspeakable shall ere

long be born—the conscious glory, namely, of the life God would share with his children.

Cosmo was on the way to know all this, but in the meantime his trouble sat not seldom heavy upon him. Indeed the young straight back, if it feel the weight less, feels the irksomeness of the burden more than the old bowed one. With strength goes the wild love of movement, and the cross that prevents the free play of a single muscle is felt grievous as the fetter that chains a man to the oar. But this day—and what man has to do with yesterday or to-morrow?—the sun shone as if he knew everything, and that all was well: Cosmo was going home, and the love of his father was a deep gladness even in presence of love's lack. Seldom is it so; between true father and true son it must be so.

When he came within a mile of Muir o' Warlock, he left the coach, and would walk the rest of the way. He desired to enjoy in unruffled flow the thoughts that like swallows kept coming and going

between him and his nest. Everything, the commonest, that met him as he went, had a strange beauty; now first, although he had known it so long, its innermost seemed lighted up by some polarized radiance from source unseen. How small and poor the cottages looked —but how home-like! and how sweet the smoke of their chimneys! How cold they must be in winter—but how warm were the hearts inside them! There was Jean Elder's Sunday linen spread like snow on her gooseberry bushes! there was the shoemaker's cow eating as if she would devour the very turf that bordered the road! there was a light-haired, brown-faced child he did not remember, holding her back from the corn by a chain! and there was the first dahlia of the season in Jonathan Jopp's garden!

As he entered the village, the road, which was at once its street and the queen's highway, was empty of life save for one half-grown pig—"prospecting," a hen or two picking about, and several cats that lay in the sun.

"There must be a redemption for the feline races," thought Cosmo, "when the cats have learned so much to love the sun!—But is it his light, or only his heat they love?"

He looked neither on this side nor on that as he walked, for he was in no mood for the delay of converse. He wondered nevertheless that he saw nobody. It was the general dinner-hour, true, but that could hardly account for the deserted look of the street! The passing of any stranger was usually enough to bring people to their doors—their windows were not of much use for looking out of! Lurking behind rose-tree or geranium or hydrangea, however, not a few faces of which he saw nothing were peering at him out of those windows as he passed. The villagers had learned from some one on the coach that the young laird was coming, but a feeling was abroad amongst them to his prejudice. They had looked to hear great things of their favourite; he was not the success they had expected; and from their own disappoint-

ment they imagined his blame. It troubled them to think of the old man, so loved and honoured, sending his son to college on the golden horse, whose history had ever since been the cherished romance of the place, and after all getting no good of him. So when they saw him coming along dusty and shabby—not so well dressed indeed as would have contented one of themselves on a Sunday, they sighed as they stared, but none went to the door to greet his return. They feared to shame him, never doubting that before himself he was ashamed.

Nothing of this did Cosmo suspect, but held on his way unconscious of the regards that pursued him as a prodigal—returning the less satisfactorily that he had not been guilty enough to repent!

CHAPTER II.

THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

Every step he took after leaving the village was like a revelation and a memory in one. When he turned out of the main road, the hills came rushing to meet and welcome him, yet it was only that they stood there changeless, eternally the same—just as they had been: that was their best and intrinsic welcome to the heart that had always loved them. When first he opened his eyes, they were as the nursing arms the world spread out to take him, and now returning from far countries where they were all but unknown, they spread them out afresh to receive him home. The next turn was home itself, for it was up the ridge on which the castle stood.

The moment he took the turn a strange stillness came over him, and as he went on it deepened. By the time he entered the gate of the close, the feeling had grown a sense, and become almost appalling. With sudden inroad his dream returned. Was there no life in the place? Was it empty utterly? He had not heard a sound; there was no sign from cowhouse or stable. A cart with one wheel stood in the cart-shed; a harrow lay, spikes upward, where he had hollowed the mound of snow. The fields had an unwonted, a haggard sort of look. A crop of oats was ripening in that nearest the close, but they covered only half of it: the rest was in potatoes, and amongst them, welcome though lonely show of life and labour, was Aggie, pulling the plums off their stems. The doors were shut all round the close, except that of the kitchen—wide open as usual. A sickening fear came upon him. It was more than a week since he had heard from home: his father might be dead, and the place indeed desolate! He dared

not enter the house. He would go first into the garden, and there pray, and gather courage.

He went back, and round the kitchen-tower, and entering the garden, made for his oldest seat, the big fallen stone. Some one was sitting there, with his head bent forward on his knees! By the red nightcap it must be his father, but how changed the whole aspect of the good man! His look was that of a worn-out labourer—one who has borne the burden and heat of the day, and already half asleep, is waiting for the night. Moveless as a statue of Weariness he sat; on the ground lay a spade as if it had dropped from his hand as he sank on the stone; and beside him lay his Marion's bible. Cosmo's heart failed within him, and for a moment he stood as motionless.

The first movement he made, the old man lifted his head expectantly, then rose in haste, and, unable to straighten himself, hurried, stooping, with short steps, to meet him. Putting his hands

on his son's shoulders, he raised himself up, and laid his face to his; and for moments they were silent, each in the other's arms.

The laird drew back his head and looked his son in the face. A heavenly smile crossed the sadness of his countenance, and his wrinkled old hand closed tremulous on Cosmo's shoulder.

"They canna tak frae me my son!" he murmured—and from that moment rarely spoke to him save in the mother-tongue.

He led him to the stone, where there was just room for two that loved each other. They sat down, and the laird put his hand on his son's knee, as, when a boy, Cosmo used to put his on his father's.

"Are ye the same, Cosmo?" he asked. "Are ye my ain bairn?"

"Father," returned Cosmo, "I loe ye mair nor ever. I'm come hame to ye, no to lea' ye again sae lang 's ye live. Ony want, I s' better 't gien I can, an' share 't ony gait. Ay, I may weel say I'm the same, only mair o' 't."

"The Lord's name be praist!" murmured the laird. "—But du ye loe *him* the same as ever, Cosmo?" he asked.

"Father, I dinna loe him the same—I loe him a heap better. He kens noo 'at he may tak his wull o' me. Naething 'at I ken o' comes 'atween him an' me."

The old man raised his arm, and put it round his boy's shoulders: he was not one of the many Scotch fathers who make their children fear more than love them!

"Noo, Lord, lat me depairt in peace," he said, "for mine eyes hae seen thy salvation!—But ye dinna *luik* freely the same, Cosmo!—Hoo 's that?"

"I hae come throuw a heap o' late, father," returned Cosmo. "I hae been ailin' in body, an' sair herrassed in hert. I'll tell ye a' aboot it whan we hae time—an' o' that we'll hae plenty, I s' warran', for I tell ye I winna lea' ye again; an' gien ye had only latten me ken ye was failin', I wad hae come hame lang syne. It was sair agen the grain 'at I baid awa'."

"The auld sudna lie upo' the tap o' the yoong, Cosmo, my son."

"Father, I wad wullin'ly be yer bed to lie upo', gien that wad ease ye; but I'm thinkin' we may baith lie saft upo' the wull o' the great Father, e'en whan it's hardest."

"True as trowth!" responded the laird. "—But ye're luikin' some tired-like, Cosmo!"

"I *am* some tired, an' unco dry. I wad fain hae a drink o' milk."

The old man's head dropped on his bosom, and so for the space of about a minute he sat. Then he lifted it up and said, looking with calm, clear eyes in those of his son,

"I winna greit, Cosmo; I'll say *yet*, the will o' the Lord be done, though it be sair upo' me the noo, whan I haena a drap o' milk aboot the place to set afore my only-begotten son, whan he comes hame to me frae a far country! 'Though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my

salvation.'—Eh, Lord! whan yer ain son cam hame frae his sair warstle an' lang sojourn amo' them 'at kenned na him nor thee, it wasna til an auld shabby man he cam hame, but til the Lord o' glory an' o' micht! An' or lang we'll a' win hame til the Father o' a'—the leevin' stren'th o' the universe.—Cosmo, the han' o' man 's been that heavy upo' me 'at coo efter coo 's gane frae me; the last o' them, Bonny Yally, she left thestreen. —Ye'll hae to drink cauld watter, my bairn!"

Again the old man's heart overcame him; his lip quivered, he covered his face with his hands, his head sank, and he murmured,—"Lord, I haena a drap o' milk to gie my bairn—me 'at wad gie 'im my hert's bluid!—But, Lord, wha am I to speyk sae to thee, wha lootest thine ain poor oot his verra sowl for him an' me!"

"Father," said Cosmo, "I can du wi' watter as weel's onybody. Div ye think I'm nae mair o' a man nor to care what I pit intil me? Gien ye be puirer nor

ever, I'm prooder nor ever to share wi' ye. Bide ye here, an' I'll jist rin an' get a drink, an' come back to ye."

"Na; I maun gang wi' ye, man," answered the laird, rising. "Grizzie's a heap taen up wi' yer gran'mither. She's been weirin' awa' this fortnicht back. She's no in pain, the Lord be praised! an' she'll never ken the straits her hoose is come til! Cosmo, I hae been a terrible cooard—dreidin' day an' nicht yer hame-comin', no submittin' 'at ye sud see sic a broken man to the father o' ye! But noo it's ower, an' here ye are, an' my hert 's lichter nor it's been this mony a lang!"

Cosmo's own sorrow drew back into the distance from before the face of his father's, and he felt that the business of his life must henceforth be to support and comfort him. It was as if a fountain of water broke forth suddenly in his being.

"Father," he said, as they went walking arm in arm towards the kitchen, "we'll haud on thegither i' the stret ro'd.

There's room for twa abreist in't—ance ye're in!"

"Ay! ay!" returned the laird with a smile; "that's the bonniest word ye cud hae to come hame wi' til me! We maun e'en perk up a bit, an' be patient—that patience may hae her perfet wark. I s' hae anither try—an' weel I may, for the licht o' my auld e'en is this day restored til me!"

"An' ye say gran'mother 's weirin' awa', father?"

"To the lan' o' the leal, laddie."

"Wull she ken me?"

"Na, she winna ken ye; she'll never ken onybody mair i' this warl'; but she'll ken plenty whaur she's gaein'!"

They reached the kitchen. Nobody was there, but they heard steps going to and fro in the room above. Before the laird, however, could lay his hand on a vessel, for he would himself get for Cosmo the water he desired, Grizzie appeared on the stair, descending. She hurried down, almost ran across the floor to meet Cosmo, and seizing him by the hand,

looked him in the face with the anxiety of an angel-hen. Her look said what his father's voice had said just before—"Are ye a' there?—a' 'at used to be?"

"Hoo's gran'mamma?" asked Cosmo.

"Ow, duin' weel eneuch, sir—weirin' awa' bonny—naither pang nor knowledge o' sorrow to trible her! The Lord grant the sowls o' 's a' sic anither lowsin'!"

"Hae ye naething better nor cauld watter to gie 'im a drink o', Grizzie, wuman?" asked the laird, but in mere despair.

"Nae 'cep' he wad condescen' til a grainie meal intil 't," returned Grizzie mournfully, and looked at him again, with an anxious deprecating look now, as if before the heir she was ashamed of the poverty of the house, and dreaded his blame. "But, laird," she resumed, turning to her master, "ye hae surely a drap o' something i' yer cellar! Weel I wat ye hae made awa' wi' nane o' 't yersel'!"

"Weel, there ye wat wrang, Grizzie,

my bonny wuman!" replied the laird, with the flicker of a humorous smile on his wrinkled face, "for I sellt the last boatle oot o' 't a month ago to Stronach o' the distillery. I thoucht it cudna du muckle ill there; it wadna mak his nose sae reid as his ain whusky. Whaur, think ye, wad the sma' things ye wantit for my mother hae come frae gien I hadna happent to hae that property left? We're weel taen care o', ye see, Grizzie! That *wad* hae tried my faith, to hae my mither gang wi'oot things! But he ne'er suffers man to be tried ayont what he's able to beir; an' sae lang as my faith hauds the grup, I carena for back no' belly! Cosmo, I can bide better 'at ye sud want. Ye're mair like my ain nor even my mother, an' we bide it thegither. It maun be 'cause ye're pairt o' my Mar'on as weel's o' mysel'. Eh, man! but this o' faimilies is a won'erfu' God-like contrivance! Gien he had taen ony ither w'y o' makin' fowk, whaur wad I hae been this day wantin' you, Cosmo!"

While he spoke, his son was drinking the water Grizzie had brought him. She had sprinkled a little meal on the top of it, and it made him think of his old mare, now long departed to the place prepared for her.

"There's this to be said for the watter, father," he remarked, as he set down the wooden bowl in which Grizzie had handed it to him, "that it comes mair direc' frae the han' o' God himsel'—maybe nor even the milk. But I dinna ken; for I doobt organic chymistry maun efter a' be nearer his han' nor inorganic! Ony gait, I never drank better drink; an' gien ae day he but saitisfee my sowl's hunger efter his richteousness as he has this meenute saitisfeed my body's drowth efter drink, I s' be a happier man nor ever sat still ohn danced an' sung."

"It's an innocent cratur 'at gies thanks for cauld watter—I hae aye remarkit that," said Grizzie. "But I maun awa' to my bairn up the stair; an' may it please the Lord to lift her or lang. They maun be luikin' for her yont the burn by

this time. Whan she wauks i' the mornin', the' 'll be nae mair scornin'!"

This was Grizzie's last at her mistress. The laird took no notice of it. He knew Grizzie's devotion, and, well as he loved his mother, could not but know also that there was some ground for her undevised couplet.

Scarcely a minute had passed when the voice of the old woman came from the top of the stair, calling aloud and in perturbation,

"Laird! laird! come up direc'ly. Come up, lairds baith! She's comin' til hersel'!"

They hastened up, Cosmo helping his father, and approached the bed together.

With smooth, colourless face, unearthly to look upon, the old lady lay motionless, her eyes wide open and looking as if they saw something beyond the tester of the bed, and her lips moving, but uttering no sound. At last came a murmur, in which Cosmo's ears alone were keen enough to discern the articulation.

"Mar'on, Mar'on," she said, "ye're i'

the lan' o' forgiveness. I hae dune the lad no ill. He'll come hame to ye nane the waur for ony words o' mine. We're no a' made sae guid to begin wi' as yersel', Mar'on!"

Here the sound became a mere murmur, so far at least as human ears could distinguish, and presently ceased. A minute or so more and her breathing grew intermittent. After a few long respirations at long intervals, they listened in vain for another.

"She'll be haein' 't oot wi' my ain mistress!" remarked Grizzie to herself as she closed her eyes.

"Mother! mother!" cried the laird, and kneeled by the bedside. Cosmo kneeled also, but no word of the prayers that ascended was audible. The laird was giving thanks that another was gone home, and Cosmo was praying for help to be to his father a true son, such as the Son of Man was to the Father of Man. They rose from their knees, and went quietly down the stair. As they left the room they heard Grizzie say to herself—

"She's gane whaur there's mair—eneuch an' to spare!"

The remains of lady Joan's ten pounds sufficed to bury her. They invited none, but all the village came to her funeral.

CHAPTER III.

THE LABOURER.

THE following is the answer Cosmo received from Joan to his letter concerning the ring.

"My dear Cosmo,

"Of course I cannot understand why you went away as you did. It makes me very unhappy, lest I should be somehow to blame. But I trust you *entirely*. I too hope for the day when it will be impossible to hide anything. I always wake trying to understand why you went away so, and one reason after another comes, but I have not got the real one yet—at least I think not. I will pay Mr. Jermyn the money with all my heart. I should have done so by

this time, but two days after you left, he was called to London upon medical business, and is not yet returned.

"Give my love to your father. I hope you are safe and happy with him by this time. I wish I were with you! Will that happy day ever come again? I cannot tell you how I miss you—not very wonderful, is it? I hope, dear Cosmo, it was not my fault that you went away. I know my behaviour was such as would to most people have seemed strange, but you are not most people, and I did and do think you understood it, and made all the allowance for me you could.

"I had almost forgot to thank you for the money. I do thank you, Cosmo, but I should have been much more grateful had you kept it. It is all so stupid—and next to no use without you or your father! And to have such a large sum in the house that my brother knows nothing about, frightens me. I wish you had left me the horse to hide it in! I feel like a thief, and I am sure my brother would look on me as one if he

came to know. I have a strange sensation as if there were a demon in the drawer where it lies. Mind you do not make the slightest allusion to it in any of your letters, and ask your father not to do so either. It has just one comfort in it—that I *could* run away now. My love to your father.

"Your loving cousin, Joan."

Long before this letter arrived, Cosmo had told his father everything; and he, although he could not believe Joan cared or would care for the doctor, quite approved of his son's conduct.

"Wait upon the Lord," he said, after listening with the excitement of a young heart, the ache of an old one, and the hope of a strong one, to his son's narrative; "wait patiently for him; he will give thee thine heart's desire."

They waited, and patiently.

Such power had been accumulated and brought to bear upon Glenwarlock, that at length he was reduced almost to the last extremity. He had had to part with

his horses before even his crops were all sown, and had therefore dismissed his men. He had tried to sell what was in the ground as it lay, and to get some neighbouring farmer to undertake the rest of the land for the one harvest that alone seemed left him; but those who might otherwise have bought and cultivated were afraid of offending lord Lick-my-loof, whose hand was plainly recognized in the condition of the laird's affairs, as well as of involving themselves in an unsecure agreement. So things were at a bad pass with the household of Castle Warlock. A small crop of oats and one of potatoes were coming on, for which the laird did what little he could, assisted by Grizzie and Aggie at such times when they could leave their respective charges; but in the meantime the stock of meal was getting low, and the laird did not see where more was to come from. He and Grizzie had only porridge, with a little salt butter, for two of their daily meals, and not unfrequently for the third also. Grizzie

managed for a while to keep alive a few fowls that picked about everywhere, but finally made of them broth for her invalid, persuading the laird to eat the little that was not boiled away. Now was neither cackle nor crow about the place. To Cosmo it seemed dying out of sound into absolute silence—after which would come the decay and the crumbling, until the castle stood at length like the great hollow mammoth-tooth he had looked down on in his dream.

He proceeded to do what little could yet be done for the on-coming crops, and resolved to hire himself out for the harvest to some place later than Glenwarlock, so that he might mow the oats before leaving, when his father and Grizzie with the help of Aggie would secure them.

Nothing could now prevent the closing of the net of the last mortgage about them; and the uttermost Cosmo could hope for thereafter was simply to keep his father and Grizzie alive to the natural end of their days. Their shelter was

secure, for the castle was free. The winter was indeed drawing on, but there would be the oats and the potatoes, with what kail the garden would yield them, and they had, he thought, plenty of peats. Yet not unfrequently, as he wandered aimless through the dreary silence, he would find himself speculating how long, by a judiciously ordered consumption of the place, he could keep his father warm. The stables and cow-houses would afford a large quantity of fuel; the barn had a great deal of heavy wood-work about it; and there was the third tower of the castle, for many years used only for stowage, whose thick floors and roof would make many a glorious fire! Yet how gladly would he save the house! In the spring there would be no land left to it; but so long as he had the house and garden, and could keep his two alive in them, he would be ashamed to grieve for that!

Agnes was at last a little shy of Cosmo —he had been away so long! but now and then her shyness would yield, and

she would talk to him with much the same freedom as of old when they went to school together. Nor would Cosmo in his rambles ever pass her grandfather's cottage without going in to inquire after him and his wife, and having a little chat with Aggie. Her true-hearted ways made her, next to his father and Mr. Simon, the best comforter he had.

She was now a strong, well-grown, sunburnt woman, with rough hands and tender eyes. Occasionally she would yet give a sharp, merry answer, but life and its needs and struggles had made her grave, and in general she would, like a soft cloud, brood a little before she yielded reply. She had by nature such a well balanced mind, and had so long strenuously set herself to do the right thing, that her cross seemed the choice of her whole being, as it was in truth of her deepest nature. In her Cosmo always found what strengthened him for any duty; though nothing that could be required of him now could be called hard, so long as at any moment he might have

his father's company, and saw the old man plainly reviving in his presence. The only hard thing was that he could not make him as easy as he would.

When the laird heard that his son, the heir of Glenwarlock, had hired himself for the harvest to a neighbouring farmer, he was dumb for a season. It was heavy both on his love and his pride, which here were one, to know his son a hired servant,—and that of a rough, swearing man, who had made money as a butcher. Also the farm was at such distance that he could not well come home to sleep! But the season of the laird's dumbness, measured by the clock at least, was but a few minutes; for presently he was on his knees thanking God for a son who would be an honour to any family out of heaven:—in there, of course, every one is an honour to every other.

Before the arrival of harvest at the farm of Stanewhuns, Cosmo, to his desire, had cut their own corn, with Grizzie to gather, Aggie to bind, and his father to stook, and so got himself into some

measure of training. He found the labour harder, indeed, at Stanewhuns, where he must keep up with more experienced scythe-men, but, just equal to it at first, in two days he was more than equal, and able to set his father's heart at ease concerning his toil.

It had been a blessed time, notwithstanding his sad thoughts, while he spent most of the day and every evening in his father's company. Not unfrequently would Mr. Simon make a third with them in the old drawing-room or on some hill-side, taking wisest share in every subject that came up. In their little council of the kingdom Cosmo represented the young generation with its new thought, its new need, and its new difficulty; and was delighted to find how readily his notions were received, how far from strange they were to his old-fashioned friends, especially his preceptor, and how largely old experience in truth may enable and suffice for the hearing and understanding of new cries after it. For what all men need is the same—only

the look of it changes as its nature expands before the enlarging eyes of the growing soul or the growing generation, with a growing hunger and thirst within it. And, coming from the higher to the lower, it must ever be in a garment of difficulty that the most precious revelations first appear. Even Mary, to whom first the highest revelation came, and came closer than to any other, had to sit and ponder over the great matter, yea and have the sword passed through her soul, ere the thoughts of her own heart could be revealed to her. But Cosmo of the new time found himself at home with those two men of the next older time because both he and they were true; for in the truth there is neither old nor new save in the process of its revelation, and the shapes in which the human creative clothes its else incommunicable essence. He who has learned aright its last lesson is not only best prepared for its next, but readiest to cast away the falsehood of necessity mingled with it in the human figures

and human speech wherein the human imagination, itself led into many blunders by the self-asserting intellect, had to clothe it. The well instructed scribe of the kingdom will be familiar with the new as well as the old shapes of its truth, and ready to bring either kind from his treasury. There was not a question Cosmo could start, but Mr. Simon had something at hand to the point, and plenty more within digging-scope of his thought-spade.

But now that he had to work all day, and at night saw no one with whom to take sweet counsel, Cosmo did feel lonely. It was an unfailing comfort, however, to remember that his father was within his reach, and he would see him the next Sunday. And in the interval he was at least free of the one thing he had dreaded —namely, having to share a room with several other men, who might prove worse than undesirable company. For the ex-butcher, a byword in the country-side for his rough speech, herein showed himself capable of becoming a gentle-

man, that he had sympathy with one: he would neither allow Cosmo to eat with the rest of the labourers — to which Cosmo himself had not the smallest objection, nor would have him put in any other than the best bedroom in the house. Nor were these by any means all the courtesies he showed him: from respect to the heir of a decayed family and valueless inheritance, he even modified several objectionable personal habits, besides almost ceasing to use bad language in his presence. Appreciating such genuine kindness, Cosmo in his turn tried to be agreeable; and during their short evenings, for the severe labour of the day sent them early to bed, would make such good use of his superior knowledge as to interest the whole family so much that most of them afterwards would declare that harvest the pleasantest they had ever had.

Perhaps it was a consequence of this successful endeavour, that the youngest daughter, who had been to a boarding school, and had never before appeared

in any harvest field, betook herself to that in which they were at work towards the end of the first week, and *gathered* behind Cosmo's scythe. But Cosmo was far too much occupied—thinking and sometimes perhaps riming to the rhythmic swing of his scythe, to be aware of the honour done him. Still further was he from suspecting that it had anything to do with the appearing of Agnes one afternoon, bringing him a letter from his father.

The harvest began upon a Monday, and the week passed without his once seeing the laird. On the Sunday he rose early, and set out for Castle Warlock. He would have gone the night before, but at the request of his master had remained to witness the signing of his will.

As he walked he discovered that the week had given him a consciousness of power such as he had never had before: with the labour of his hands he now knew himself capable of earning bread for more than himself, and every muscle in his body seemed to know itself stronger

than hitherto. On the other hand he was conscious in his gait of the intrusion of the workman's plodding swing upon the easy walk of the student.

His way was mostly by footpaths, often up and down hill, now over a moor, now through a valley, alongside of a stream. The freshness of the morning he found no less reviving than in the old boyish days, and sang as he walked, taking huge breaths of the life that lay on every heathery height. And as he sang the words came. He had never wondered at the powers of the improvvisatori; it was easy to him to extemporize. One of the songs he sung was nearly like this:

"Win' that blaws the simmer plaid
Ower the hie hill's shouthers laid,
Green wi' gerse, an' reid wi' heather,
Welcome wi' yer sowl-like weather!
Mony a win' there has been sent
Oot 'aneth the firmament;
Ilka ane its story has;
Ilka ane began an' was;
Ilka ane fell quaiet an' mute
Whan its angel wark was oot.
First gaed ane oot throuw the mirk,
Whan the Maker gan to work;

Ower it gaed an' ower the sea,
An' the warl' begud to be.
Mony ane has come an' gane
Sin' the time there was but ane:
Ane was grit an' strang, an' rent
Rocks an' muntains as it went
Afore the Lord, his trumpeter,
Waukin' up the prophet's ear;
Ane was like a steppin' soon'
I' the mulberry taps abune—
Them the Lord's ain steps did swing,
Walkin' on afore his king;
Ane lay doon like scoldit pup
At his feet, an' gatna up—
Whan the word the Maister spak
Drave the wull-cat billows back;
Ane gaed frae his lips, an' dang
To the yird the sodger thrang;
Ane comes frae his hert to mine,
Ilka day to mak it fine.
Breath o' God, eh! come an' blaw
Frae my hert ilk fog awa';
Wauk me up, an' mak me strang,
Fill my hert wi' mony a sang,
Frae my lips again to stert,
Fillin' sails o' mony a hert,
Blawin' them ower seas dividin'
To the only place to bide in."

"Eh, Mr. Warlock, is that you singin' o' the Sawbath day?" said the voice of a young woman behind him, in a tone of gentle raillery rather than expostulation.

Cosmo turned and saw Elspeth, his master's daughter already mentioned.

"Whaur's the wrang o' that, miss Elsie?" he answered. "Arena we tellt to sing an' mak melody to the Lord?"

"Ay, but i' yer hert, no lood oot—'cep' it be i' the kirk, or at worship—that is, upo' Sundays. Ye can sing as ye like upo' ither days 'at 's nae holy. An yon wasna a psalm-tune!"

"Maybe no. Maybe I was a bit ower happy for ony tune i' the tune-buiks, an' bude to hae ane 'at cam o' 'tsel'!"

"An' what wad hae made ye sae happy—gien a body micht speir?" said Elspeth, peeping from under long lashes, with a shy, half-frightened, consciously daring, sidelong glance at the youth.

She was a handsome girl of the milk-maid type, in a bonnet with pretty ribbons, who thought herself a young lady, and had many admirers, whence she had grown a little bold, and did not know it.

"Ye haena ower muckle at hame to mak ye blithe, gien a' be true," she added sympathetically.

"I hae a'thing at hame to mak me blithe—'cep' it be siller," answered Cosmo; "an' that may come neist—wha kens?"

"Ay! wha kens?" returned the girl with a sigh. "There's mony ane doobtless wad be ready eneuch wi' the siller ye haena, anent the thing ye hae!"

"I hae naething but an auld hoose—no sae auld as lat the win' blaw throuw 't, though!" rejoined Cosmo, amused. "But whaur are ye for sae ear, miss Elsie?"

"I'm for Muir o' Warlock, to see my sister, the schuilmaister's wife. Puir man! he's been dowie ever sin' the spring. I little thoucht I was to hae sic guid company upo' the lang ro'd!—Ye hae caused an unco cheenge upo' my father, Mr. Warlock. I never saw man sae altert in ae ook!"

She had heard Cosmo remark that he preferred good Scotch to would-be English, and therefore spoke with what breadth she could compass. But in truth she despised all homely ways, for she had been to school in the great town, and

had learned the ambition to *appear:* of *being* she had as yet no notion. Of what really goes to make *a lady*—the goal of her ambition, the star of her aspiration—she had no more idea than the swearing father of whom, while she loved him, as did all his family, she was not a little ashamed. She had an affectionate heart—small for her size, but lively. She was an honest girl too in a manner, and had by nature a fair share of modesty; but now her heart was sadly fluttered, and its action was scarcely to be counted upon, for the week that had wrought the change of which she spoke in her father, had not been without its effect upon her.

"Your father is very kind to me," said Cosmo. "My father will be very grateful to him when I tell him. You are all good to me."

"Some wad be gien they daured!" faltered Elspeth. "—Was ye content wi' my getherin' to ye—to yer scythe, I mean, laird?"

"Wha cud hae been ither, miss Elsie? Ye was aye close ahin' me."

"Did ye wuss me far'er?" rejoined Elsie, with another sidelong look and a blush Cosmo never saw. "Maybe ye didna like my han's?"

The relevance of the suggestion I must leave to the discovery of my reader—for what could it matter to the mower what sort of hands the woman had who gathered his swath? Neither were Elspeth's hands very pretty. But they were small, and smallness was the only merit she knew of in a hand.

What Cosmo would have answered, or in what perplexity between truth and unwillingness to hurt she might have tangled him before long, I need not surmise: the danger vanished suddenly at the sound of a second voice addressing him.

They had just passed a great stone on the roadside, at the foot of which Agnes had been for some time seated waiting for him. She had come thus far in vain the night before, and sat there till it was dark. Recognizing the voices that neared her, she waited until the pair had gone by without seeing her, and then addressed

Cosmo with a familiarity she had not used since his return.

"Cosmo!" she said, rising as she spoke, "winna ye bide for me? Ae word sairs whaur twa hae lugs."

The moment Cosmo heard her voice, he turned—glad enough.

"Eh, Aggie," he said, "I'm pleased to see ye! It's richt kin' o' ye to come an' meet me! Hoo's your father, an' hoo's mine?"

"They're baith brawly," she answered, "an' blithe eneuch, baith, at the thoucht o' seein' ye. Gien ye cudna luik in upo' mine the day, he wad stap doon to the castle. Sin' yesterday mornin' the laird, Grizzie tells me, hasna ristit a meenute in ae place, 'cep' in 's bed. What for camna ye thestreen?"

As he was answering her question, Agnes cast a keen searching glance at his companion: Elsie's face was as red as fire could have made it, and tears of vexation were gathering in her eyes. She turned her head away, and bit her lip.

The two girls were hardly acquainted,

and as to familiarity, Elsie would have disdained it with the daughter of a cottar. Aggie seemed much farther below her than she below the young laird of Glenwarlock. Yet here was the rude girl addressing him as Cosmo — with the freedom of a sister! and he taking it as matter of course! It was unnatural! Indignation grew fierce within her. The shameless hussy!

"Ye'll be gaein' to see yer sister, miss Elsie?" said Agnes, after a moment's pause.

Elspeth kept her head turned away, and made no answer. Agnes smiled to herself, and reverting to Cosmo, presently set before him a difficulty, for, with the help of Mr. Simon, she still prosecuted, at odd spare times, the study of algebra; and Elsie, who understood nothing of the subject, was thrown out. She dropped a little behind, and took the rôle of the forsaken one. Becoming aware of this, Cosmo stopped.

"Are we gaein' ower fest for ye, miss Elsie?" he said when she came up.

"Not at all," she answered, English again; "but I would be sorry to interrupt such an interesting conversation."

Cosmo turned to Agnes and said,

"Aggie, we're i' the wrang. We hae no richt to speyk aboot things only twa ken, whan three 's gaein' thegither.—Ye see, miss Elsie, her an' me was at the schuil thegither, an' happent to tak up maistly wi' the same things, in partic'lar wi' algebra an' geometry, an' sae can ill haud oor tongues frae them whan we forgaither. It's been to the prejudice o' oor mainners the day, an' I beg ye to owerluik it."

"I only thought it wasn't very profitable conversation for the Sabbath day," said Elsie, with a smile meant to be chastened, but Agnes took it for bitter, and laughed in her sleeve.

Again they walked on together, though seldom, from the narrowness of the path, all three abreast, and sometimes in single file. But in a few minutes the two more learned were afresh absorbed, this time with a point in conic sections, and

again Elsie was left out. It occurred, however, neither through forgetfulness on the part of Agnes, nor from the naturally strong undertow of the tide of science in her brain : it was with positive intent, this time as well as the former, that she produced her difficulty. Once more Elsie adopted the rôle of the neglected, and finding herself allowed to play it, dropped farther and farther behind, until its earnest grew heavy on her soul. Then she sat down by the roadside, and having wept a while, rose in anger, turned back some distance, and took what was in reality the shorter way to Muir o' Warlock.

Poor girl-heart ! How many tears do not fancies doomed to pass cost those who give them but as it were a night's lodging ! And the tears may be bitter, although neither the love, nor therefore the sorrow, may have had time to develop much individuality. One fairest soap-bubble, one sweetly devised planet-world vanishes with those tears ; and it may be never another is blown with so many

colours, and such enchanting changes! Some individuality there must have been, for what is the bubble itself but air parted from the air, individualized by thinnest skin of slightly glutinous water? But do not swift comfort and ready substitution show first love rather the passion between man and woman than between a man and a woman? How speedily is any Romeo consoled for the loss of a Rosaline by the gain of a Juliet! Yet may we not mourn a little over even such evanishment—and that although the bubble of paradise, swift revolving to annihilation, is never a wasted thing? Itself is gone, but its influence, its educating power on the human soul, which must at all risks be freed of its shell and taught to live, remains in that soul, to be, I trust, in riper worlds, an eternal joy. Therefore neither would I be too sad over such as Elsie, seated on her way in a solitary hollow, alone with her mortification—bathing her red eyes with her handkerchief soaked in the heedless babbling stream, and dreading the inquisition of

the sister whom marriage has not made more tender, or children more sympathetic.

But how is it that girls ready to cry more than their eyes out for what they call love when the case is their own, are so often hard-hearted when the case is that of another? There is something here that wants looking into—if not by an old surmiser, yet by the young women themselves! Why are such who would themselves dare not a little upon occasion so relentless towards every slightest relax of self-restraint in another? Here was Agnes, not otherwise an ill-natured girl, positively exultant over Elsie's discomfiture and disappearance! The girl had done her no wrong, and she had had her desire upon her, and yet she gloried over her!

"The impident limmer!" she said to herself. "Wha 's she to mak up til a gentleman like the yoong laird! Cudna he be doon i' the warl 's sicht ae meenute, but she maun be upo' 'im to devoor 'im as gien he was a reid worm—an' her

father naething but the cursin' flesher o' Stanewhuns!—forby 'at a'body kens she promised hersel' to Jock Rantle, ower at Braefit, an' wad hae had him gien the father o' her hadna sworn at them that awfu' 'at naither o' them daured gang a fit further! Gien I hed loed a lad like Jock, wad I hae latten him gang for a screed o' ill words! They micht hae sworn—I wad hae latten them sweer! Na! Cosmo 's for Elsie's betters!"

Elsie appeared no more in any field that season, but staid at Muir o' Warlock till harvest was over.

A blessed day was that Sunday to Cosmo! Labour is the pursuivant of Joy to prepare the way before him. His father received him like a king come home with victory. And was he not a king? Had he not done the true thing? And did not the Lord say his own kinghood lay in this that he came into the world to bear witness to the truth?

They walked together to church and home again to dinner as happy as two boys let out of school—their poor dinner

of new potatoes and a little milk, the latter brought by Agnes with her father's compliments "to his lairdship," as Grizzie transmitted and transmuted the message. But what! was I traitor enough to call such a dinner a poor one? Truth and Scotland forgive me, for I know none so good! And after dinner—immediately, for the laird had long ago given up his toddy—they went to the drawing-room, an altogether pleasant place now in the summer. It was full of the scent of the homely flowers Grizzie had stuck in the old vases on the chimney-piece, and their scent harmonized strangely with the slow-vanishing colours of the room. The laird laid himself down on the brocade-covered sofa, and Cosmo sat close beside him on a low chair, and talked, and told him this and that, and read to him, till at last the old man fell asleep, and then Cosmo, having softly spread a covering over him, sat brooding upon things sad yet pleasant, until he too fell asleep, and went to Joan in his dreams.

At length the harvest was over, and

Cosmo returned to his home, and in poverty-stricken Castle Warlock dwelt a peaceful, contented, hopeful household. But the stillness of it was almost awful. So deep was the silence that Grizzie averred she had to make much more noise than was necessary to her affairs that she might not hear the ghosts. She did not mind them, she said, at night; they were natural then; but it was *ugsome* to hear them in the daytime!

The old woman was more of an angel than ever. The poorer their fare, the more pains she took to make it palatable. The gruel the laird had for his supper was cooked with love rather than fuel. With what a tender hand she washed his feet! What miracles of the laundress-art were the old shirts he wore! Now that he had no other woman to look after him, in all but the mother's familiarity she treated him as if he had been her delicate child. But the cloud was cold to her also; she seldom rimed; and except when unusually excited, never returned a sharp answer.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCHOOLMASTER.

What was there now Cosmo could do to earn a little money? With Mr. Simon he held many an anxious conference on the matter, but nothing certain could either think of; while the only possible thing seemed the heart-wearing endeavour after favour with one or other of the magazines — involving an expense of much time, a sick deferment of hope, and general discouragement; for how small were the chances of his work proving acceptable to this or that man who, with the best intentions for the *success* of the magazine in his charge, and a keen enough perception of the unworthy in literature, had probably no

special love for the truth or care to teach it, and was under the incapacitating influence, the deadening, debilitating, stupefying effect of having continually to judge;—not to mention the enervating hopelessness that at length falls, I presume, upon every editor of popular periodical, of finding one pearl among the cartloads of oysters sent him by unknown divers in the gulf of literature—filling him with amazement that there should be so many to write so well, and so few to write better. Mr. Simon nevertheless encouraged Cosmo to make the attempt, seeing that to one who had nothing else to do it involved no loss of time, and would be certain gain to both head and heart, while there remained the possibility of a little return in money. So he set to work, and wrote and wrote, and sent and sent, but heard nothing and still nothing.

The weeks came and went, and the frosts came and went, and then came and staid; and the snow fell and melted, and then fell and lay; and winter had

settled down with moveless rigour upon Castle Warlock.

Soon it became evident that the natural powers of the laird were failing more rapidly. But sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, and that in the matter of death as well as of life; if we are not to forestall the difficulties of living, surely we are not to forestall the sorrows of dying. So said Mr. Simon, and in like spirit Cosmo heard him. But there was one thing that did trouble him. The good old man's appetite was nearly gone, and how was he to get for him what might tempt him to eat? This was what brought him to his knees oftenest of all —oftener even than his own spiritual necessities.

He would have had his father take the grandmother's room now, but he would not leave the one he had last occupied with his wife. He would go from that, he said, as she had gone. Cosmo, therefore, took his grandmother's room, and there wrote and read; so that when his father could not, in the very cold weather,

leave his bed, he was within the call of the slightest knock upon his floor. But every now and then, when the cold would abate, the laird would revive, and hope grow strong in the mind of his son: his father was not such an old man yet, he would persuade himself, that he might not be intended to live many years. Thereupon he would set to work with fresh vigour. But it is hard to labour without encouragement or apparent prospect of result.

Never surely did household, even in Scotland, live upon less! Cosmo had to watch Grizzie to know that she ate at all, and once came nearly to the conclusion that she consumed only dry meal.

Many a time did the Gracies go without milk that they might send the laird the little their cow gave; but though Cosmo never refused their kindness, as indeed he had no right, it went to his heart that the two old people should go without what was as needful for them as for his father. Mr. Simon too would every now and then send something from his house

or from the village—oftener than Cosmo knew, for the giver had appealed to Grizzie, and she was discreet. But now at length began a little fall of heavenly crumbs to keep the human sparrows picking.

The schoolmaster at the Muir, the same who had behaved so insolently to the Warlocks, father and son, though for some time ailing, had returned to his duties at the end of the *hairst play;* but since then had been getting worse, and was now at length unable to go on: Cosmo heard that he was on the outlook for a substitute.

Cosmo knew well that, if he had desired to be made parish-schoolmaster, the influence of lord Lumbiggin would have been too strong against him, but it seemed possible that his old master might have so far forgotten by-gones as to be willing to employ him. He went to him therefore the same hour, and was shown into the room where he sat wrapt in blankets.

Now the schoolmaster, although both

worldly in his judgment and hasty in his temper, was not a heartless man. Keen feelings are not always dissociated from brutality even. One thing will reach the heart that another thing will not; and much that looks like heartlessness may be mainly stupidity. He had never ceased, after the first rush of passion, to regret he had used the word that incensed the boy; and although he would not to his own heart confess himself wrong in knocking down the violator of the dominical sanctity, yet, unconsciously to himself, he was sorry for that also. When the boy, therefore, on whom for years he had not set his eyes, stood unexpectedly before him, a fine youth, down in the world, and come, as he anticipated the moment he saw him, to beg a favour, he not only felt inclined to make him reparation by granting it, but beheld within his reach the opportunity of doing so without any confession of wrong, and even with the dignity of one forgiving wrong. He received Cosmo, therefore—with the stiffness of

a condescending inferior, it is true, but with kindness notwithstanding, and having heard his request, accorded immediately a gracious assent, which so filled Cosmo with gratitude that he could not help manifesting some emotion, whereupon the heart of the schoolmaster in its turn asserted itself, and from that moment friendly relations were established between them.

Things were soon arranged: Cosmo was to be paid by the week, and should commence his work the next morning. He returned, therefore, in much consolation, carrying with him for his father one or two simple luxuries the village afforded. That night he hardly could sleep for joy.

He cast himself into his new duties with zeal. Whoever is anxious to make it genuine, will find teaching far from easy work; and Cosmo had besides to leave home early in all kinds of wintry weather, and walk to school through the bitterness of *black frost*, the shifting toil of deep snow, or the assault of arctic

storm, whichever might rule the temporal hour. But he thought nothing of the labour or its accessories of discomfort; the only thing he felt hard was having to leave his father all the winter day alone—for it was generally five o'clock before he got back to him.

And now in the heart of the laird arose a fresh gratitude to God for the son he had given him. His hours passed mainly in devotion and anticipation. Every time he received his son from the arms of the winter to his own, it was like the welcoming of one lost and found again.

Into the stern weather of their need had stolen a summer day to keep hope alive. Cosmo gave up his writing, and spent all his home-time in waiting with soul and body upon his father. He read to him—sometimes his own poetry—and that the laird liked best of all, because in it he had more of his boy and came nearer to him; now and then, when he saw he was too weary for thought, he would play backgammon with him; and

sometimes, when he was himself more tired than usual, he would get Grizzie to come up and tell yet again the stories she used to tell him—some of which his father enjoyed the more that he remembered having himself heard them when he was a child.

Upon one of these occasions, Grizzie brought from her treasury a tale the laird remembered his grandmother saying she had heard from her nurse, and therewith it came into Cosmo's head to write it out, as nearly as he could, in Grizzie's words, and try a magazine with it. After a long delay he received for the first time an answer—the most agreeable part of which was a small cheque—with a request for another paper of like character. Grizzie's face, when she learned in what way, and how largely, as it seemed to her, the stores of her memory had ministered to the family necessities, was a sight worth more than a good dinner to father and son both. At first she imagined Cosmo was making game of her, and stood upon the dignity of her

legends; but convinced at length of the fact of the case, she glowered into nowhere for a minute.

"Eh, sirs!" she cried at last. "Oot o' the moo' o' babes an' sucklin's! The Lord be praist whan herts is raist!"

"Amen, Grizzie!" responded the laird. "Eh, wuman! gien ever ane made a place her ain 'at was foreordeent her by the fatherly providence ower a' the faimilies o' men, Grizzie, ye're that wuman!"

Word to please Grizzie better the laird could not have found. It sunk the deeper that her delight found no outlet: there was no room for growth in the devotion of her ministrations.

And now Cosmo would take no more of the Gracies' milk, but got Aggie to go every day to a farm near, and buy what was required for his father, and Agnes was regular as the clock, sunshine or storm.

There was another thing in which she was not quite so regular, which yet she never missed when she could help it: as

often as three, occasionally four times in the week, would Cosmo find her waiting for him somewhere on his return from school—now just outside the village, now nearer Glenwarlock, according to when she had got through her work. She had now recovered her former position of familiarity with him; and it was one of the comforts of his labour, when the dullness or contrariety of the human animal threatened to be too much for him, to anticipate the walk and the talk with Agnes which he might any day at least hope the evening would bring forth. Under Mr. Simon she had made much progress, and was now a companion fit for any thinking man. The way home was not half the length to Cosmo when Agnes walked it by him. Thinking inside, and labouring outside, she was, in virtue of the necessities of her life, such a woman as not the most vaunted means of education, without the weight and seeming hindrances of hardship, can produce. An immortal woman she was—for she had set out to grow for evermore. For

such, neither poet nor prophet, none save him who knows what he is making of her, is capable of predicting an adequate future.

Her behaviour to Cosmo was likest that of a half-sister born in a humbler position from which she would not rise, but none the less his sister, and none the less loving him. Whether she had any struggle to keep this position, I am not prepared to say; but I suspect that her scorn of the behaviour of Elspeth had something to do with the restoring of the old relation between her and Cosmo. The most jealous of mothers could hardly have found fault with her behaviour in Cosmo's company, however much she might disapprove of her seeking it as she did. And to Cosmo, next to his father and Mr. Simon, Agnes Gracie was the most valued of his friends. Mr. Burns came next. For lady Joan, he never thought of her by the side of anyone else. If he had not loved lady Joan, I think he might now have loved Agnes; and if he had now asked her to marry

him, when marriage was impossible, I do not know what Agnes might have said. But as it was they remained the best of trusting friends.

CHAPTER V.

GRANNIE AND THE STICK.

This winter, the wind that drops the fruit not plucked before, blew hard upon old Grannie, who had now passed her hundredth year. For some time Agnes had not been able to do much for her, but another great-grandchild, a widow, with a little daughter, was spending the winter with her. On his way to or from school, Cosmo would every day look in to see or enquire after her; and when he heard she had had a bad night, he would sometimes think how with her would fail the earthly knowledge of not a little of the past of his family. Upon one of these occasions he resolved to see whether she remembered the bamboo he had brought from Cairncarque.

When school was over, he called, and hearing she was a little better, the next morning brought with him the cane. Learning then that she had had a good night, he went in after school, and found her in her chair by the fireside. He took his place by her, but so that the light from the window at her back should fall upon the stick.

He had not sat more than a minute, when her eyes found it and fixed on it.

"What's that ye hae there, Cosmo?" she said.

"This?" returned Cosmo. "It's a bit cane I pickit up upo' my traivels. What think ye o' 't?"

He held it towards her, but she drew back the hand next it.

"Whaur got ye 't?" she asked, her eyes seeming to come forward from the pits in which age had sunk them, and growing larger as she looked.

"What gars ye speir, Grannie?" he returned, with assumed indifference.

"I dinna believe there was ever anither like the ane 'at that's like," she replied.

"In that case," rejoined Cosmo, "it maun be the ane itsel'. What ken ye aboot it?"

"Gien ye ken naething yersel', ye 're no sae gleg as I wad hae expeckit o' a Warlock. That stick's no a stick like ither sticks, an' I wuss I was nearer hame."

"Hoot, Grannie! ye dinna mean there's onything no canny aboot the stick?" suggested Cosmo.

"I wadna like to think him near me 'at aucht it!" she replied.

"Wha aucht it, Grannie?"

"Rive 't a' to bits, laddie; there's that 'at 's no mowse (*safe to meddle with*) aboot it. The auld captain made o' 't as gien it had been his graven image. That same ye hae i' yer han' 's *his* stick, whaurever ye got it; an' oot o' his it seldom was frae mornin' til nicht. Some wad hae't he tuik it til's bed wi' 'im. I kenna aboot that; but gien by ony chance he set it oot frae 'atween his k-nees, it gatna ayont the sicht o' his een. I hae seen him mysel' luik up o' a

suddent as gien his sowl hed been requiret o' 'im, an' grip at it as gien it hed been his proadigal son come hame oonexpeckit."

Cosmo told her where he had found it.

"I tellt ye sae!" she cried. "The murderin' villain tuik it wi' 'im! Weel kent he what was intil 't!"

Cosmo showed her the boxes in the joints. She shook her head.

"Ower late! ower late!" she murmured. "The reavin' English lord! Wha but he to scrape pot an' pan!"

She fell then into what seemed a kind of lethargic musing, and as Cosmo had not yet made up his mind to show her the paper found in the horse, he bade her good night—little thinking he was not to see her again in this world. That same night she died.

When all opportunity was thus gone, and he could learn no more from her, the mind of Cosmo began to be exercised afresh concerning the stick. According to Grannie, its owner habitually showed anxiety for its safety, keeping it all but

constantly under his eye. It did not seem likely that the rings had been in it long when it was taken from him, neither that he would have been in the habit of carrying such valuables about in such a losable receptacle. It could hardly therefore have been because of those or of similar precious things that he was from the first and always so watchful over it. It was possible, indeed, that from often using it for temporary concealment, he might have come to regard it with constant anxiety; but the possibility was not enough to set Cosmo's mind at rest on the matter. Little as he had regarded it when first found, and notwithstanding that its presence in the horse seemed accounted for by its mere chance employment for the protection of the jewels, round which it was rather squeezed than folded, he came by degrees to imagine the unintelligible paper somehow associated with the fidgety care of the old captain over his stick: a man may crumple up his notes and thrust them in his pocket, yet value them more than

anything else in that pocket. He was indeed driven to imagine thus, or yield all hope of discoverable mystery. And now Grannie was gone, who might possibly, if he had but trusted her, have cast him a light on the curious puzzle! It was not probable, however, he thought, by way of self-consolation, that she should have got much nearer the old captain's secret than himself.

Meditating on the thing one night in bed, about a week after Grannie's funeral, it occurred to him suddenly to ask himself what he had done with the paper, for he could not remember when he had last seen it. He got up, took the stick, which always, except when he carried it, stood in a corner of his room, and opening the horse in the dark, found it empty. This made him uneasy, and he lay down again, thinking what he could have done with it. His anxiety was not so great, however, but that sleep presented its claim upon him. He resisted it, unwilling to yield without having at least got a glimpse of some probability

concerning the paper. Like a soundless tide it kept creeping on, and he kept starting back from it with successive spur-pricks of the will not yet consenting to pass under the shadow of annihilation. Bethinking himself in one of these partial revivals, that he might have put the paper in his pocket-book, he stretched his hand to the chair by the bed, on which lay his clothes, and got the book from his pocket. At this point, I presume, he fell asleep, but he thought he searched at once every pocket in the book, and, satisfied the paper was not there, could rest no longer, but must look for it until he found it. He rose, as he thought, lighted his candle, went down the stair, through the kitchen, and out of the house. Then first he began to doubt whether he was indeed awake, but like one compelled, went on to the great door, and up to the drawing-room. There the moon was shining! At sight of that, all at once he knew that an old dream was coming again: there it was!—the old captain was sitting in the old chair, with

the moon on his ghastly face! He felt his hair about to stand on end, but resisted the terror with all his might. The rugged, scarred countenance gazed fixedly at him. He did his best to return the gaze as fixedly. The appearance rose, and went walking from the room, and Cosmo knew he had to follow it to the guest-chamber above, which he had not once entered since his return. Thither it led the way, with Cosmo after it. Arrived in the room it went straight to the other side of the bed, and disappeared. Despite his terror Cosmo followed still, and in the wall, by the head of the bed, saw an open door. He hurried up to it, but seemed to strike against the wall, and woke, his heart beating a terribly quick march. He was in bed. His pocket-book was in his hand. He struck a light, and found in it the missing paper.

The next day he told his dream to his father and Mr. Simon, and they had a talk about dreams and apparitions. Then all three pored over the paper, but far

from arriving at any conclusion, seemed hardly to get a glimpse of what even might be light concerning it.

All this time Cosmo had not written again to Joan. His father thought it better he only should for the present keep up the correspondence. But months had passed without their hearing from her. The laird had written the third time, and received no answer.

CHAPTER VI.

OBSTRUCTION.

The day came on when the last of their land would be taken, leaving them nothing but the kitchen-garden—a piece of ground of about half an acre, the little terraced flower-garden to the south of the castle, and the croft tenanted by James Gracie. The laird applied to lord Lumbiggin for a lease of the one field next the castle, which, with the help of the two women, he had cultivated the spring before; but his lordship would not grant it: his resentment was as strong as ever, and his design deeper than they saw. The formal proceedings took their legal course; and after a certain day lord Lumbiggin was not seldom to be seen walking the fields to north, east, and west of

the castle, holding council with his bailiff concerning them. Within a fortnight those to the north were cut off from the precincts of the castle by a *dry-stane-dyke;* and its inhabitants soon found that their old neighbour in his nearer approach was not likely to spare them one annoyance he could safely cause them.

Lord Lumbiggin had discovered from the plan of the property that that part of the road from the glen of the Warlock to the How o' Hap which now passed the gate of the castle-yard, had been made by the present laird only so-many years before; and thereupon had given orders that it should be broken up from the old point of departure, and a dry dyke built across the gate. The persons to whom the job was committed, either ashamed or afraid, took an evening for the work on which Cosmo had a class at the school for farm-labourers, and even then did not venture to begin it until after dark; whence it came that, plodding homewards without a suspicion, Cosmo found himself all at once floundering among stones and

broken ground, and presently brought up standing—cut off from his own door by a wall night-born like a mushroom—the entrance gone which to him had seemed primordial, for it was older than his memory! With a great shove he hurled down half the height of the dyke, and appeared before his father in a rage that bewildered and troubled him far more than any insolence of lord Lumbiggin could have done.

"The scoundrel!" cried Cosmo; "I should like to give him a sound drubbing —only he's an old man! But I'll make him repent it—and heartily too!"

"Cosmo, my boy," said the laird, "you must not meddle with what does not belong to you."

"I know the place is yours, not mine, father; but——"

"This business is no more mine than yours, my son: 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.'—An' the best o' 't is," he went on, willing by a touch of humour to help turn the tide of Cosmo's wrath, "he'll tak no more o' the same than's guid

for the sinner; whauras yersel', Cosmo, i' the tune ye're in the noo, wad damn puir auld Lick-my-loof for ever an' ever for puttin' up a dry-stane-dyke! Man, he canna hurt you an' me thegither to the worth o' sic an awfu' heap o' firin'!" Then changing his tone to one of absolute seriousness, "Min' ye tu, Cosmo," he went on, "'at the Maister never threatent, but aye left the thing, whatever it was, to him 'at judges richteously; an' his w'y is the only w'y for you an' me 'at wad fain he had his wull. Ye want naething but fair play, my son, an' whether ye get it frae Lick-my-loof or no, ye'll get it, for the ane 'at hauds 't frae nane is ower a'. Ye'll get it, my son; ye'll get it! The Maister 'll hae a'thing set richt some time; an' gien *he* binna in a hurry 'at hates wrang mair nor ony man can, you an' me may weel hae patience. For mysel', the man has smitten me upo' the tae cheek, an' may hae the tither to lat drive at whan he likes. It's no worth liftin' my auld airm to haud aff the smack."

He laughed, and Cosmo laughed too—but grimly and out of tune. Then the laird told him that that piece of the road was an improvement of his own, and had taken a good deal of blasting. The road used to cross the stream twice before it got to the yard-gate, and he had seen both the bridges carried away in one winter. He hardly thought, he said, his lordship would like having to reconstruct it; for, besides the expense, it would take so much out of one of his best fields. For themselves, they must contrive a connection with what was left of the road between them and the Warlock. The worst of it was there would be no longer direct communication with James Gracie's cottage. Even when the old road was restored, it would be a tremendous round!

The rage and indignation of Grizzie when she learned what had been done, surpassed even Cosmo's. The flood of poetic abuse poured out by her seemed inexhaustible, sweeping along with it tale after tale to the prejudice of "that leein' Lick-my-loof." But, poetic as was her

speech, not a single rime did she utter during the hour she took thus to unload her heart.

"Ay!" she concluded, and thereafter sank into smouldering silence, "there was a futpath there afore ye was born, laird, blast or no blast, an' whether ye min' upo' 't or no; an' to that I can fess them 'at can beir testimony—ane o' the same bein' Jeames himsel', wha's ten lang years aheid o' yer lairdship; an' lat me see man or dog 'ill haud me ohn taen my wull o' my richts intil 't! They canna hang me, and for less I carena."

At break of day Cosmo was up to see what could be done, and found that a few steps cut in the rocky terrace of the garden would bring one with ease to the road, and there was now no need of approach for cart or carriage. He set about it immediately, and before breakast-time had finished the job.

The schoolmaster was at length equal to the resumption of his labours, and soon after the event just narrated, Cosmo ceased to occupy his place.

CHAPTER VII.

GRIZZIE'S RIGHTS.

In those days Mistress Gracie fell sick, and though for a while neither husband nor granddaughter thought seriously of her ailment, it proved more than her age, worn with labour, could endure, and she began to sink. Then Grizzie must go and help nurse her: Cosmo being again at home all day, the laird insisted he could well enough spare her. Father and son were now indeed seldom out of each other's sight. While Cosmo was writing, the laird would be reading in the same room; and when, after dinner, the laird slept, Cosmo would read, generally his New-Testament, beside him; then as often as he woke fresh from his nap, the two would talk about what the

one had been reading, and Cosmo show his father any fresh light the Greek had given him. The capacity of the old man for what was new to him was wonderful —and yet not to be wondered at, seeing it was the natural result of the constant practice of what he learned. Knowledge gained is duty; duty done becomes truth in the inward parts; and such truth is wisdom and understanding. To him who obeys, truth comes as to its home; to him who obeys not, it comes in forms of fear and dismay. The true, that is the obedient man, cannot help seeing the truth, for it is the very business of his being—the natural concern, the correlate of his soul. The religion of the two, father and son, was obedience and prayer; their theories only the print of their spiritual feet as they walked homeward.

The road which lord Lumbiggin had broken up went almost in a straight line from Castle Warlock to the cottage of the Gracies, where it joined the road that passed his lordship's lodge on the way

to How o' Hap. And now came Grizzie's call to action! The moment she found her services required at the cottage, she climbed the gate of the close, from the top of it crept cautiously on to that of the new wall, whose stones had been replaced by the hands of the laird himself and Cosmo, got down on the disfeatured road, and set out to follow its track, straight through the ploughed land. In the evening she came back the same way, scrambled over the wall and the gate, and neither said word, nor was asked question. To visit his tenants the laird himself went a mile about, but was not prepared to strain his authority with Grizzie, and therefore was as one who knew nothing. Before the week was out, her steps, and hers alone, had worn a visible and very practicable footpath across the enemy's field; and whether lord Lumbiggin was from home, or willed the trespass to assume well defined form and be itself the snare to take the trespasser, he let the week go by and made no sign.

On the Sunday morning, however, as Grizzie was on her way to the cottage, she spied suddenly, over the edge of a hollow through which her path ran, the head of lord Lick-my-loof: he was following the track she had made, and would presently meet her. Wide spread her nostrils like those of the war-horse, for she too smelt the battle from afar.

"Here's auld Belzebub at last," she said to herself, "gaein' to an' fro i' the earth, an' walkin' up an' doon intil't! Noo 's for me to priv the trowth o' Scriptur! Whether he'll flee or no we'll sune see: I s' resist him ony gait. It's no me 'at'll rin!"

His lordship had been standing by his lodge on the lookout, and the moment he saw Grizzie approaching, had started to encounter her. As they drew near to each other he stopped, and stood in the path motionless. On she came till within a single pace of him. He did not move. She stopped also.

"I doobt, my lord," she said, "I'll hae to mak my ro'd a bit wider. There's

hardly room for yer lordship an' anither. But I'm gettin' on fine!"

"Is the woman an idiot!" exclaimed his lordship.

"Muckle siclike 's yersel', my lord!" answered Grizzie; "—no that muckle wit but I micht hae mair—an' haith I wad need it to guide my steps throuw the wilderness ye wad mak o' no sae ill a warl' but ye wad hae't waur!"

"Are you not aware, woman, that you make yourself liable to a heavy fine for trespass? This field is mine!"

"An' this fitpath 's mine, my lord—made wi' my ain feet! an' I coonsel ye to stan' aside an' lat me by, for fear I hae a coonter-chairge for assault an' battery."

"Woman, you are insolent."

"Troth, I needna yer lordship to tell me that! Nane the less ae auld wife may say 'at she likes til anither."

"I tell you there is no thoroughfare here."

"An' I tell you there *is* a thoroughfare, an' ye hae but to wull the trowth to ken

'at there is. There was a fit-ro'd here lang or yer lordship's father was merriet upo' yer lordship's mither; an' the law—what o' 't yer lordship hasna the makin' o'—is deid agen ye:—that I can priv. Hae me up: I can tak my aith as weel's onybody whan I'm sure."

"I intend doing so; but in the meantime you must get off my property."

"Weel, stan' by, an' I s' be aff o' 't in less time nor yer lordship."

"You must go back."

"Hooly an' fairly! Bide till the gloamin', an' I s' be back, safe eneuch—nae fear o' that! I' the mids o' the meantime I'm gaein' aff yer property the nearest gait—an' that's straucht efter my nose."

She tried to pass him, but turn as she might, he confronted her. She persevered. He raised the stick he carried, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps thinking to intimidate her. Thereupon was the air rent with outcry. Grievously it shook the nerves of his lordship.

"Hold your tongue, you howling

jade!" he shouted—and the epithet sufficed to destroy every remnant of forbearance in the mind of Grizzie.

"I'm thinkin', my lord," she said with sudden calm, "it'll be the verra name ye ca'd Annie Fyfe, puir lass, whan she cam efter ye, fifty year come Can'lemas, to yer father's hoose, an' gat fowth o' ill words, but naither plack nor bodle to haud her an' her bairn frae the ro'dside!—Ye need-na girn like that, my lord! Spare yer auld teeth for the gnashin' they'll *hae* to du. Though ye fearna God nor regaird man, yer hoor 'll come, an' ye're no like to bid it walcome."

Beside himself with rage, lord Lick-my-loof would have laid hold of her, but she uttered a louder cry than before—so loud that James Gracie's deaf colley heard her, and, having a great sense of justice, more courage than teeth, and as little regard to the law of trespass as Grizzie herself, came, not bounding, but tearing over the land to her rescue, as if a fox were at one of his sheep. He made straight for his lordship.

Now this dog was one of the chief offences of the cottage, for he had the moral instinct to know and hate a bad man, therefore could not abide his lordship. He had never attacked him, for the colley cultivated self-restraint, but he had made his lordship aware there was no friendship in his heart towards him.

Almost as silent as swift, he was nearly on the enemy before either he or Grizzie saw him. His lordship turned from red to white, staggered from the path, and raised his stick with trembling hand.

"Doon wi' ye! doon, Covenant! doon, ye tyke!" cried Grizzie. "Haud frae 'im gien ye wad keep the feow teeth ye hae left! Deil a bite but banes is there i' the breeks o' 'im!"

The dog had obeyed, and stood worshipping Grizzie with his tail, while with his eyes he watched the enemy and his stick.

"Hark ye, Covenant!" she went on: "Whan his sowl he sellt him, the deevil tellt him 'at never mair sud he turn a hair at cry or moanin' in highway or

loanin', for greitin' or sweirin', or grane o' despair. Haud frae him, Covenant, my fine fallow; haud frae him."

Grizzie talked to the dog nor lifted her eyes. When she looked up as she ended her address, lord Lick-my-loof was beyond the hollow, hurrying as if to fetch help. In a few minutes she was safe in the cottage, out of breath, but in high spirits, making even the dying woman laugh at her tale of how she had served his lordship.

"But ye ken, Grizzie," suggested James, "we're no to return evil for evil, nor flytin' for flytin'."

"Ca' ye that flytin'?" cried Grizzie. "Ye sud hear what I didna say! That was flytin'! We'll be tried by what we *can* du, no by what we canna! An' for returnin' evil, did I no haud the dog frae the deith-shanks o' 'im?"

The laird and Cosmo had spent as usual a quiet and happy Sunday. It was now halfway down the gloamin' towards night, and they sat together in the drawing-room, the laird on the sofa, and

Cosmo at one of the windows. The sky was a cold clear calm of thin blue and translucent green, such an embodiment of profound but sad peace as in my mind will more or less for ever be associated with a Scotch Sunday. A long low cloud of dark purple hung like a baldachin over the yet glimmering coals on the altar of sunset, and the sky above it was like a pale molten mass of jewels that had run together with heat, and was still too bright for the stars to show in it. Father and son were both looking out at the sky, and a peace as of the unbeginnings of eternity had sunk into their hearts. The laird's thoughts were with his Marion in the region beyond the dream; Cosmo's with Joan in the dream that had vanished into itself. If love be religion, what matter whether its object be in heaven or on the earth! Love itself is the only nearness. He who thinks of his Saviour as far away can have made little progress in the need of him; and he who does not need much cannot know much, any more than he

who is not forgiven much can love much. They sat silent, belonging to the heaven over their heads, not the earth under their feet, when of a sudden the world of their stillness was invaded with hideous discord, on the top of which rose the well known voice of Grizzie. They started up and hurried out.

The noises came from the direction of the obstructed gate, and over the wall they descried in the dim light several heads, two of them in fierce contention, with voices clearer than their faces: Grizzie was in the grasp of Lumbiggin's bailiff, and his lordship looking on with his hands in his pockets and the smile that was his own. But it was not for herself Grizzie had this time cried out: there were two more in the group—two of the dog-kind, at the moment worrying each other with that perfect devotion which renders a master's quarrel superior to a dog's own. They were, however, far from equally matched, and hence Grizzie's cry; for one of them was the ancient colley named Covenant,

whose teeth were of the past, and the other a young mastiff belonging to lord Lick-my-loof, malevolent, and that night off his chain the first time for a month. It was a poor chance for Covenant, who was a brave dog, incapable of turning his back on death itself when duty called him. Both were well-bred, each in his kind. Covenant was the more human, Dander the more devilish. And the battle was fierce.

The moment Cosmo descried who the combatants were, he was over the wall, and had thrown himself upon them. Instantly the bailiff, knowing his master's eagerness for Covenant's death, let Grizzie go, and would have rushed on Cosmo. But it was Grizzie's turn now, and she clung to him like an anaconda. He cursed and swore; nor failed to deposit on Grizzie certain bruises of which she made no mention except to Agnes; but she kept her hold of his cravat, and did her best to throttle him. Cosmo tried the same with the mastiff, but without success because of his collar. He caught

up a great stone, therefore, and stunned him with a blow on the head; which done, he took Covenant and heaved him over wall and gate to his father. The same moment the bailiff got clear of Grizzie, and made at him, calling to the mastiff. But the dog, just coming to himself, and either mistaking through bewilderment, or moved by some occult influence, instead of attacking Cosmo, rushed at his master. Rage recalls offence and dislike: he may not have forgotten certain teasings on the chain. His lordship, however, was instantly aware of his treacherous intent; in a moment his legs had saved themselves over wall and gate, and, in his turn the trespasser, he stood panting and shaking beside the laird.

The mastiff would have been over after him, had not Cosmo, leaving the bailiff, who had not observed his master's danger, knocked the dog, in the act of leaping, once more to the earth, when a rush of stones that came with him and partly fell upon him, had its share in cowing him.

"Haud him! haud him! Haud the deevil, ye brute! Haud the brute, ye deevil!" cried his lordship.

"It's yer ain dog, my lord," said the bailiff, as he took him by the collar.

"Am I to be worried 'cause the dog's my ain?" returned his master indignantly. "Haud him the sickerer. He s' be ayont mischeef the morn!"

"He's the true dog sides wi' the richt! he'll be in bliss afore his master!" said Grizzie, as she descended from the gate and stood once more on her own side.

But in the meantime the laird was welcoming his lordship with the heartiness of one receiving the favour of an unhoped-for visit.

"Weel loupen, my lord!" he said applaudingly. "Come in-by, an' rist yersel' a bit, an' I s' set ye back on yer ain property an easier gait nor ower a dry-stane-dyke."

"Gien ye ken 't for my property," returned his lordship, "I wad thank ye, laird, to haud yer fowk aff o' 't!"

"Grizzie, wuman," said the laird, turn-

ing to her, "ye dinna surely want to bring disgrace upo' me! The lan' 's his lordship's—boucht an' paid for, an' I hae no more richt ower 't nor Jeames Gracie's colley there, puir beast!"

"That may be the case wi' the lan', laird—the mair 's the peety!" answered Grizzie; "but the fut-path, beggin' the pardon o' baith lairdship an' lordship, belangs to me as muckle as to the ane or the ither o' ye. Here I stan' alane for mysel'! That ro'd 's my neebour, an' I'm b'un' to see til 't; for a sair vex it wad be to mony a puir body like mysel' to lowse the richt o' 't."

"You'll have to prove what you assert, woman," said his lordship.

"Surely, Grizzie," expostulated the laird, "his lordship maun un'erstan' affairs o' sic a natur' better nor you or me!"

"As to the un'erstan'in' o' them, laird, I mak nae doobt," returned Grizzie; "an' as little 'at he's o' the wrang side o' the wa' this time."

"Na, Grizzie—he's upo' my side o' 't, an' walcome."

"An' I mak him jist as walcome to the fair eese (*use*) o' the path I made wi' my ain feet throuw the rouchest plooed lan' I ever crossed. It'll tak him straucht hame."

Therewith Grizzie, who abhorred compromise, turned away, and went into the kitchen.

"Come this way, my lord," said the laird.

"Take the dog home," said his lordship to the bailiff. "Have him shot the first thing to-morrow morning. If it were not the Sabbath-day, I should have it done to-night."

"He's a good watch, my lord!" interceded the man.

"He may be a good watch, but he's a bad dog," replied his lordship. "I'll have neither man nor dog about my place that doesn't know his master. You may poison him if you prefer it."

"Come awa', come awa', my lord!" said the laird. "This, as ye hae weel said, 's the Sabbath-day, an' the thoucht o' 't sud mak us mercifu'. I hae naething

to offer yer lordship but a cheir to rist ye in, an' syne we'll tak the ro'd thegither, like auld neebours as we are, an' I'll shaw ye the w'y hame."

Lord Lick-my-loof yielded, for his poor thin legs were yet trembling with the mighty effort they had made, and now that the spur of fear was withdrawn, the gate and the dyke seemed a rampart insurmountable.

"What are you doing with that cursed dog there?" he said, catching sight of Cosmo holding Covenant by the back of the neck.

"I am keeping him till your lordship's mastiff is out of the way," answered Cosmo.

"That you may set him at me, as that old hag of yours did this morning?"

They had neared the kitchen-door, open as usual.

"That's as big a lee as ever yer lordship h'ard tell i' the coort," cried Grizzie from within. "It's the natur o' dougs to tak scunners. They see far ben. Fess the beast in here, Cosmo; I s' be answer-

able for 'im. The puir animal canna bide his lordship."

"Hoot, hoot, Grizzie!" began the laird anew, now with displeasure in his tone; but that moment, Cosmo having put the dog in, the kitchen-door was closed.

"Leave her alone, Mr. Warlock, before you have the worst of it," said his lordship, trying to laugh. "But seriously, laird," he went on, "it is not neighbourly to treat me like this. Oblige me by giving orders to your people not to trespass on my property. I have paid for it, and must be allowed to do with it as I please."

"My lord," returned the laird, "I have not given, and I will not give you the smallest annoyance in my own person. But I cannot interfere with the rights of other neighbours either. If Grizzie believes there was a right of way before the road,—and she generally knows what she is about—I have no business to interfere."

"Confound your cant!" cried his lord-

ship. "You care no more for your neighbours than I do. You only want to make yourself unpleasant! Show me the way out, and be damned to you!"

"My lord," said Cosmo, "if you weren't an old man, I would show you the quickest way out! How dare you speak so to a man like my father!"

"Hold your tongue, you young fool! *You* stand up for your father!—idling about at home and devouring him! Why don't you list? I warn you, if you fall into my hands I will not spare you. The country will be better to live in when such as you are scarcer."

"Cosmo," said his father, "do not answer him. Show his lordship the way out."

As they went through the garden, lord Lick-my-loof sought to renew the conversation, but Cosmo maintained a stern silence, and his lordship went home incensed more than ever with "the contumacious paupers."

The path in which Grizzie gloried as the work of her own feet, hardened and

broadened, but she herself had very little *foot* in it any more. For the following week Mistress Gracie died.

The day after she was buried the old cottar came to the laird, and begged him not to think of him any longer, but, if he saw fit, let his lordship have the croft, for doubtless he would give a good price for it.

All the neighbours knew that Lick-my-loof greatly coveted it, though none of them were aware what a price he had actually offered for it.

"Ye see, sir," said Gracie, "noo 'at *she* 's gane, it maitters little to Aggie or me whaur we are or what comes o' 's."

"Wadna she hae said the same, gien it had been you 'at was gane hame, Jeames?" asked the laird.

"'Deed wad she! She was aye a'thing for ither fowk, an' naething for hersel'! The mair cause she sud be considered the noo!"

"An' ca' ye that considerin' her—the minute she's gane to gang an' du the thing wad hae grieved her by ordnar'?"

"Whan we was thegither," returned James with solemnity, "there was a heap o' things worth a hantle; noo 'at we're pairtit, there's jist nearhan' as mony 'at 's no worth a strae."

"Weel div I un'erstan' ye, Jeames!" returned the laird with a sigh. "But what wad come o' yersel' an' Aggie wi'-oot a place to lay yer heids? We're no to prezhume to mak oorsel's as ill aff as was the Maister; we maun lea' a' to his wull. Ye wadna hae *her* luik doon an' see ye in less comfort nor whan she was wi' ye? It wad be like to brak the speerit-hert o' her!"

"Thereanent, sir, I had a word o' a proposal to mak," rejoined James. "Ye haena a man aboot the place: whatfor sudna Aggie an' me come an' pitch oor bit tent i' the men's quarters, an' sae be at han' to len' a han' whan it micht be wantit? Aggie an' me thegither wad get mair oot o' the gairden; I wad hae mair time for weyvin'; an' ye wad get a heap for the craft frae Lick-my-loof. It wadna be an ill muv, I do believe, laird—

a guid ane for hiz, an' no an ill ane for yersel'. Consider o' 't, sir."

The laird thought with himself that the two might indeed be better accommodated at the castle. He would consult his son, he said. Cosmo in his turn consulted Agnes, and was satisfied. In the winter the wind blew through the cottage bitterly, she said.

As soon as the change was concluded upon, Cosmo went to see Lumbiggin, and was shown into the library. His lordship guessed his errand, for his keen eye had that same morning detected about the cottage some signs of a flitting. He received him with politeness, and begged to know wherein he could serve him. From his changed manner Cosmo thought he must be sorry for the way he had spoken to the laird.

"My father sent me," he said, "to inform your lordship that he is now at length in a position to treat with you, should you be so inclined, concerning the purchase of James Gracie's croft."

"I am greatly obliged to Glenwarlock,"

replied lord Lick-my-loof, softly wiping the palm of one hand with the ball of the other, "for his attention, but I have no longer any desire to possess the land. It has been so long denied me, that at length I have grown indifferent to it. It is a merciful provision of the Creator that the human mind should have the faculty of accommodating itself to circumstances —even such as are a positive nuisance."

Cosmo rose.

"As soon as you have made up your mind," added his lordship, rising also, "to part with what remains of the property *including the castle*, I shall be glad to have the refusal of *that*. Castle Warlock would make a picturesque ruin from certain points on the estate."

Cosmo bowed, and left his lordship grinning.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANOTHER HARVEST.

HARVEST-TIME brought again the opportunity of earning a pound or two. But Cosmo would not go from home again, if he could help it, for, although his father never pined or complained, he had seen that the remnant of his life shrunk more rapidly when he was away: left to himself, he began at once to go home the faster—as if he cut the cable of yet another dragging anchor, and was drawn the more swiftly whither sets the tide of life.

To the old and weary man the life to come showed as rest; to the young and active Cosmo it promised more work. But what we need for rest as well as for labour is *life*. It is life, more life

we want, whether we be young or old. Life is everything. That which is would be more. The eternal root of our being causes us to long for larger existence, more being, more of God's making, less of our own unmaking. Our very desire after rest comes of life, life that recoils from weariness. The imperfect hungers to grow. Its hunger lies in its lack of its own eternity. The sense of a continuous enlargement of existence is indispensable to the created children of an infinite Father; for in the child the paternal infinite works—by him apprehensible, not as infinitude, but as lack and aspiration, or as gain and growth. Are not we too infinite, if infinite growth be our God-born prerogative? Nothing indeed that is not infinite can justly be said to live.

The best thing for both seemed to Cosmo, if it could but be compassed, an engagement for the Lumbiggin-harvest—to reap, among other fields, those that had so lately been their own. He would then be hardly out of sight of his father

all the time. He applied, therefore, to the *grieve*, the man with whom he had all but fought that memorable Sunday of trespass. Though of a coarse, the man was not of a spiteful nature, neither regarded a quarrel as ground of hatred; yet as he carried the application to his lordship—for he dared not without his master's consent engage the man he counted his enemy—it gave him pleasure to see what he called *poor pride* brought to what he called *beggary*—as if the labour of a gentleman's hands were not a good deal farther off beggary than the money of his ancestors!

Lord Lick-my-loof smouldered a while before he gave his answer. The question was—which would most gratify the feeling he cherished against the man of old family and evil fortunes—to accept or refuse the offered toil of his son? His deliberation ended in orders to the bailiff to fee the young laird, but to mind he did not pay workman's wages for gentleman's work—an injunction the bailiff allowed to reach Cosmo's ears.

The young laird, as they all called him, was a favourite with his enemy's men, partly because they did not love their master, and were therefore not unprepared to side with the man he oppressed; partly because they admired the gentleman who could so cheerfully come down to their level, and, showing neither condescension nor chagrin, be in all simplicity friendly with them; and partly because some of them had been to his evening-school the last winter, and had there become attached to him. No honest heart in truth could be near Cosmo long and not love him—for the one reason that humanity was in him so largely developed. To him a man was a man whatever his position or calling; he beheld neither in the great man a divinity, nor in the small man a slave, but honoured in his heart every image of the living God it had pleased that God to make—honoured every man as, if not already such in the highest sense, yet destined to be one day a brother of Jesus Christ.

In the arrangement of the mowers the bailiff put Cosmo last, as presumably the least capable, who must not be allowed to lower the rate of the field. But presently Cosmo contrived to make his neighbour in front a little uneasy about his legs, and when he humorously objected to having them cut off, asked him, for the joke of the thing, to change places with him. The man at once consented; one after another behaved with equal courtesy, showing no desire to contest with him the precedence of labour; before the end of the long bout, Cosmo swung the leading scythe, and many were the compliments he received from his companions as they stood sharpening for the next—in which they were of one mind he must take the lead, some begging him however to be considerate, as they were not all so young as he, while others warned him that if he went on as he had began, he could not keep it up, and the first would be last before the day was over. Cosmo listened, and thereafter restrained himself, having no right to

overwork his companions—yet had cause, many a time in after life, to remember the too great exertion of that day. Even in the matter of work a man has to learn that he is not his own, but has a master, whom he must not serve as if he were a hard one. When our will goes hand in hand with God's, then are we fellow-workers with him in the affairs of the universe—not mere discoverers of his ways, watching on the outskirts of things, but labourers with him at the heart of them.

The next day lord Lick-my-loof came into the field, and stood watching the toil.

Now Grizzie and Aggie, irrespective of Cosmo's engagement, of whose intention at the time they were unaware, had laid their heads together, and concluded that, although they could not be at once away from the castle, they might between them do a day's work and earn a day's wages; and although the grieve would certainly have listened to no such request from Grizzie in person, he was incapable of

refusing it to Aggie. Thence it came that Grizzie was that morning gathering to Cosmo's scythe, hanging her labour on that of the young laird with as devoted a heart as if he had been a priest at the high altar and she his loving acolyte. I doubt if his lordship would have just then approached Cosmo had he noted who the woman was that went stooping along behind the late heir of the land.

"Weel, Glenwarlock!" said the old man, giving a lick to the palm of his right hand as he stopped in front of the nearing mower, "ye're a famous han' at the scythe! The corn boos doon afore ye like the stooks to Joseph."

"I hae a guid airm an' a sharp scythe, my lord," answered Cosmo cheerily.

"Whisht, whisht, my lord!" said Grizzie, before he could speak again; "gien the corn hear ye, it 'll stan' up again an' cry oot. Hearken til 't."

The morning had been very still, but that moment a gust of wind came, and set the corn rustling.

"What! you here!—Crawford, you

rascal!" cried his lordship, glancing round, "where are you? Look sharp and turn this old cat out of the field."

But his eyes searched the field in vain; the grieve was nowhere in sight.

"The deil steek (*stitch*) yer lordship's moo' up wi' an awn o' beer (*a beard of barley*)!" cried Grizzie. "—Haith, gien I be a cat, ye s' hear me curse!"

His lordship bethought him that she would assuredly disgrace him in the hearing of his labourers if he provoked her farther; and he knew for certain that, although they were all working away as if they had not an ear amongst them, every one of them within possible hearing was straining the sense to the utmost.

"Hoots, wuman!" he said, in altered tone, "dinna ye ken a jape frae a jab (*a joke from a prick*)?"

"I daurna. There's ower mony o' yer lordship's japes has turnt fearsome jabs to them 'at tuik them!"

"What mean ye, wuman?"

"Wuman! quo' he? My name's Grisel Grant. Wha kensna auld Grizzie 'at

never turnt her back on freen' or foe? But I'm no gaein' til affront yer lordship wi' the sicht o' yersel' afore fowk—sae lang, that is, as ye haud a quaiet souch. But gie the yoong laird there ony o' the dirt ye're aye lickin' oot o' that loof o' yours, an' the auld cat 'll be yowlin' upo' the hoose-tap!"

"Grizzie! Grizzie!" cried Cosmo, ceasing his work and coming back to where they stood, Grizzie with her fists in her sides, and her face flaming on his lordship, "ye'll ruin a'!"

"What is there, sir, to ruin mair?" returned Grizzie. "Whan yer back 's to the wa', ye canna fa'. An angry chiel 'ill ca' up the deil; but an angry wife 'll gar him rin for 's life. Whan I'm angert, I fear no aiven his lordship there!"

Lord Lick-my-loof turned and went, and Grizzie set to work like a fury, probably stung by the sense that she had gone too far. Old woman as she was, she had soon overtaken her scythe. But Cosmo did not speak to her, he was so sorely vexed. In a few minutes the heat

of her wrath was abated; then she grew aware of his silence, and in every motion of his body in front of her could read that she had hurt him grievously. It was more than she could endure.

"Laird!" she cried, "my stren'th 's gane frae me. Gien ye dinna speyk to me, I'll drap."

Cosmo stopped his scythe in mid swing, and turned to her. She was standing erect, but her arms were hanging by her sides.

"Grizzie," he said, "I winna deny 'at ye hae vext me,——"

"Ye needna; I wadna believe ye. But ye dinna ken yon man as I du, or ye wadna be sair angert at onything wuman said til 'im. Gien I was to tell ye what I ken o' 'im, ye wad be affrontit afore me, auld wife as I am; an' haith, ye wadna du anither stroke for *him!* He's a deevil, an' an oogly ane!"

"It's for the siller, nó for *him*, jist at this present, Grizzie. But gien he war as ill 's ye ca' 'im, a' the same, as ye weel ken, the Lord maks his sun to rise

on the evil an' on the good, an' sen's rain on the just an' on the unjust!"

"Ow ay! The Lord can affoord it!" remarked Grizzie.

"An' them 'at wad be his, maun affoord it tu, Grizzie, an' du the man's wark as ready as anither's!" returned Cosmo. "An' whaur's the guid o' ca'in' ill names, 'uman?"

"Ill 's the trowth o' them 'at's ill. Whatfor no set ill names to ill duers?"

"'Cause a Christyan 's b'un' to destroy the warks o' the evil ane; an' ca'in' names only raises mair o' the deil's corn. The only thing 'at maks awa' wi' ill, is the man himsel' turnin' again' 't, an' that the man 'll ne'er du for ill names. Ye wad never gar *me* repent that gait, Grizzie!. Hae mercy upo' the auld sinner, 'uman."

The pace at which they were making up for lost time was telling upon Grizzie, and she remained silent. When she spoke next it was upon another subject, though in much the same spirit.

"I cud jist throttle that grieve there!"

she said. "To see 'im the nicht afore last come hame to the verra yett wi' Aggie, was eneuch to anger the sanct 'at I'm no."

Was it jealousy that sent a pang through the heart of Cosmo at her words? Aggie was one of the family—more like a sister to him than any other could ever be, and the thought of her in any kind of familiar relation with a man like Crawford was unendurable to him.

"She cudna weel help hersel'," he rejoined, "gien the man wad gang. An' whaur's the maitter o' 't sae lang as she has naething to say til 'im!"

"Ay, sae lang!" returned Grizzie; "but wha kens hoo lang that may be! The hert o' a wuman 's no deceitfu', as the Buik says is a man's, an' sae it's the easier deceivt. The chield's no ill-luikin'! an' I s' warran' no sae rouch wi' a yoong lass as wi' an auld wife!"

"Grizzie, ye wadna mint 'at oor Aggie 's ane to be ta'en wi' the luiks o' a man?"

"What for no—gien it be a' the man has? A wuman's hert 's that saft, whiles, 'at she'll jist tak 'im, no to be sair upon 'im. I wadna warran' ony lass. Na; gien the fallow cairry a fair face, she'll sweir her conscience doon he maun hae a guid hert!"

Thus Grizzie turned the tables upon Cosmo, and sheltered herself behind them. Scarce a word did he speak the rest of the morning. At noon, however, when toil made way for food, and they sat down among the stooks—except Grizzie, who, appropriating one share all in oat-cake, took it home and laid the greater part aside—Cosmo ate and drank, and enjoyed the homely repast with the hungriest.

By the time the meal was over, Agnes had arrived to take Grizzie's place.

It was a sultry afternoon, and what with the heat, what with the annoyances of the morning, the scythe swung heavy in Cosmo's hands, and Aggie had not to do her very best to keep up with him. But she was careful to maintain her

proper distance, for she knew that the least suspicion that he was not up to his own mark would set him off like a thrashing-machine. He led the field, nevertheless, at a fair speed; his fellow-labourers were content; and the bailiff made no remark. But he was so silent, and prolonged silence was so unusual between them, that Aggie was disquieted.

"Are ye no weel, Cosmo?" she asked.

"Weel eneuch, Aggie," he answered. "What gars ye speir?"

"Ye're haudin' yer tongue sae sair," she replied.

"I'll tell ye a' aboot it as we gang hame," he returned.

The same moment the bailiff came up.

"Dinna warstle yersel' to deith, Aggie," he said.

"I maun haud up wi' my scythe," she answered.

"Yer man 's ower het at it! He'll be fit for naething or the week be oot. He canna haud on at this rate!"

"Ay can he—fine that! Ye dinna ken oor yoong laird. He's worth twa ordnar

men. An' gien ye dinna think me fit to gaither til 'im, I s' lat ye see ye're mistaen!"

He had brought her a little behind by talking to her, but in a moment almost she had recovered her position.

"Hoots, Aggie!" said the bailiff, going up to her, and laying his hand on her shoulder, "I ken weel ye hae the spunk to drive till ye drap. But there's nae occasion the noo. Sit ye doon an' tak yer breath a meenute—here i' the shaidow o' this stook. Whan Glenwarlock 's at the tither en', we'll set tu thegither, an' be up wi' him afore he has a fresh edge on 's scythe. Come, Aggie! I hae lang been luikin' oot for the chance o' a word wi' ye. Ye left me or I kent whaur I was the ither nicht."

"My time 's no my ain," answered Agnes.

"Whause is't than?"

"Whiles it's the laird's, an' whiles it's my father's, an' noo it's his lordship's."

"It's yer ain sae lang 's I'm at the heid o' 's lordship's affairs."

"Na; that canna be. He's boucht my time, an' it 's his siller 'at 'll pey me for 't, an' he s' hae his ain."

"Ye needna consider 'im mair nor rizzon; he's nae freen' to you or yours."

"What's that to the p'int?"

"A'thing to the p'int—wi' me here to haud things straucht."

"Ca' ye that haudin' straucht—to temp' me to wrang my enemy?" said Agnes, keeping steadily on with her gathering, the grieve following her step by step.

"Ye're unco short wi' a body, Aggie!"

"Weel I may be, whan a body wad hae me neglec' my paid wark."

"Weel, I reckon ye're i' the richt o' 't efter a'," said Crawford; "sae I'll jist fa' tu, an' len' ye a han'."

He had succeeded in so far hindering her that Cosmo had again gained a little; and now pretending to help, he contrived to hinder her yet more. She still managed however to keep near enough to Cosmo to prevent him from saying much, and by and by he left her.

When they ceased for the night, the grieve would again have accompanied her home, but she saw it, and never left Cosmo's side.

"Aggie," said Cosmo, as soon as they were out of other hearing, "I dinna like that chield hingin' aboot ye—glowerin' at ye as gien he wad ait ye."

"He winna ait me, Cosmo; he's ceevil eneuch."

"Ye sud hae seen sae rouch as he was to Grizzie that Sunday nicht at the yett!"

"Grizzie 's some rouch hersel' whiles," remarked Agnes quietly.

"That's ower true," assented Cosmo; "but a man sud never be rouch wi' a wuman."

"Say that to the man," rejoined Aggie. "The wuman can haud aff o' hersel' weel eneuch."

"Grizzie, I grant ye, 's mair nor a match for ony man; but ye're naither sae sharp nor sae lang i' the tongue, Aggie."

"Think ye a lang tongue an' a sharp 's

a lass's safety, Cosmo? I wad awe nane til't! But what's ta'en ye the nicht, 'at ye speyk sae to me? I ken o' no occasion."

"Aggie, I wadna wullin'ly say a word to vex ye," answered Cosmo; "but I hae baith notit an' h'ard tell 'at the best o' women whiles taks onaccoontable fancies to men no fit to haud a can'le to them."

Agnes turned her head aside.

"I wad ill like to see you, for enstance, Aggie, drawin' to yon Crawford," Cosmo went on. "It micht be eneuch, it seems to me, for a woman to ken 'at he's been sae lang the factotum o' an ill man!"

Aggie was again looking straight before her. A slight convulsive movement passed across her face, leaving behind it a shadow of hurtless resentment, yielding presently to a curious smile.

"I micht mak a better man o' 'im," she said, and again turned her head aside.

"They a' think that, I'm thinkin'!" replied Cosmo with a sad bitterness. "An' sae they wull think, I doobt, to

the warl's en'.—But, Aggie," he added, after a pause, "ye ken we're no to be oonaiqually yokit."

"That's a thing to heed," murmured Aggie. "—But what du ye un'erstan' by that, Cosmo? There's nae worshippers o' idols the noo, as i' the days whan the apostle said it."

"There's idols veesible, an idols inveesible," answered Cosmo. "There's heaps o' idols amo' them 'at ca's themsel's, ay an' them 'at 's coontit Christyans. Gien a man set himsel' to lay by siller, he's the worshipper o' as oogly an idol as the fish-tailt god o' the Phillisteens."

"Weel I wat that!" returned Agnes, and a silence followed.

"You an' me's aye been a heap til ane anither, Aggie," resumed Cosmo at length. "—I wad fain hae a promise frae ye—jist to content me."

"What aboot, Cosmo?"

"Promise, an' I'll tell ye, as the bairnies say.—It wad pit my hert at rist aboot ye, sae far, Aggie."

"But we're no bairns, Cosmo, an' I daurna—no even to you 'at I wad trust like the Bible. Tell me what it is, an' gien I may, I wull."

"It's no muckle atween you an' me, Aggie; it's only this—'at gien ever ye fa' in love wi' onybody, ye'll lat me ken."

Agnes was silent for a moment; then, with a tremble in her voice which in vain she sought to smooth out, and once more turning her head away, she answered,

"Cosmo, I daurna."

"I want naething mair," persisted Cosmo, thinking she must have misapprehended the scope of his request, "nor jist the promise 'at what ye ken I sall ken. I wad fain be wi' ye at sic a time."

"Cosmo," said Agnes with much solemnity, "there's ane 'at's aye at han', ane that sticketh closer nor a brither. The thing ye require o' me, it micht be a lass could tell to nane but the father o' her—him 'at's in haiven."

Cosmo was silenced, as indeed it was

time and reason he should be; for had she been his daughter he would have had no right to make such a request of her. He might well have asked her to tell him, but not to promise to tell him. He did it in all innocence, however, and not yet understanding that he had made a moral blunder, was the more troubled about Agnes, and felt as if, for the first time in their lives, they had begun to be divided.

They entered the kitchen. Aggie hastened to help Grizzie lay the cloth for supper. Her grandfather looked up to her with a smile from the old newspaper he was reading in the window. The laird, who was in his chair with a book in his hand which Mr. Simon had lent him, called out joyfully,

"Here, Cosmo! hark to this bit o' wisdom, my man—frae a hert doobtless praisin' God this mony a day in upper warl's:—'He that would always know before he trusts, who would have from his God a promise before he will expect, is the slayer of his own eternity.'"

The words mingled strangely with what had just passed between him and Agnes. Both they and that gave him food for thought. But this night thought did not keep him awake.

The bailiff continued to haunt the steps of Agnes, but few supposed his attentions acceptable to her. Cosmo was soon convinced that she gave him no encouragement.

The harvest was over at length, and the little money he had earned laid aside for the sad winter once more on its way. But no good hope dies without leaving its child, a younger and fresher hope, behind it. The year's fruit must fall that the year's fruit may come, and the winter itself is the king's highway to the spring.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FINAL CONFLICT.

As there was no more weekly pay for teaching, and no extra hands were longer wanted for farm-labour, Cosmo, hearing there was a press of work and a scarcity of workmen in the building-line, offered his services, at what wages they might upon trial be judged worth, to Sandy Shand the mason, then raising a house in the village for a certain Mr. Pennycuik, a native of the same, who, having left it long ago, and returned from India laden with riches, now desired, if not to end, yet to spend his days amid the associations of his youth. Upon this house, his offer accepted, Cosmo laboured, doing the work now of a mason, now of a carpenter, and receiving a fair remuneration—until

the weather put a stop to all such work except what was under cover, and there was no longer any need of partially skilled hands.

But instead of reaping golden opinions by his readiness to turn himself to any labour at which he could honestly earn a shilling, the strange result was that Cosmo thus became the object of endless depreciatory remark. "A young fellow of his abilities, with a college-education too, to waste his time at home, a Jack of all trades, working with his own hands to the degradation of his family, instead of leaving the country and devoting himself to some honourable calling fit for a gentleman! Look at Mr. Pennycuik! See how he has raised himself—and that without one of the young laird's advantages! There he stands, a rich man and an employer of labour, the builder of his own fortunes, while the poor-spirited gentleman is working away at the walls of his house, one of his hired men!" Such was the mean idea cherished in that little village of the self-raising which is the

duty of a man! They spoke after their kind, putting ambition for aspiration. They did not know the spirit they were of, who would have had the youth leave his father for Mammon. As little did they know, or, had they known, were capable of taking into the account, certain moral refinements and delicate difficulties entailed upon him by that father, which might indeed bring him to beggary, but could never allow him to gather riches as Mr. Pennycuik had gathered them. He had a holy weakness for the purity that gives alms of the things within us. If there is one blot more disgraceful than another upon a Christian soul, it is meanness—of action, of thought, or of judgment.

Through stress of weather, Cosmo was therefore once more driven back upon his writing. But whether it was that there was too little of Grizzie or too much of himself in these later stories, his work seemed now to have lost either the power or the peculiarity that had recommended it. Things therefore did not look pro-

mising. But they had a fair stock laid in of oatmeal, and that was the staff of life, also a tolerable supply of fuel, which neighbours had lent them horses to bring from the peat-moss.

With the cold weather the laird began again to fail, and Cosmo to fear that this would be the last of the good man's winters. As the best protection he betook himself to bed, and his son spent his life almost in his room, reading aloud when he was able to listen, and reading to himself or writing when he was not. The other three of the household occupied the kitchen, to save fuel, and keep each other company. Thus the little garrison awaited the closer siege of the slow-beleaguering winter, while some of them fortified their hearts against the more terrible enemies which all winter-armies bring flying on their flanks—the haggard fiends of doubt and dismay, which will often bore through the stoutest walls. To trust in spite of the look of being forgotten; to keep crying out into the vast whence comes no voice, and where

seems no hearing; to struggle after light, where is no glimmer to guide in the direction of it; at every turn to find a doorless wall, yet ever seek a door; to stare at the machinery of the world pauseless grinding on as if self-moved, caring for no life, shifting no hair's-breadth for all entreaty, and yet believe that God is awake and utterly loving; to desire nothing but what comes meant for us from his hand; to wait patiently, willing to die of hunger, fearing only lest faith should fail—such is the victory that overcometh the world; such is very faith. For such victory Cosmo strove and prayed hard—sometimes deep sunk in the wave while his father floated calm on its crest. The old man's discipline had been longer; a continuous communion had for many years been growing closer between him and the heart whence he came.

"As I lie here, warm and free of pain," he said once to his son, "expecting the redemption of my body, I cannot tell you how happy I am. I cannot think how ever in my life I feared anything. God

knows it was my obligation to others that oppressed me, but now, in my utter incapacity, I am able to trust him with my honour and my duty as well as my sin."

"Look here, Cosmo!" he said, another time; "I had temptations, such as you would hardly think, to better my worldly condition, and redeem the lands of my ancestors, and the world would have commended, not blamed me, had I yielded. But my God was with me all the time, and I am dying a poorer man than my father left me, leaving you a poorer man still, but, praised be God, an honest one. Your honesty, my son, is a diamond in my heart. Be sure, Cosmo, God is the only adviser to be trusted, and you must do what he tells you, even if it lead you to a stake, to be burned by the slow fire of poverty.—O my Father," cried the old man, here breaking out suddenly in prayer, "my soul is a flickering flame of which thou art the eternal, inextinguishable, self-burning fire. I am blessed because thou art. Because thou

art life, I live. Nothing can hurt me, because nothing can hurt thee. To thy care I leave my son, for thou lovest him as thou hast loved me. Deal with him as thou hast dealt with me. Set him free as thou hast set me free. I ask for nothing, care for nothing but thy will. Strength is gone from me, but my life is hid in thee. I am a feeble old man—the old feeble child of a Father everlastingly young and strong; but I am dying into the eternal day of thy youth and thy strength."

Cosmo stood and listened with holy awe and growing faith. For what can help our faith like the faith of the one we most love, when, sorely tried, it yet shows sound and strong!

But there was one earthy clod still clinging to the heart of Cosmo. There was no essential evil in it; not the less it held him back from the freedom of the man who, having parted with everything, possesses all things. The place, the things, the immediate world in the heart of which he was born and had grown up,

crowded with the memories and more shadowy but hardly less potent associations of childhood and youth, amongst them the twilight loveliness of lady Joan, had such a hold of him that his feeling towards them savoured of idolatry. This love was born with him, it was in him, had come down into him, growing, through generation after generation of ancestors, had become the stronger that he had been true, and was neither weakling nor craven, and had a power over him for whose existence he was not accountable, but for whose continuance, so soon as he should become aware of its true character, he would immediately know himself accountable. For Cosmo was not one of those poor creatures who, finding in themselves certain tendencies with whose existence they had nothing to do, therefore in whose presence they have no blame, will say to themselves, "I cannot help it," and at once create evil, and make it their own, by obeying the inborn impulse. Inheritors of a lovely estate, with a dragon in a den which they have to kill that the brood

may perish, they make friends with the dragon, and so think to save themselves trouble!

But I would not be misunderstood: I do not think Cosmo loved his home too much; I only think he did not love God enough in it. He did not enough feel that it was a gift of God to him, a shape that the love of God had taken that it might come to him. He did not love the body of it too much, but the soul of it too little. If he had felt the soul of it more, the loving will of God, that is, the ceaseless presence of that changeless soul would have been infinite comfort for the loss of its passing incarnation. To love a thing divinely, is to be ready to yield it, if not without a pang, yet certainly with a great joy, when God wills it; but to Cosmo, the thought of parting with the house of his fathers and the rag of land that clung to it, was torture. This hero of mine, instead of sleeping the perfect sleep of faith, would lie open-eyed through half the night, hatching scheme after scheme—not for the redemption of

the property—even to him that seemed hopeless, but for such repulse of want as might render possible the retention of the house. Might it not at least go to ruin under eyes that loved it, and hands that laboured though in vain to fill the slow-yawning chasms of decay? His dream haunted him: if it came true, he would rather linger out his life in the dungeon wine-cellar of the mouldering mammoth-tooth, than forsake the old stones for any palace! The love of his soul for Castle Warlock was like the love of the psalmist for Jerusalem: when he looked on a stone of its walls, it was dear to him. But the love of Jerusalem became an idolatry, for the Jews no longer loved it because the living God dwelt therein, but because the glory of it was *theirs:* then it was doomed, for it was an idol. The thing was somewhat different with Cosmo: the house was almost a part of himself—an extension of his own body, as much his as the shell of a snail is his. But because into this shell were not continued those nerves of life which give the consciousness of the

body, and there was therefore no reaction from it of those feelings of weakness and need which, to such a man as Cosmo, soon reveal the fact that he is not lord of his body, that he cannot add to it one cubit, or make one hair white or black, and must therefore leave the care of it to him who made it, he had to learn in other ways that his castle of stone was God's—God's as well as his body and his spirit. It was not that he *could* ever have doubted this; but not to doubt a truth is one thing, and to know it is quite another. Cosmo's truth and humility and love had not yet reached to the quickening of the idea of the old house with the assurance that God was in it with him, giving it to him, making it his. Not yet possessing therefore the soul of the house, which nothing could take from him, naturally he could not be content to part with the body of it. It seemed a moral impossibility that it should be taken from him —a wrong to things, to men, to nature, that a man like Lick-my-loof should obtain the lordship over it. As he lay in

the night, in the heart of the old pile, and heard the wind raving athwart its stone-mailed roofs, the thought of losing it would sting him almost to madness, hurling him from his bed to the floor, to pace up and down the room, burning, in the coldest midnight of winter, like one of the children in the fiery furnace, only his furnace was of worse fire, the wrath, namely, which worketh not the righteousness of God.

Suddenly one such night he became aware that he could not pray—that in this mood he never prayed. In every other trouble he prayed—felt it the one natural thing to pray! Why not in this trouble? Something must be wrong—terribly wrong!

It was a stormy night; the snow-burdened wind was raging; and Cosmo would have been striding about the room but that that night he was in his father's, who was not quite so well. He lay still—now with a stone on his heart, for he was at length awake to the fact that he could not in this matter say, "Thy

will be done." He tried sore to lift up his heart, but could not. Something rose ever between him and his God. A thick fog was about him—no air wherewith to make a cry! In his heart not one prayer would come to life; it was like an old nest without bird or egg in it.

Such a state was too terrible! Here was schism at the very root of his being! Things were closer to him than God! Between him and God rose the rude bulk of a castle of stone! He crept out of bed, laid himself on his face on the floor, and prayed in an agony. The wind roared and howled, but the desolation in his heart made of the storm a mere play of the elements. How few of my readers will understand even the possibility of such a human state! How many of them will scorn the idea of it, as presenting a man on the high road to insanity!

"God," he cried, "I thought I knew thee, and loved thy will; and I have loved thy will in greater things than this wherein I now lie ashamed before

thee. I cannot even pray to thee. But hear thou the deepest will in me, which, thou knowest, must bow before thine when once thou hast uttered it. It is rather that I am not willing this thing should be thy will, than that I am not willing thy will should be done. Hear the prayer I cannot offer. Be my perfect Father to fulfil the imperfection of thy child. Be God after thy own nature, beyond my feeling, beyond my prayer—according to that will in me which now, for all my trying, refuses to awake and arise from the dead. O Christ, who knowest me better a thousand times than I know myself, whose I am, divinely beyond my notions of thee and me, listen and hear, and save me eternally, out of thy eternal might whereby thou didst make me and give thyself to me. Hear me in thy own primal will, which hangs nowise upon my mushroom prayer. Make me strong to yield all to thee. I have no way of confessing thee before men, but in the depth of my soul I would confess thee, hating myself for thee,

yielding everything but the truth, which is thyself; and therefore, even while my heart hangs back, I force my mouth to say the words—*Take from me what thou wilt, only make me divine, the child of thy Father and my Father.* I yield the house and all it holds. It is thine, not mine. Give it to whom thou wilt. I would have nothing but what thou choosest shall be mine. I have thee, and all things are mine."

Thus he prayed, thus he wrestled with his reluctant heart, forcing its will by the might of a deeper will, that *would* be for God and freedom in spite of the cleaving of his soul to the dust.

Then for a time thought ceased in exhaustion. When it returned, lo! he was in peace, in the heart of a calm unspeakable. How it came he could not tell, for he had not been aware of its approach; but the contest was over, and in a few minutes he was fast asleep —ten times his own because a thousand times another's—one with him whom all men in one could not comprehend, but

whom yet the heart of every true child apprehends and understands.

I would not have it supposed that, although the crisis was past, there came no more stormy weather. Often it blew a gale; often a blast would steal upon him from behind the skirts of the hope that God would not require the sacrifice of him; but he never again found he could not pray. Recalling this conflict and the great ensuing peace, he always made haste to his master, compelling the refractory slave in his heart to be free, and say "Thy will, not mine!" Then would the enemy withdraw, and again he breathed the air of the eternal.

When a man comes to the point that he will no longer receive anything save from the hands that have the right to withhold it, and in whose giving alone lies the good of having, then has he begun to enter into possession of the inheritance of the saints in light, of those whose strength has been made perfect in weakness. But there are whom for the present it is needless to

trouble any more than the chickens about the yard. Their hour will come, and in the meantime they are counted the fortunate ones of the earth, for their pickings are large.

CHAPTER X.

A REST.

But now James Gracie fell sick. They removed him therefore from the men's quarters, and gave him Cosmo's room, that there he might be better attended to, and warmer than in his own. Cosmo put up a bed for himself in his father's room, and Grizzie and Aggie slept together; so that the household was gathered literally under one roof—that of the kitchen-tower, as it was called.

James's attack was serious, necessitating much ministration, and involving an increase of expenditure which it needed faith to face. Cosmo of course did not shrink from it: so long as his money lasted, his money should go. James objected bitterly to the waste, as he called

it: what remained of his life was not worth it! But the laird hearing the mood he was in, rose, and went down the stair, and stood before his bed.

"Jeames," he said to him solemnly, "wha are ye to tell the Lord the time 's come? What kin' o' faith is't to refeese a sup frae yer father's han' 'cause ye seena anither spunefu' upo' the ro'd 'ahin' 't?"

James hid his old face in his old hands. The laird went back to his bed, and nothing more was ever said by either on the subject.

The days went by; the money ran fast away; no prospect appeared of more; but still they had enough to eat.

One morning in the month of January, still and cold, and dark overhead, a cheerless day in whose bosom a storm was coming to life, Cosmo, sitting at his usual breakfast of *brose*, the simplest of all preparations of oatmeal, bethought himself whether something more might not be found in the mine whence so much had already issued—whether some

others of the curiosities in the cabinets might not, with the help of his friend Mr. Burns, yield them pabulum. Without finishing his breakfast, for which he found he had that day but little relish, he rose and went to the drawing-room to examine its treasures in the light of necessity.

It felt like a tomb, dank and close and freezing-cold, and looked weary of its memories. So still was it, it seemed as if sound would die in it nor be heard at all—as if the silence were an entity that would choke it. Not a mouse stirred. The few pictures on the walls looked perishing with cold and changelessness. The very shine of the old damask was wintery. But he did not long stand gazing. He crossed to one of the shrines of his childhood's reverence, opened it, and began to examine the things in it with the eye of a seller. Once they had seemed treasures inestimable, now he feared they might be worth nothing for his sore need. Scarce a pang at the thought of parting with any one of them

woke in him as they passed through his hands. He was like a miner searching for golden ore, not a miser whom hunger had dominated. The sole question with him was, would the object he regarded bring money? When he had gone through all the things in the cabinet, he turned and again examined those he had set aside. Amongst them was a dagger in a sheath of silver of raised work, with a hilt cunningly wrought of the same; a goblet of iron with a rich pattern in gold beaten into it; a snuff-box with diamonds round a golden monogram in the lid: these, and a few smaller things with an air of promise about them, he put carefully together, thinking to take them at once to Muir o' Warlock, and entrust them to the carrier. But when he saw his father again, he judged it better to put off going till the next day.

As the sun went down, the wind rose, and the storm in the bosom of the stillness came to life—the worst of that winter. It reminded them of the terrible night on which lord Mergwain went out

into the deep. The morning came, fierce with gray cold age, a tumult of wind and snow. There seemed little likelihood the carrier would put his horses to; but the storm might be more severe upon their hills than in the opener country, and as some things were wanted for the invalids, Cosmo would go and see.

It was with no small difficulty he made his way to the village, and there also he found the snow so deep that the question would have been how to get the cart out of the shed, not whether the horses were likely to get it through the glens o' Fowdlan. He left the parcel therefore with the carrier's wife, and proceeded, somewhat sad at heart, to spend the last of his money, just half a crown. Having done so, he set out for Glenwarlock, the wind blowing fierce, and the snow falling thick.

Just outside the village he met a miserable-looking woman with a child in her arms. How she came to be there he could not think, but he did not ask her. They were neighbours in suffering,

hers was the greater share, and he gave her the twopence he had left. Prudence is but one of the minor divinities, if indeed she be anything better than the shadow of a virtue, and he took no counsel with her, knowing that the real divinity, Love, would not cast him out for the deed. The widow who gave the two mites was by no means a prudent person. Upon one of the prized cabinets was carved *Charity* gazing at the child on her arm, and beside her *Prudence* with a mirror in her hand, contemplating herself.

He had not gone far, battling with the wind, and the snow both flying and fallen, before he began to feel his strength failing him. It had indeed been failing for some time; he had never quite recovered his exertions in lord Lumbiggin's harvest-fields; and now, for the first time in his life, he began to find it unequal to the encounter of the elements. But he laughed at the idea, and held on. The wind was right in his face, the cold was bitter, and within him, though plenty of

courage, were not good spirits enough to supply the lack of physical energy: his breath grew short, and his head began to ache. He longed for home that he might lie down and breathe, but a long way and a great snowy wind were betwixt him and rest. He fell into a reverie, an absorption of thought in dreamy meditation, and vaguely seemed to himself to be getting on better for not thinking of the exertion he had to make. Alternately sunk in himself for minutes, and waking for a moment to the consciousness of what was around him, he had walked, by his feelings, for many hours, when at length he began to think he must be near the parish-road. He stood therefore, and sent sight into his eyes, but nothing was to be descried through the drift save more drift behind it. A ghastly doubt invaded him: was he upon a road to anywhere? He sought this way and that, but could find neither ditch nor dyke. He was lost! He knew well the danger of sitting down, knew on the other hand that the more exhausted he was when he

succumbed at last the sooner would the cold get the better of him, and that with every step he might be wandering from the abodes of men, diminishing the likelihood of being found. Not knowing what to do, he turned his back to the wind and stood—how long he could not afterwards even conjecture.

But while thus he stood, hardly half awake, more than half asleep, out of the raving chaos around him he received—or so it seemed—a heavy blow on the head from something soft. It dazed him, and the rest was as a dream, in which he walked on and on for ages, often falling and rising again, ever following something, he never knew what. But all the time he knew, or seemed to know that he was on the way to his father's house. With that, however, all memory of consciousness ceased.

Aggie was the first to get anxious about him. They had expected him home to dinner, and when it began to grow dark and he had not come, she could bear it no longer, and set out to

meet him. But she had not far to go, for scarcely had she left the kitchen-door when she saw some one leaning against the gate. Through the gathering twilight and the storm she could not distinguish who it was, but she never doubted it was the young laird, though whether in the body or out of it she felt by no means so certain. She hurried to the gate, and found him standing between it and the wall. There came no answer when she spoke, and she thought he was dead; but presently followed an inarticulate murmur. She opened the gate gently. He would have fallen, but she got beside and supported him. Her touch seemed to bring him a little to himself. He tried to do as she told him, and she succeeded in getting him into the house. It was long before Grizzie and she could make him warm by the kitchen-fire, but at last he came to himself sufficiently to walk up the stairs to his father's room, though afterwards he remembered nothing of his arrival at home, or of what took place during the next three days.

When he entered the room, he went to his father's bed and spoke to him, then staggered to his own. The laird seemed at once to regain some portion of his strength, and rising helped to get him to bed. The three nights during which he was feverish and wandering, the old man could hardly be persuaded to lie down, and slept only in snatches. On the third day Cosmo himself persuaded him to return to his bed. Not until then did Grizzie let the laird understand the plight in which Agnes had found Cosmo. With all the men in the house laid up, the two women had now their hands full.

The first night, when they had put Cosmo to bed, and together gone down again to the kitchen, in the middle of the floor Grizzie and Aggie stopped and turned and looked at each other: their hour had come! They understood each the other, for they meant the same thing, and words were needless. They had a little money, and now no questions would be asked!

Aggie left the room, came back with

her savings, and put them in Grizzie's hand. Grizzie laid the money on the table, went in her turn to her box, brought thence her store, every penny of it, laid the one on the other, took both up, closed her hands over the whole, shook it together, murmured over it like an incantation the words, "It's nae mair mine, an' it's nae mair thine, but belangs to a', whatever befa'," and put it in her pocket under her winsey petticoat. Thereafter, for a time, the invalids wanted nothing.

When Cosmo came to himself on the third day, he found that self possessed by a wondrous peace. It was as if he were dead, and must rest till his strength, exhausted with dying, came back to him. Bodiless he seemed, and without responsibility of action—with that of thought only. The words of the Ancient Mariner came to him as if he were speaking them for himself:

> I thought that I had died in sleep
> And was a blessed ghost.

His soul was calm and trusting like that

of a bird on her eggs, who knows her one grand duty in the economy of the creation is repose. How it was he never could quite satisfy himself, but remembering he had spent their last penny, he yet felt no anxiety, neither, when Grizzie brought him food, any inclination to ask her how she had procured it. His atmosphere was that of the fairy-palace of his childish visions, only his feelings were more solemn, and the fairy, instead of being beautiful, was—well, was dear old Grizzie. His sole concern was his father, and the cheerful voice that invariably answered his every inquiry was sufficient reassurance.

For three days more he lay in a kind of blessed lethargy, with little or no suffering. He fancied he could not recover, nor did he desire to recover. His only wish was to go with his father to the old world, and learn its ways from his mother. In his half-slumbers he seemed always to be floating down a great gray river, on which thousands more were likewise floating, each by him-

self, some in canoes, some in boats, some in the water without even an oar; every now and then one would be lifted and disappear—none saw how, but each knew that his own turn would come; in the meantime all floated helpless on, some full of alarm at the unknown before them, others indifferent, and some filled with solemn expectation; he himself glided along gently waiting: the unseen hand would come with the hour, and give him to his mother.

On the seventh day he began to regard the things around him with dawning interest, began to be aware of returning strength, and the approach of duty: presently he must rise, and do his part! Still he felt no anxiety, for the alarum of duty had not yet called him.

And now his father from his bed would tell him old tales he had heard from his grandmother; and at times Grizzie would sit between the two beds and tell some of her stories, the stock of which seemed inexhaustible. Now the one, now the other would say, "There, Grizzie! I

never h'ard that afore!" and Grizzie would answer, "I daursay no, sir. Hoo sud ye than? I had forgotten't mysel'!"

Here is one of the stories Grizzie told them.

"In a cauld how, far amo' the hills, whaur the winter was a sair thing, there leevit an honest couple, a man wi' a gey lot o' sheep, an' his wife. They war fowk weel aff in respec' o' this warl's gear, an' luikit up til amo' the neebours, but no to be envyed, seein' they had lost ane efter the ither o' a bonny faimily, till there was left i' the hoose but jist ae laddie, the bonniest an' the best o' them a', an' as a maitter o' coorse, the verra aipple o' their e'e.—Amo' the three o' 's laird," here Grizzie paused in her tale to remark, "ye'll be the only ane 'at can fŭlly un'erstan' hoo the hert o' a pahrent maun cleave to the last o' 's flock.—Weel, whether it was 'at their lives was ower sair wrappit up i' the life o' this ae human cratur for the guid o' their sowls, I dinna ken—there bude to be some

rizzon for't—but this last ane o' a' begud in his turn to dwine an' dwin'le like the lave; an' whaurever thae twa puir fowk turnt themsel's i' their pangs there stude Deith, glowerin' at them oot o' his toom e'en (*empty eyes*). Pray they did, ye may be sure, an' greit whan a' was mirk, but prayers nor tears made nae differ; the bairn was sent for, an' awa' the bairn maun gang. An' whan at len'th he lay streekit in his last clean claes till the robe o' richteousness 'at wantsna washin' was put on 'im, what cud they but think the warl' was dune for them!

"But the warl' maun wag, though the hert may sag; an' whan the deid lies streekit, there's a hoose to be theekit. Sae freens an' neebours gaithert frae near an' frae far, an' there was a heap o' fowk i' the hoose, come to the beeryin' o' the bonny bairn. An' though deith be in a hoose, fowk maun ait nane the less, an' sae the nicht afore the yerdin' their denner whan they cam back frae the kirkyaird had to be foreordeent.

"It was the spring-time o' the year—unco late i' thae heich pairts. The maist o' the lambs hed come, but storm an' drift war laith to lift frae the laps o' the hills, an' lang efter it begud to be something like weather laicher doon, the sheep cudna be lippent oot to pick their bit mait themsel's, but had to be keepit i' the cot. Sae to the cot the gudeman wad gang to fess hame a lamb for a denner til 's freens an' neebours. An' as it fell oot, it was a fearsome nicht o' win' an' drivin' snaw—waur, I reckon, nor onything we hae hereawa'. But the gudeman he turnt na aside for win' or for snaw, for little cared he, wi' sic a how in his hert, what cam til 'im or cam o' 'im. The storm in fac' was a veil til's grief, an' ahin' 't he fell a greitin' an' bewailin' an' lamentin' lood oot, jeedgin' nae doobt, gien he jeedgt at a', he micht grane an' sigh, wi' naebody nigh, as he dauredna du amo' a' the fowk, or even afore his ain wife, for the hertbrak o' 't. To the sheep-cot, as I say, he gaed wailin' an' plainin' an' cryin' efter his bonny

bairn, the last o' his flock, oontimeous ta'en.

"Half blin' wi' the nicht an' the snaw an' his ain tears, he cam at len'th to the door o' the sheep-cot. An' what sud he see there but a man stan'in' afore the door—straucht up an' still i' the mirk an' the storm, as gien naither win' nor snaw cam nigh him. It was 'maist fearsome to see onybody there—sae far frae ony place, no to say upo' sic a night. The stranger was rowed in some kin' o' a plaid like the gudeman himsel', whether a lowlan' or a hielan' plaid, he cudna tell. But the face o' the man wasna ane to be forgotten—an' that for the verra freen'liness o' 't! An' whan he spak, it was as gien a' the voices o' them 'at was hame afore war made up intil ane, for the sweetness an' the pooer o' the same.

"'What mak ye here in sic a storm, man?' he speirt. An' the soon' o' his voice was aye safter nor the words o' his mooth.

"'I come for a lamb,' the gudeman he answered.

"'What kin' o' a lamb?' askit the stranger.

"'The best lamb I can lay my han's upo' i' the cot,' answered he, 'for it's to set afore my freens an' neebours. Sir, ye'll come hame wi' me an' share o' 't?'

"'Du yer sheep mak ony resistance whan ye tak the lamb? Or whan it's gane, mak they an ootcry?'

"'No, sir,' said the gudeman.

"The stranger ga'e a kin' o' a sigh, an' says he,

"'That's no hoo mine trait me! Whan I gang to my sheep-fold, an' tak the best an' the fittest—no to kill 'im an' ait 'im, but to tak 'im hame, an' fess 'im up i' my father's ain hoose, my ears are deavt an' my hert torn wi' the clamours, the bleatin' an' the ba-in' o' my sheep—my ain sheep!—compleenin' sair again' me!—an' me feedin' them, an' cleedin' them, an' haudin' the tod frae them, a' their lives, frae the first to the last! It's some sair to bide!'

"By this time the man's heid was hingin' doon; but whan the voice ceased,

he daurt to luik up. There was nae man there! Like ane in a dream, whaurin he kennedna joy frae sorrow, nor pleesur frae pain, he gaed intil the cot, an' grat ower the heids o' the 'oo'y craturs 'at cam croodin' aboot 'im, soucht oot the best lamb, an' cairriet it hame. The neist day they saw 'im come back frae the funeral wi' a smile upo' the face whaur hed been nane for sae mony a lang; an' the neist Sunday they h'ard him singin' i' the kirk as naebody had ever h'ard him sing afore. An' never frae that nicht was moan or plaint to be h'ard frae the lips o' aither o' the twa o' them. They hadna a bairn to close their e'en whan their turn cam, but what o' that? Whaur nane 's left ahin', there's the mair to fin'."

She ceased, and her hearers were silent, for the old legend had touched the deepest in them.

Many years after, Cosmo discovered that she had not told it quite right, for, having been brought up in the lowlands, she was not familiar with the ancient customs of the highlands. But she had

told it well after her own fashion, and she could not have had a fitter audience.*

"It's whiles i' the storm, whiles i' the desert, whiles i' the agony, an' whiles i' the calm, whaurever he gets them richt their lanes, 'at the Lord veesits his ain—in person, as a body micht say," remarked the laird, after a long pause.

Cosmo did not get well so fast as he had begun to expect. Nothing very definite seemed the matter with him; it was rather as if life itself had been checked at the spring, therefore his senses dulled, and his blood made thick and slow. A sleepy weariness possessed him, in which he would lie supine and motionless for hours, desiring nothing, fearing nothing, suffering nothing, only loving. The time would come when he must be up and doing, but now he would not think of work! he would fancy himself a yet callow bird in God's nest—the nest into which the great brother would have

* See Mrs. Grant's Essays on the Superstitions of the Highlanders.

gathered the children of Jerusalem! In this holy quiet, poems visited him, little songs and little prayers—spiritual butterflies with wings whose spots matched, sometimes humorous little parables concerning life and its affairs; they visited him, but would not stay. Never, do what he might, could he remember so as to recall one of them. He had to comfort himself with the thought that nothing true can ever be lost; the immediate form of it may go, but it is that a better may come in its place. Had it been the best, could he have forgotten it? I doubt it. A thing may be itself invaluable, and the form in which it presents itself so poor as to be neither capable nor worthy of being remembered, though at the moment it shares the shine of the invaluable which it as transiently as imperfectly embodies. But happy is the half-sleeper whose brain is a thoroughfare for lovely things—all to be caught in the nets of Life, for Life is the one miser that never loses, never can lose!

When he was able to be up for a part of

the day, Grizzie yielded a portion of her right to Agnes; and now first the laird seemed to discover that there was yet more in her than goodness and common sense. Expressing his new admiration one day, and remarking on her knowledge, intellect, and insight, he was surprised that Cosmo did not seem to respond with equal warmth.

"Dinna ye see't sae yersel', Cosmo?" he asked.

"I hae seen't sae sin' ever I min', father," he replied, "an' I thoucht ye had aye been o' the same opinion!

"Bairns' e'en are gey gleg upo' angels!" murmured the laird.

"There's feow like Aggie, father," said Cosmo. "Mony's the time she's hauden me up whan I was like to sink."

"The Lord be her portion!" said the laird.

All sicknesses are like aquatic plants of evil growth: their hour comes, they wither and die, and leave the channels free. Life returns—in slow, soft ripples at first, but not the less in irresistible tide,

and at last in pulses of mighty throb through every pipe. Death is the final failure of all sickness, the clearing away of the very soil in which the seeds of the ill plants take root.

By slow degrees Cosmo recovered strength, nor left behind him the peace that had pervaded his weakness. And now the time for action was at hand. For many days he had been fed like the young ravens, and knowing he could do nothing, had not troubled himself with the useless *how;* but the moment was come when he must understand, that he might resolve. Mechanically almost, he opened his bureau: there was not a penny there! He knew there could not be—except some angel had visited it while he lay, and that he had not looked for. He closed it, and sat down to think. There was no work to be had that he knew of; there was little strength to do it with had there been any. As the spring came on there would be labour in the fields, but necessity was at the door. There were many in the country around on friendly

terms with his father and himself, but his whole being revolted from the borrowing of money where was no prospect of repaying it. He would rather die. For his father, if it came to want, he would beg. "Where borrowing is dishonest," he said to himself, "begging may be honourable. The man who borrows, knowing no chance of repaying, the more he scorns a gift is but the more a thief; the man who has no way to earn his day's bread, has a divine right to beg." In Cosmo's case, however, there was this difficulty: he could make a living for both, if he would but leave his father, and that he would not. There was one alternative more—to go, and take his father with him; and that he would not do until they were driven to part with stick and stone. But was there nothing to be done between this want and that last of compelled resources?

Once more he found the loose raft of his thoughts helplessly adrift, and no shore of ways or means visible—nothing but beggary, or final sale and departure in sight—except indeed some of the

things in the house might find a purchaser. But had Mr. Burns been able to do anything with those he had sent he would have written, he thought—for he did not know that the parcel he had left at the carrier's was lying there still—in his wife's press under her summer-shawl! It might be that God intended to bring him to the last humiliation of all—to positive beggary! But would even that be worse than the humiliation under which they had bowed for so many long years—that of owing and not being able to pay? A beggar may be under endless obligation, but a hopeless debtor is a slave! He *may* be God's free man all the while, but not the less is he his fellow's slave! His slavery may be a light burden or a sickening misery according to his creditor, but except indeed there be absolute brotherhood between them, he is that creditor's slave!

Again the immediately practical had vanished, lost in debate; again he sought to return to it. But it was like sharpening his eyes to see through a wall. He

could not go to Mr. Simon; he too was poor, and had now for some time been far from well. He knew he would go without necessaries to help them, and that was an insurmountable reason against letting him know their condition.

At last came a thought: why should he not for present need pledge the labour of his body in the coming harvest? That would be action upon a reasonable probability, and he would not be ashamed to propose the thing to any man who knew him. He would but require a portion of the fee in advance, and a kindly disposed man would surely venture the risk involved! True, when the harvest came he might be as much in want of money as he was now, and there would be the less to receive; but if he did not have help now he could not reach that hour of want, and help now would give time for other help to arrive. Both hunger and beggary are safe things to postpone. At the worst he could beg then! He would see what could be done as soon as he was able for the walking necessary.

And now he would have a peep into the meal-chest!

It stood in a dark corner of the kitchen; he had to feel with his hand to learn accurately its condition. To his surprise he found a not very shallow layer of meal in the bottom of it. How there could be so much after his long illness, he hardly dared imagine. He must ask Grizzie! Yet he almost feared to question her.

There came a spell of warm weather, and the invalids improved. Cosmo was able to go out, and every day had a little walk, not seldom thinking of that other time after illness, when Joan was with him, and so near that it scarce seemed possible anything should part them—and now she was an eternity away! For months he had heard nothing of her. She must be married, and think it kinder not to write!

The weather continuing moderate, he made rapid progress, and the week following judged himself equal to a long walk.

CHAPTER XI.

HELP.

He had come to the resolve to carry first his petition to Mr. Henderson, for whom he had worked the harvest before the last. The distance was an objection, but he flattered himself he could after all get home every night. In the present state of his strength, however, he found it a long trudge indeed; and before the house came in sight was very weary. But he bore up and held on.

"I was almost as ill-off," he said to himself, "when I sought work the first time, yet here I am—alive and after work again! It's like going on and on in a dream, wondering what's coming next!"

He was shown into the parlour, and

presently Mr. Henderson appeared. He scarcely welcomed him, but by degrees his manner grew more cordial. The coldness with which he had been received caused Cosmo to hesitate, and a pause ensued. The farmer broke it.

"Ye didna grant 's the fawvour o' yer company last hairst!" he said. "Gentleman 'at ye are, I wad hae thoucht ye micht hae f'un' yersel' mair at hame wi' the like o' hiz nor wi' that ill-tongued vratch, Lick-my-loof! Nane o' 's tuik it ower weel, I can tell ye, 'at ye gied na 's the chance o' yer guid company."

This explained his reception, and Cosmo made haste in his turn to explain his conduct.

"Ye may be sure," he answered, "it gaed some again' the grain wi' me to seek wark frae *him!* I hadna a rizzon upon this earth for no comin' to speir gien ye wad hae me, but jist 'at I cudna bide to be sae far, at nicht especially, frae my father. He's grown some auld, an' 's no the man he was."

"Verra nait'ral!" responded the farmer

heartily, and in a tone of thorough satisfaction, while he wondered in himself whether a son of his would have been so considerate. "Weel," he went on, "I'm jist relieved to un'erstan' the thing; for the lasses wad hae perswaudit me I hed gien ye some offence wi' my free-spocken w'y. Naething cud hae been far'er frae the thoucht o' my hert."

"Indeed," answered Cosmo, half-rising in his eagerness, "I assure you, Mr. Henderson, there is not a man from whom I should be less ready to imagine offence than yourself. I do not know how to express my sense of the kindness with which you always treated me. Nor can I better prove that such is my feeling towards you than by telling you at once why I have come to you, the very first day I was fit for the walk: it is to ask you to engage me for the harvest and pay me a part of the fee now in advance. I know it is a strange request, and if you think proper to refuse it, I doubt if there is another to whom I shall venture to make it. I have been ill as you

know—very ill, but I am now fairly on the mend, and there are long days and nights between this and harvest. To tell you the truth, we are much in want of a little money. We are not greatly in debt now, but we have lost all our land, and a house won't grow corn. Something in my mind seems to keep saying my father will yet pay every thing; but anyhow we want to hold on as long as we can. I am sure, if you were in our place, Mr. Henderson, you would not be willing to give up the house a moment before it was absolutely necessary. That is not mortgaged, thank God."

"But, laird," said the farmer, who had listened with the utmost attention, "hoo can the thing be? Is there no ane amo' a' the great fowk ye hae kent, to say, 'Help yersel'"? I canna un'erstan' 't! The last o' sic an auld faimily no to hae a han' heeld oot to help them!"

"It is not so very hard to explain," replied Cosmo. "Almost all my father's *old* friends are dead, and a man like him, especially in such circumstances as his,

does not readily make new ones. Almost the only person he has been intimate with of late years is Mr. Simon, whom I daresay you know, and he is far from being a man of means. Then my father has what people count peculiar notions: I heard of one calling him a fool behind his back because he paid him a certain small sum his father owed him. If he had rich friends they would only say it was no use trying to help such a man."

"Weel," exclaimed the farmer, "it jist blecks me to see hoo there can be ony trowth i' the Bible, whan a man like that comes sae near beggin' his breid!"

"He *is* come very near it certainly," assented Cosmo; "but why not he as well as another?"

"'Cause they tell me the Bible says the richteous man sall ne'er beg his breid."

"Well, *near* is not *there!* But I don't think the Bible says that. Certainly the New Testament does not. It is true the psalmist says he never saw the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread; but

though he never saw it, another may have seen it."

"Weel, I fancy gien he hed seen 't, he wadna hae been lang in puttin' a stop til 't!—Laird, gien a sma' maitter o' fifty poun' or sae wad tide ye ower the bar,—weel, ye cud pey me whan ye likit."

It was a moment or two before Cosmo could speak. A long conversation followed, rising almost to fierceness, certainly to oaths on the part of the farmer, because of Cosmo's refusal to accept the offered loan.

"I do see my way to meeting my wages with my work, but I see no way to repaying such a debt!" insisted Cosmo. "Lend me two pounds, Mr. Henderson, upon the understanding that I am to work it out in the harvest, and I shall be your debtor to all eternity; but more I cannot and will not take upon myself."

Grumbling heavily, the farmer at length handed him the two pounds, but obstinately refused either written acknowledgment or agreement.

All the time the friendly altercation

proceeded, Elsie was standing behind the door, her ear laid against it not to lose a word, and her colour coming and going like the shadows in a day of sun and wind! She was sorely disappointed when it ceased without her father's having succeeded in making the young laird his debtor in a larger sum; but the next moment she entered with a smile, and asked Cosmo to stop and take tea with them. The farmer following up the invitation, he accepted it, and indeed was glad of a good meal. It passed with pleasure to all, for the relief of having two pounds in his pocket, and lent him with such genuine kindness, had put Cosmo in great spirits, so that he was more than usually agreeable, and the old farmer wondered admiringly at the good courage of the youth who in such hardship could afford to be merry.

Cosmo sat with these his true neighbours till the gloaming began to fall. Then it was more than time to go, and they all rose with him, and accompanied him half-way home. When they had

taken their leave of him and he was again alone, his heart grew so glad that, weak as he was, and with the mists rising all along his path, he never felt a moment's chill, but trudged on cheerily, singing and *making* all the way, and was surprised to find what a short way it really was.

For a part of it, every now and then he had a glimpse of some one before him that looked like Aggie, but the distance between them gradually lengthened, and by and by he saw her no more. When he entered the kitchen, Aggie was there.

"Was yon you upo' the ro'd afore me, Aggie?" he asked.

"Ay was 't," she answered.

"What for didna ye wait on me?"

"Ye had the Hen'ersons' company the first half o' the ro'd, an' yer ain the last, an' I didna think ye wantit me."

So saying she went up the stair.

As Cosmo followed, he turned at the foot of it, and opened the meal chest. It was all but empty! there was hardly enough in it to make their supper! He smiled in the dark, and said to himself,

"The links hold yet! When one breaks the world will drift."

Going up to his father's, he had to pass the door of his own room, now occupied by James Gracie. As he drew near it, he heard the voice of Aggie speaking to her grandfather. What she said he did not know, but he heard his answer.

"Lassie," said the old man, "ye can never see by (*past*) the Lord to ken whaur he's takin' ye. Ye may jist as weel close yer e'en as try. His garment spreads ower a' the ro'd, an' what we hae to du is to haud a guid grip o' 't—no to gang gleyin' an' keekin' (*squinting and peeping*) ayont it."

Cosmo hastened up and told his father what he had overheard.

"There's naething like faith for the makin' o' poets, Cosmo!" remarked the laird. "Jeames never appeart to me to hae mair o' what's ca'd intellec' nor jist an ord'nar share; but ye see the man 'at has faith he's aye growin', an' may come to what nane expeckit even i' this warl'. An' whan ye think o' the ages to come,

truly it wad seem to maitter little what stock o' onything a man may start wi'. I ance kenned ane in ord'nar affairs coontit little better nor an idiot, wha 'maist turnt a prophet the minute he gaed doon upo' his k-nees. Ay! fowk may lauch at what they haena a glimp o', but it wad be lang or their poleetical economy wad du sae muckle for sic a man! It wadna e'en gie 'im a chance. It wad hae the necks o' sic like's him thrawn the moment they appeart!—But there's Grizzie! I h'ard her come in! Gang an' tell her I wad like to see her. She's been to see her fowk."

Cosmo went down. The old woman was sitting in his father's chair by the fire, and did not turn her face when first he spoke. She was either tired or vexed, he thought. Aggie was again in the kitchen.

"My father wad like to see ye, Grizzie," he said. "An' here, Grizzie, here's twa poun'; an' ye'll need to gar 't gang far'er nor it can, for I kenna whaur we're to get the neist."

"Ken ye whaur ye got the last?" muttered Grizzie, but made haste to cover the words:— "—Whaur got ye that, Cosmo?" she said.

"What gien I dinna tell ye, Grizzie?" he returned, willing to rouse her with a little teasing.

"That's as ye think proper, sir," she answered. "Ae body has no richt to say til anither body, 'Whaur got ye that?'— 'cep' he doobts ye hae been at the stealin' o' 't."

It was a somewhat strange answer, but there was no end to the strange things Grizzie would say: it was one of her charms! Cosmo told her where and how he had got the money.

The moment she understood, Grizzie started from her chair, and shaking her clenched hand at Cosmo, cried out like a Pythoness,

"Glenwarlock, yoong sir, ken ye what ye're duin'?" Then turning with an expression of despair to Aggie, who stood regarding them with a strange look, "The Lord preserve 's! he's an innocent!" she said, and dropped into her seat.

"Grizzie!" cried Cosmo, in astonishment, "what on earth gars ye luik sae raist like? Hasna the man ta'en 's oot o' the warst strait ever we was in?"

"Gien naebody nearer hame had na helpit ye oot o' waur straits, its waur straits ye wad be in the noo!" cried Grizzie. "An' it's waur ye'll be in yet, gien that man gets his wull o' ye!"

"He's a fine chiel', an' a rale freen," said Cosmo. "An' for waur straits, Grizzie—arena ye at the last o' yer meal?"

As he spoke he turned, and with factual reference to fact, strode to the chest into which he had put his hand but a few minutes before. To his astonishment there was enough in it for many meals! He turned again and stared speechless at Grizzie. But she sat now with her back to him.

"What's this o' 't, Grizzie?" he began; but before he could finish his speech, she broke out thus:

"Shame fa' 'im, say I, 'at gethert his siller sellin' beef an' mutton i' the Wast-

wyn' o' Howglen! *Him* to ettle at a gentleman o' a thoosan' year for ane o' *his* queyns! But, please the Lord, we s' haud clear o' sic a doonfa' as that for a' 'at 's come an' gane!"

"Hootoot, Grizzie!" said Cosmo, returning to the fire, "ye canna surely imaigine ony man in his senses wad think the like o' me worth luikin' efter for a guid-son til him! Stanewhuns wadna be sic a gowk!"

"Gowk here, gowk there! he kens what ye are an' what ye're worth! Weel that! Hasna he seen ye at the scythe? Disna he ken there's ten times mair to be gotten oot o' ae gentleman like you, wi' his siller at yer back, nor ten cowmon men sic as he's like to coff i' the market for 's dothers? Weel kens he it's nae faut o' you or yours 'at ye're no sae flush as some 'at oucht to be, an' wull be waur-aff yet, gien it be the Lord's wull, or a' be dune! Disna he ken 'at Castle Warlock itsel' wad be a warl's honour to ony leddy —no to say a lass broucht up in a slauchter-hoose? Shame upo' him an' his!"

"Weel, Grizzie," rejoined Cosmo, "ye may say 'at ye like, but I dinna believe he had onything o' the kin' in 's heid. It cam a' o' rale guid wull an' charity; an'——"

"Charity!" interrupted Grizzie; "tshah! I'm ashamed to hear ye! Disna he ken the word o' a Warlock 's as guid as gowd? Disna he ken *your* wark, what wi' yer pride an' what wi' yer ill waured (*ill spent*) graititude, 'ill be worth til 'im that o' twa men? The man's nae coof! He kens what he's aboot! Haith, ye needna waur muckle graititude upo' sic benefactions!"

"To show you, Grizzie, that you are unfair to him," said Cosmo, more seriously, "I must tell you he pressed on me the loan of fifty pounds."

"I tell ye sae!" screamed Grizzie, starting again to her feet. "God forbid ye took 'im at his offer!"

"I did not," answered Cosmo; "but all the same——"

"The Lord be praist for his abundant an' great mercy!" cried Grizzie, more

heartily than devoutly. "We micht contrive to win ower the twa poun' even ohn workit it oot—but *fifty!*—The Lord be aboot 's frae ill! As sure's deith, gien ye had ta'en the siller ye wad hae had to tak the lass!—Cosmo, ye canna but ken the auld tale o' muckle-moo'd Meg?" she concluded, more gently.

"Weel that," replied Cosmo. "But ye'll alloo, Grizzie, times are altert sin' the day whan ae man cud gie anither the ch'ice atween a wife an' the wuddie! Stanewhuns cudna weel hang me for sayin' *no*."

"Say ye *no*, come o' the hangin' 'at like," rejoined Grizzie, and sat down again.

"But, Grizzie," said Cosmo, "I wad fain ken whaur that meal i' the kist cam frae. There was nane intil 't an hoor ago."

With all her faults of temper and tongue, there was one kind of evil word Grizzie could not speak: she had tried a good many times in her life to tell a lie, but had never succeeded: absolutely

determined not to disclose how she had procured the meal, she paused unprepared. Her hesitation, however, lasted but a moment.

"Some fowk says, sir," she answered in a deliberative tone, as if, although having in a measure weighed the question, she yet suspended judgment, "'at the age o' mirracles is ower. For mysel' I dinna preten' til an opingon; but gien the needcessity was the same, I wad be laith to think providence no consistent wi' 'tsel'. Ye maun min' weel the auld tale o' the meal-girnel—muckle siclike, I daursay, as oor ain, though it be ca'd a barrel i' the Buik,—hit 'at never wastit, ye ken—an' the uily-pig an' a'—ye'll min' weel!—though what ony wuman in her senses cud want wi' sic a sicht o' ile 's mair nor ever I cud faddom; she cudna aye be poorin' 't upo' the heid o' her! But maybe it was lamp-ile!—Eh, but a happy wuman was she 'at had but to tak her bowl an' gang to the girnel, as I micht tak my pail an' gang to the wall! An' what for michtna the Almichty mak

a meal-wall as weel 's a watter-wall, I wad like to ken! What for no a wall 'at sud rin ile—or say milk, which wad be mair to the purpose? What for sudna he, I say! Ae thing maun be jist as easy to him as anither—jist as ae thing 's as hard to hiz as anither! Eh, but we're helpless craturs!"

"Your w'y, Grizzie, ye wad haud 's helpless! Ye wad hae a'thing hauden to oor moo's, as gien we war bairns in oor mithers' laps! It's o' the mercy o' the Lord 'at he wad mak men an' women o' 's—no haud 's bairns for ever!"

"It may be as ye say, Cosmo; but whiles I cud weel wuss I was a bairn again, an' had to luik to my mither for a'thing."

"An' isna that jist siclike 's the Lord wad hae o' 's, Grizzie? We canna aye be bairns to oor mithers—an' for me I wasna ane lang—but we can an' maun aye be bairns to the great Father o' 's. It's him 'at hauds oot the piece til's, only we maun warstle til 't."

"I hae an ill hert, Cosmo, an' unco

hard to content. An' I'm ower auld noo to mak muckle better o' 't; but maybe some kin'ly body like yersel' 'ill tak me in han' whan I'm deid, an' pit some sense intil me!"

"Ye hae sense eneuch, Grizzie, an' to spare, gien only ye wad——"

"Guide my tongue a wee, ye wad say! Little ye ken the temptation o' ane 'at has but ae solitary wappin, an' that no an ill ane! A tongue 's a gift, an' gifts ye're no to despise but turn til accoont."

Cosmo did not care to reason with her further. And Grizzie had gained her point: she had turned him aside from questioning her about the meal.

For a day or two more they had whereby to live; and if it seem to my reader that the horizon of hope was narrowing around them, it did not seem so either to the laird or Cosmo. For they judged not by appearances, neither was their hope in the shows of things. The help they looked for made its own way, and had highest ends in view for them—not merely deliverance from outside oppressions.

And what is the extent of our merely rational horizon at any time? But for faith and imagination it were in truth a narrow one! Even what we call experience is but a stupid kind of faith—a trusting in impetus instead of in love. And these days on the verge of a gulf of poverty were fashioning father and son eternally, for at the close of each they were loving each other more, and thus time, despite of fortune, nay rather working by the good that was at the heart of its evil, had its perfect work.

CHAPTER XII.

A COMMON MIRACLE.

Cosmo had all the winter, until he was laid up, and especially after his old master was taken ill, gone often to see him. The good man was now, but chiefly through the progress of his complaint, becoming aware of a general failure of his powers. But he was cheerful and hopeful as ever, and more expectant. As soon as he was able, Cosmo renewed his visits, but seldom stayed long, for Mr. Simon could not bear much talking, and his father would be watching for his return.

It had rained before sunrise, and a soft spring wind had been blowing ever since —a wind both soothing and persuading. It drew at the buds in the secret places of the dry twigs, and whispered to the

roots of the rose-trees that roses would be wanted of them by and by. And now the sun was near the foot of the western slope. A mellow look, mingled of gold and gray, hope, that is, and tears, was spread over earth and sky. Cosmo was reading to his father, who sat in his mother's chair by the fireside, when Grizzie entered and told them she had just heard that Mr. Simon had had a bad night and was worse. The laird begged his son to go at once and inquire after their friend.

The wind that had been busy all day now at evening kept Cosmo company as he walked. It flitted softly about him, going and coming like an attendant natured for more motion than his pace would afford. So full of thought and love it seemed, that Cosmo, as he had done a thousand times before, wondered whether spirit were not all, and matter but our human relation to the under side of the golden tissue. Then came the thought of the infinitude of our moods, of the countless colours and hues and shades of our thoughts, of the endless kinds and unde-

finable varieties of our feelings, especially in our dreams.

"How rich God must be," he said to himself, "since from him we come capable of such inconceivable differences of conscious life!—How poor and helpless," his heart went on thinking, "how mere a pilgrim and stranger in a world over which he has no rule, must be the man who has not God one with him! Not otherwise can any man's life be free, save moving in loveliest harmony with the will and life of the only Freedom—that which is so free that it wills and we are! We too must will, and so be free!—will the pure will that is love and so life."

"How would it be," he thought again, "if things came and went as they pleased in my mind and brain? Would it not be madness? Is it not of the essence of madness that things thrust themselves upon the man, and by very persistence of seeming, compel and absorb his attention, drowning faith and will in the false conviction of mere presence? The soul that is empty, swept, and garnished, is

the soul which adorns itself, the soul where God is not, where therefore other souls come and go at will, drawn by the very selfhood, and make the man the slave of their thoughts and their desires. Oneness with the mighty All is the apex of life; its antipode is distraction—a thousand foolish desires tumultuously simulating the long dead will, a thousand self-impassioned spirits tearing the one asunder: he calls them by his own name, nor knows them from himself. Self is the one all-potent annihilator of individuality. God or chaos is the alternative. All thou hast, or no Christ!"

As he walked thinking thus, the stream was all the way by his side, tumbling out its music as it ran to find its eternity. The wind kept flowing rather than blowing from the moist west, where the gold and purple had fallen together in a ruined heap over the tomb of the sun. The stars came thinking out of the heavens, and the things of earth withdrew into the great nest of the dark. And he found himself at the door of the cottage, under

whose low thatched roof lay one of the heirs of all things, waiting for his inheritance.

But Dorty said her master was better, and would be glad to see him, and showed him to his room. Because of his long illness and his need of air, Mr. Simon lay in the study, and the dusky place grew radiant with the smile that greeted Cosmo from the pillow.

"Come, come!" said Mr. Simon, almost eagerly. "I have been longing for you. I want to tell you something—a little experience I have had—an event of my illness. Outwardly it is nothing, but to you it will not be nothing.—It was blowing a great wind last night."

"So my father tells me," answered Cosmo. "For my part I slept too sound to hear it."

"It grew calm with the morning. As the light came the wind fell. Indeed I think it lasted only about three hours altogether.

"I have of late been suffering a good deal with my breath, and have always

supposed it worse when the wind was high. Last night I lay awake very weary, longing for the sleep which seemed as if it would never come. I thought of Sir Philip Sidney, how, as he lay dying, he was troubled because, for all his praying, God would not let him sleep: the want of the sleep troubled his body, but that God would not give it him sorely troubled his mind; and I was trying hard to make myself strong to trust in God whatever came to me, sleep or waking, weariness or slow death—when all at once up got the wind with a great roar, as if the prince of the power of the air were mocking at me. And I thought with myself, 'It is then the will of God that I neither sleep this night nor lie quiet!' and I said, 'Thy will be done!' and laid myself out straight, expecting my breathing to grow thick and laboured, and that presently I should have to pump hard for every fill of my lungs. And so lying I waited.

"But still as I waited, I kept breathing softly. No iron band ringed itself

about my chest; no sand filled up the passages of my lungs!

"The cottage is not very tight, and I felt the wind blowing all about me; but instead of beginning to cough and wheeze, I began to breathe better than before. Soon I fell fast asleep, and when I woke I was like a new man. It seemed as if a tide of life must have risen and filled me, so much better did I feel. It was a wind of God that had been blowing all about me as I slept, renewing me! Oh how sweet was the air when I woke, and how sweet it is still!

"On the wings of the dreaded wind had sped to me the spirit of good.

"So it may be when the time comes at whose approach nature will 'grow gray with fear': the pale damps of the grave will come steaming up, but they shall not enfold us; we shall hear the ghastly winds that issue from the tomb's mouth, but when they blow upon us they shall be sweet; a sighing, and a rustling of unrest may invade our ears, but lo, it was the waving of the wings of the waiting

angels that sit in the antechamber of the hall of life, once the sepulchre of our Lord! And when we die, instead of finding we are dead, we shall have waked better."

To most men it would have been an experience of nothing but bodily relief; to Peter Simon it was a word from the eternal heart—the heart which, in every true and quiet mood, speaks within the heart of a man—makes itself known as the heart of his heart.

"When we close our ears," said Mr. Simon, "to the cries of self and care, then the voice that was there all the time fills those closed ears. It is the voice of the father speaking to his child—never known for the father's voice until the child begins to obey it. To him who has not ears to hear God will not reveal himself; any other revealing would be death by terror."

Cosmo sat a long time talking with his friend, for now there seemed no danger of hurting him, so much better was he. It was late therefore when he rose to return.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEFIANCE.

AGNES was in the kitchen when he entered. She was making the porridge.

"What's come o' Grizzie?" asked Cosmo.

"Ye dinna like my parritch sae weel 's her's!" returned Agnes.

"Jist as weel, Aggie," answered Cosmo.

"Dinna ye tell Grizzie that."

"What for no?"

"First she wad be angert, an' syne her hert wad be like to brak."

"There's nae occasion to say onything aboot it," conceded Cosmo. "But what's come o' her the nicht?" he repeated. "It's as mirk 's mirk, an' I dinna like her to be oot in 't.—She's no up the stair, is she?"

"Na, she's no up the stair. But the ro'd 'atween this an' the Muir 's no easy to lowse," replied Agnes.

The same instant her face flushed hotter than ever sun or fire made it: what she had said was in itself true enough, but what, though she had not *said* it, she had yet for the moment meant him to understand, was not true; Grizzie had gone nowhere near Muir o' Warlock. She had never told a lie in her life, and before the words were gone from her mouth felt as if the earth were sinking from under her feet. She left the *spurtle* sticking in the porridge, and dropped into the laird's chair.

"What's the maitter wi' ye, Aggie?" asked Cosmo, hastening to her in alarm, for her face was now white, and her head hanging down.

"This is no to be borne!" she cried, and started to her feet. "—Cosmo, I tellt ye a lee."

"Aggie!" returned Cosmo, dismayed, "ye never tellt me a lee i' yer life!"

"Never afore," she answered; "but I

hae tellt ye ane noo—no to live though! Grizzie's no gane to Muir o' Warlock."

"What care I whaur Grizzie 's gane!" rejoined Cosmo. "Tell me or no tell me as ye like."

Agnes burst into tears.

"Haud yer tongue, Aggie," said Cosmo, trying to soothe her, himself troubled, and troubled with her trouble, for he too was sorry she should *almost* have told him a lie,—he would not allow it was more than *almost*—and his heart was sore for her misery over the sin. He knew how she must suffer, the thing she had done was so foreign to her nature!

"It *could* na be muckle mair, at the warst," he went on, "than a mere slip o' the wull, seein' ye made sic haste to set it richt again. For mysel', I s' bainish the thoucht o' the thing."

"I thank ye, Cosmo," sobbed Agnes. "Ye 'll aye du like the Lord himsel'! But there's mair intil 't. I dinna ken what to du or say. It 's a sod thing to stan' 'atween twa, an' no ken what to du ohn dune mischeef—maybe wrang!—

There's something it 'maist seems to me ye hae a richt to ken, but I canna be sure; an' yet—— "

She was interrupted by the sudden and hurried opening of the door. It flew to the wall, and Grizzie came staggering in, with a face of terror.

" Tu wi' the door! " she cried, with the last effort of speech, and sank upon a chair, gasping for breath, and dropping at her feet a bag like a pillow-case.

Cosmo leaped to the door and closed and locked it, while Agnes made haste to get her some water, which she drank eagerly. After a time of panting and sighing, she seemed to come to herself all at once, and rose, saying, as if nothing had happened,

" I maun see to the supper! "

Cosmo went to take up her bag, for he felt curious concerning it, but she pounced upon it, and carried it to the corner of the fire, where she placed it beyond her. The same instant her nose informed her that the porridge had begun to burn.

"Eh, sirs!" she cried, as she took the pot hastily from the fire, "the parritch 'ill be a' sung—no to mention the waste o' guid meal! Aggie, hoo cud ye be sae careless!"

"'T was eneuch to gar a body forget ony pot," said Cosmo, "to see ye come in like yon, Grizzie!"

"An' what'll ye say to the tale I bring ye?" rejoined Grizzie, as she turned the porridge into a dish, careful not to scrape too hard on the bottom of the pot—which she set aside with the burned portion adhering to it, to serve as dish, plate, and supper for herself.

"Tell's a' aboot it, Grizzie, an' bena lang aither," said Cosmo, "for I maun til my father."

"Gang til 'im. Here's naebody wad keep ye frae 'im."

He was surprised at her tone, for although she took abundant liberty with the young laird, he had not since boyhood known her rude to him.

"Nae till I hear yer tale, Grizzie," he answered.

"An' I wad fain ken what ye'll hae to say til't; for naither the laird nor Maister Simon nor yersel' wad ever alloo o' kelpies, say 'at I likit! An' noo there I hae been followed myself, for the first time i' my life, by a sure ane—this last half-hoor —or it may be less!"

"Hoo kenned ye it was a kelpie—it's maist as dark 's pick?"

"Kenned! quo' he? Didna I hear the deil's naig 'ahin' me—the tramp o' a' the fower feet o' 'im—as gien they had been fower an' twinty!"

"Hoo was't he didna win up wi' ye than, Grizzie?" asked Cosmo.

"Guid kens hoo!" she answered; "I won'er at it mysel'. But I trow I ran! An' I tak ye to witness I garred ye steik the door wi' my last breath."

"But," objected Cosmo, to whom, his observation sharpened both by his own vague suspicions, and by what Agnes had said, Grizzie's whole bearing seemed to betray anxiety to conceal something, "it's weel kent the kelpie wons aye by some watterside.'

"Weel, cam I no by the tarn o' the tap o' Stieve K-now?'

"What on earth tuik ye there an' nicht comin' on, Grizzie?"

"I said na I was there at nicht-fa'! The cratur had seen me gang by i' the efternune, an' watcht me back by the laich ro'd! Didna I haud ower the hill to the How o' Hap, an' come hame by Luck's Lift? Mair by token, wadna the guidman o' that same *hae* me du what I haena dune this twal year, or maybe twenty—an' that's tak a dram? An' didna I come hame a' the better for 't?"

"An' get a sicht o' the kelpie intil the bargain—eh, Grizzie?"

"Hoots! gang to the laird, an' lea' me to get my breath an' your supper thegither. An' I wuss ye see the neist kelpie yersel'!" said Grizzie. "—Only, whatever ye du, Cosmo," she added, already repenting her evil wish and dreading its possible consequences, "dinna m'unt the back o' 'im, or he'll cairry ye straucht til 's maister—an' we a' ken wha *that* is."

"I'm no gaein' oot o' this," returned Cosmo, "till I see what ye hae i' that pock o' yours."

"Hoot!" cried Grizzie, and snatching up the bag, she held it behind her back, "never wad a yoong gentleman mint at (*attempt*) luikin' intil an auld wife's pock! What kens he what she michtna hae there!"

"The ribs o' 't sticks oot like wi' meal! It's my belief it's nae ither nor a meal-pock," said Cosmo.

"Meal-pock!" returned Grizzie with indignant contempt: "what neist?"

He made another movement to seize the bag, but she caught the spurtle from the empty porridge-pot, and showed herself in genuine earnest for its defence. Whatever the secret to which Aggie had alluded, this pock must have to do with it! thought Cosmo, and began to grow very uncomfortable. So strange were his nascent suspicions that he dared not at the moment allow them to take defined shape, lest thereby they should start into facts.

For the last few days he had been occupied with the whole question of miracles. Why, thought he, should one who believes that in very truth a live, thinking, perfect Power is at both the heart and the head of affairs, count it impossible that, in like need, another meal-chest should be supplied like that of the widow of Zarephath? If the thing was ever done, there could be no absurdity in hoping it might be done again. If it was possible once, it was possible in the same circumstances always. No human being, however, could tell when circumstances were the same—and in fact he could not believe that the same circumstances all round, inside and out, ever came again! Wherever, indeed, the same thing was not done, the conclusion must be that the circumstances were not the same. One thing he did discover—that, in the altered relations of man's mind to the facts of nature, a larger faith is necessary to believe in the constantly present and ordering will of the Father of men, than to believe in the unusual phenomenon of a miracle. In the

meantime, it was a fact that they had hitherto had their daily bread! But now the strangeness of Grizzie's behaviour set him thinking in a very different direction.

And now again came the question, why Mr. Burns took no notice of the things he had sent him! If he had found it impossible to do anything with them, and had delayed writing from unwillingness to cause him disappointment, yet there ought surely to be some limit to silence! Why should his friend not even show himself aware of the straits he had confessed himself in. It must be the design of Providence to take off him the last clog that trammelled him: he was to have no ease until he had yielded the castle! If it were indeed so, then the longer they delayed the worse off they would find themselves when at length it was done! To sell everything in it first would, in postponing the evil day, but prepare for them so much the deeper poverty against its arrival; whereas if he parted with the house at once, and took his father where work was to be

had, they might have some of the old things about them still to tincture strangeness with home. The more he thought about it, the more it seemed his duty to end the hopeless struggle, and having accepted the social descent which seemed the will of God for them, with new courage commence a new endeavour, no more on the slippery slope of the hill Difficulty, but with the firm ground of the valley of Humiliation under his feet. But ready as he was to do whatever was required of him, he did wish God would make it quite plain. The part of discipline he liked least—one of whose good and necessity I doubt if we have yet gained more than a glimpse —was his uncertainty upon occasion as to what the will of God might be. But on the other hand, perhaps the cause of that uncertainty was the lack of perfect readiness; perhaps all that was wanted to make duty plain was absolute will to do it!

These and other such thoughts went flowing and ebbing for hours in his mind

that night. But at last he saw his immediate duty plain enough—namely, to banish care and go to sleep. He yielded his consciousness therefore to him from whom it came, and slept.

CHAPTER XIV.

DISCOVERY AND CONFESSION.

In the morning he woke wondering whether God would that day let him know clearly what he required of him. He was certain he would not have him leave his father; anything else in the way of trouble he thought he was prepared for.

The season was now approaching the nominal commencement of summer, but the morning was very cold. He went to the window. Air and earth, he thought, wore the crape veil of a black frost—the most ungenial, the most killing of weathers. Alas, that was his father's breathing! His bronchitis was worse! In haste he lighted the fire, and leaving him still asleep, went down stairs. He was earlier than usual, and Grizzie was

later ;—she had not yet got over her run from the kelpie ; only Agnes was in the kitchen. Her grandfather was worse also, she told him. Everything leaned towards severer straits and sorer necessity : this must be God letting him know what he was to do !

He sat down, and suddenly, for a moment, seemed to be on the opposite bank of the Warlock river, looking up at the castle, now the property of another, and closed to him for ever ! Within those walls he could not order the removal of a straw ! could not chop a stick to warm his father ! "The will of God be done !" he said, and the vision was gone.

Agnes was busy making his porridge : here was a chance of questioning her before Grizzie came down.

"Come, Aggie," he said abruptly, "I want to ken what for Grizzie was in sic a terror aboot her pock last nicht. I'm thinkin' I hae a richt to ken."

"I wish ye wadna speir," returned Aggie, after but a moment's pause.

"Aggie," said Cosmo, "gien ye tell me

it's nane o' my business, I winna speir again."

"Ye're 'maist ower guid to me, Cosmo, efter the w'y I behaved to ye last nicht!" she answered, with a tremble in her voice.

"Dinna think o' that again, Aggie. To me it's jist as gien it had never been. My hert's the same to ye as afore—an' justly. I believe I un'erstan' ye whiles 'maist as weel as ye du yersel'."

"I houp whiles ye un'erstan' me better," answered Agnes. "Sair I m'urn the shaidow o' that lee ever crossed my min'."

"It was but a shaidow!" said Cosmo.

"But what wad ye be thinkin' noo o' yersel', gien it had been you 'at sae near —na, I winna nibble at the trowth ony mair—gien it had been you, I wull say't, 'at leed that lee—sic an' sae as it was?"

"I ken what I wad *say to* mysel'," answered Cosmo. "I wad say 'at wi' God's help I was the less likly ever to tell a lee again. For, ye see, I wad better

un'erstan' hoo a temptation may come upo' a body a' at ance, ohn gien im time to reflec'. Sae, I wad tell mysel', my responsibility was noo the greater."

"I thank ye, Cosmo," returned Aggie humbly, and was silent.

"But," resumed Cosmo, "ye haena tellt me yet it's nane o' my business what was in Grizzie's pock last nicht."

"Na, I cudna tell ye that, 'cause it wadna be true. It is yer business."

"What was i' the pock than?"

"Weel, Cosmo, ye pit me in a great diffeeclety; for though I never said to Grizzie I wadna tell, I made nae objections—though at the time I didna like it—whan she tellt me what she was gaein' to du; an' sae I canna help fearin' it may be fause to her to tell ye. Besides, I hae latten 't gang sae lang ohn said a word! The guid auld body cud never jaloose I wad turn upo' her noo!"

"Ye're awfu' mysterrious, Aggie!" said Cosmo. "Troth, ye mak me 'at I 'maist daurna think! What can 't be 'at 's been gaein' on sae lang, an' hasna

been tellt me? Hae I a richt to ken or hae I no?"

"Ye *hae* a richt to ken, or I wadna tell ye yet," answered Agnes. "Frae the first o' 't I was terrifeed to think what ye wad say til't! But ye see, what was there left? You, an' the laird, an' my father, a' laid up thegither! heaps o' things wantit! the meal dune! an' life depen'in' upo' mait an' drink! I pit it to ye, Cosmo: *cud* we sit still an' lat oor ain three men dee o' cauld want?"

As she spoke, shadowy horror was deepening to monster presence; the incredible was gradually assuming shape and fact; the hair of Cosmo's head seemed about to rise. He answered nothing, asked no more, but sat waiting the worst.

"Ye maunna be ower hard upo' Grizzie an' me, Cosmo," Agnes resumed. "It wasna for oorsel's we wad hae dune sic a thing, an' maybe there was nane but them we did it for 'at we wad hae been able to du't for. But I hae no richt to say *we*. Blame, gien there be ony, I hae my share

o'; but praise, gien there be ony, she has't a'; for, whan the warst cam to the warst, or raither 'at the warst michtna come to the warst, she tuik the meal-pock an' gaed oot wi' 't."

Here Agnes gave a howl like a hurt child, and fell a weeping bitterly.

"Good God!" cried Cosmo, and for some moments was dumb. "Lassie!" he said at length, in a voice that came from somewhere he did not know, "didna ye ken i' yer ain sowl we wad raither hae dee'd?"

"There 't is! That's jist what for Grizzie wadna hae ye tellt!—But dinna think she gaed ony gait whaur she wad be kent," sobbed Agnes, "or appeart to ony to be ither than a puir auld body gaein' aboot for hersel'. Dinna think aither 'at ever she tellt a lee, or said a word to gar fowk peety her. She had aye afore her the possibeelity o' bein' ca'd til accoont some day. But eh! gien 't war her an' no me, ye wad be hearkenin' til anither mak o' a justification! Ae thing ye may be sure o'—there's no ane in a' the country-side a hair the wiser."

"What differ maks that?" cried Cosmo. "Fac' 's fac'!"

"Hoot, Cosmo!" said Agnes, with a revival of the old authority, "ye're takin' the thing efter a fashion oonworthy o' a philosopher—no to say a Christyan. Ye tak it as gien there was shame intil't! An' gien there bena shame, I daur ye to say there can be disgrace! Come to that wi' 't, an' hoo was the Lord o' a' himsel' supportit whan he gaed aboot cleanin' oot the warl'? Wasna it the women 'at gaed wi' 'im 'at providit a'thing?"

"Trowth; but that was verra different! They a' kenned him, they a' lo'ed him—kenned he was duin' what gowd cudna pey for; kenned he was workin' himsel' to deith for them an' their fowk—was earnin' the haill warl', o' the whilk they themsel's war the arles (*earnest*). Or gien no freely sae muckle as that, they kenned at least 'at he was duin' as did never man afore, an' their ain lugs tauld them he spak as never man spak. Forby, there was nae beggin' intil 't; he never askit them for onything."—Here Aggie

shook her head in unbelief, but Cosmo went on.—"An' thae women, some o' them onygait, war rich, an' prood to du what they did for the best an' grandest o' men. But what hae we dune for the warl' 'at we sud daur luik til 't to come 'atween 's an' meesery!"

"For that maitter, Cosmo," returned Agnes, still gathering courage now the weight of her secret was off her, "arena we a' brithers an' sisters? A'body's breethers an' sisters wi' a'body, an' it's but a kin' o' a some mean pride 'at wadna be obligat to yer ain fowk, efter ye hae dune yer best. Cosmo! ilka han'fu' o' meal gi'en i' this or ony hoose by them 'at wadna in lik need accep' the same, is an affront frae brither to brither. Them 'at wadna tak, I say, has no richt to gie."

"But naebody kent the trowth o' whaur their meal was gangin'! They thoucht they war giein' 't til a puir auld wife, whan they war in fac' giein' 't to men wi' a grit hoose ower their heids. It's a disgrace, an' hard to beir, Aggie!"

"'Deed the thing 's hard upo' 's a'—

that's no to be contradickit! But whaur the disgrace o' 't is, that I wull not condescen' to see. Men in a muckle hoose! Twa o' them auld, an' a' three ailin' an' i' their beds no fit to muv! An' div ye think there was ane o' them 'at gied o' her meal to Grizzie, 'at wad hae gi'en less—though what less nor the han'fu' o' meal, which was a' she ever soucht or got, wad be ill to imaigine—wad hae gi'en less, I say, had she kent it was for the life o' auld Glenwarlock—a name respeckit, an' mair nor respeckit, whaurever it was h'ard?—or for the life o' the yoong laird, vroucht to deith wi' labourer's wark, an' syne 'maist smoored i' storm? —or for auld Jeames Gracie, 'at 's led a God-fearin' life till 'maist ower auld to live ony langer? I say naething aboot Grizzie an' me, wha cud aye tak care o' oorsel's but for the three dowie men we had to luik efter. We did oor best, but whan a' oor bit hainin's (*savings*) was efter the lave, an' we cudna win awa' oorsel's to win mair, what was we to du? Gien ony ane o' you three cud hae dune

for the lave, we wad hae been awa' an' sen'in hame."

"Ye tell me, Aggie," said Cosmo, as in a painful dream, through which flashed lovely lights, "'at you an' Grizzie waured a' yer ain siller upo' 's, an' syne gaed oot an' beggit for 's?"

"Grizzie did—an' 'deed there's no anither word for 't—nor was there ae thing ither to be dune." Aggie drew herself up, and went on with solemnity. "Div ye think, Cosmo, whaur heid or hert or fit or han' cud du a stroke to haud trible frae you or the laird, Grizzie or mysel' wad be to seek that day? I beg o' yer grace ye winna lay to oor chairge what we war driven til. As Grizzie says, we was jist at ane mair wi' desperation."

Cosmo's heart was full. He dared not speak, but approaching Agnes with reverence, and taking her hand, he looked her in the face with eyes full of tears. She had been pale as sun-browned could be, but now she grew red as a misty dawn. Her eyes fell, and she began to pull at

the hem of her apron. Grizzie's step was on the stair, and Cosmo, not quite prepared to meet her yet, walked out.

He found the morning neither so black nor so cold as he had imagined it. He went into the garden, to the nook between the two blocks, there sat down, and tried to think. The sun was not far above the horizon, and he was in the cold shade of the kitchen tower, but he sat there motionless and felt no chill. The sun came southward, looked round the corner, and brought with him a lovely fresh day. The leaves were struggling out, and the birds had begun to sing. Ah! what a day were here, had the hopes of the boy been still swelling in the bosom of the man! But the decree had gone forth! no doubt remained! no refuge of uncertainty was left! The house must follow the land! Castle Warlock and their last foothold of soil must go! wrong must not sustain ruin! Were those divine women to spend money, thought, and labour, to endure privation, care, and weariness, that he and his father might

hold what they no longer had any right to hold? Or, if beggars, were they to hide themselves in the lower depth of begging by proxy—living in their grim stronghold upon unacknowledged charity, as their ancestors on plunder? He durst not tell the laird his discovery until he had taken at least the first step towards putting an end to the whole falsehood. Delay of due action was of all things what Cosmo shrunk from the most; and as the loss mainly affected him, the yielding of the castle must primarily be his deed and not his father's. He rose at once to do it.

The same moment the incubus of Grizzie's meal-pock was lifted from his bosom. The shame was, if shame was any, that they should have been living in such a house while the thing was done. When the house was sold, let people say what they would! In proportion as a man cares to do what he ought, he ceases to care how he may be judged; for why should a true man heed judgment, just or unjust?

"If there be any stain upon us," he said to himself, "God will see that we have the chance of wiping it out!"

With that he got over gate and wall, and took his way along Grizzie's path.

But while he was thinking in the garden, Grizzie, who had learned from Aggie that her secret was such no more, was going about her affairs in dire distress, for she feared she had offended the young laird beyond atonement. In heart-devouring anxiety she kept going every minute to the door, to see if he was not coming in to his breakfast; but the first she spied of him was his back as he leaped from the top of the wall. She ran after him to the gate.

"Sir, sir!" she cried, "come back; come back, an' I'll gang doon upo' baith my auld k-nees to beg yer pardon. I wull, sir! I wull!"

Cosmo turned the moment he heard her, and went back.

When he reached the wall, over the top of the gate he saw Grizzie already on her knees upon the round paving stones

of the yard, stretching up her old hands to meet his appearance, as if he were some heavenly messenger just descended, whose wrath she deprecated. He jumped over wall and gate, ran to her, put his arms round her, and lifted her to her feet, saying,

"Grizzie, wuman, what are ye aboot! Bless ye, Grizzie, I wad 'maist as sune strive wi' my ain mither whaur she shines i' glory as wi' you!"

Grizzie's face began to work like that of a child in an agony between pride and tears, just ere he breaks into a loud cry. She gripped his arm hard with both hands, and after a few moments of struggle faltered out, gathering composure as she proceeded,

"Cosmo, ye're like an angel o' God to a' 'at has to du wi' ye! Eh, sic an accoont o' ye as I'll hae to gie to the mither o' ye whan I win to see her! For surely they'll lat me see her, though they may weel no think me guid eneuch to bide wi' her up there, for as lang as we was thegither doon here! But for

trowth's sake ae thing I maun say, sir: —gien I hadna dune as I did du, I div not see hoo we cud hae won throuw the winter."

"Grizzie," said Cosmo, "I ken ye did a' for the best, an' maybe it was the best. The day may come, Grizzie, whan you and me 'ill gang thegither to ca' upo' them 'at pat the meal i' yer pock, an' return them thanks for the kin'ness."

"Eh, na, sir! That wad never du! What for sud they ken onything aboot it! They war kin' nae doobt, but no to you or me, or to onybody in partic'lar. They gae to me jist as to ony unco beggar wife. It was to me they gae't, no to you. Lat it lie upo' me, sir, an' me du as I see fit."

"That canna be, Grizzie," replied Cosmo. "Ye're ane o' the faimily, ye ken, an' whatever ye du, I maun haud my face til."

"God bless ye, sir!" exclaimed Grizzie, and turned towards the house, entirely relieved and satisfied.

"But eh, sir," she cried, turning

again, "ye haena brocken yer fast the day!"

"I s' be back in a feow meenutes, an' mak a brakfast o' 't by or'nar'," answered Cosmo, as he hastened away up the hill.

CHAPTER XV.

IT IS NAUGHT, SAITH THE BUYER.

When Cosmo reached the gate of his lordship's *policy*, he found it closed, and although he both rang the bell and called lustily to the gate-keeper, no one appeared. He put a hand therefore on the top of the gate, and vaulted clean over it. But just as he lighted, who should come round a bend in the drive a few yards off, but lord Lick-my-loof himself, out for his morning-walk! His cantankerous temper would have been greatly irritated at mere sight of such treatment of his gate, but to see Cosmo thus make nothing of it—clearing it with as little respect as a lawyer would a quibble not his own—raised his displeasure to indignation and wrath, which were plainly to be read on his approaching countenance.

"I beg your pardon, my lord," said Cosmo; "I could make no one hear me, and therefore took the liberty of describing a parabola over your gate."

"A verra ill fashiont parabola in my judgment!" replied lord Lumbiggin. "For auld proprietors you Warlocks think ower little o' the richts o' property."

"If I had set my foot on the new paint, my lord, I should have been to blame; but I vaulted right over, scarcely touching more of the gate than if it had been opened to me."

"I'll hae an iron gate!"

"Not on my account, my lord, I hope; it would be a needless expense; I have come to ask you to put it in my power to leave Glenwarlock."

"Well?" returned his lordship, and waited.

"I find myself compelled at last," said Cosmo, not without a little tremor in his voice, which he did his best to still, "to offer you, as your lordship desired, the refusal of what remains of my father's property."

"House and all?"

"Everything except the furniture."

"Which I do not want."

A silence followed.

"May I ask if you are prepared to mention any sum?—or will you call on my father when you have made up your mind?" said Cosmo.

"I will give you two hundred pounds for the lot."

"Two hundred pounds!" repeated Cosmo, who had certainly not expected a large offer, but was nevertheless taken aback. "Why, my lord, the bare material is worth more than that!"

"No. I might as well blast it fresh from the quarry. I know the sort of thing those walls are! Vitrified with age, by George! Anyhow, I don't want to build. Neither is the place as it stands of the smallest use to me. I should but let it crumble!"

Cosmo's dream rose yet again in his mind's eye; but it was no more with pain; for if the loved walls must pass from their possession, what better could they desire!"

"The sum you mention, my lord," he said, "would scarcely, after paying everything, take us to another place!"

"That *I* should see to! It must be entered as a condition of purchase! You have my offer; take it or leave it. You'll not get half as much if you come to the hammer. It's worth nothing to anybody else, bedded in my property."

"There's the croft too!" said Cosmo.

"That of course. If you decline my offer, I will wait the auction."

Cosmo's heart sank afresh. He dared not part with the place off hand on such terms! His power of action seemed for the moment exhausted; he could no more even spare his father.

"I must speak to the laird," he said. "I doubt if he will accept your offer."

"As he pleases. I do not promise to let it stand over."

"I must run the risk," answered Cosmo. "Will you allow me to jump the gate?"

But his lordship had a key, and preferred opening it.

When Cosmo reached his father's room, he found him still in bed, and sitting down on the edge of it, he told him all—first to what straits they were reduced; then what Grizzie had been doing; next how his mind and heart and conscience had been exercised concerning the castle—how all his life the love of it had held him to the dust; and last he recounted his interview that morning with lord Lumbiggin, and said he could do no more without his father.

"I wadna wullin'ly be left oot o' yer troubles, my son, sae lang as I'm 'ithin reach o' them, an' I houp that'll no be i' this warl' only," said the old man cheerfully. "But ye did richt to come til a conclusion concernin' the castel yer lane; I wadna hae f'un' mysel' at leeberty to determine the fate o' what was sae muckle mair yours nor mine. But that sae far sattlet, I can deleeberate wi' ye anent the rest. But lea' me my lane a wee. There 's ane, as ye weel ken, wha 's nearer to ilk ane o' 's nor we are to ane anither: I maun speyk to him first—your Father

and my Father, in whom you and I are brothers."

Cosmo bowed in reverence, and withdrawing, went and sat with James Gracie in the room below.

After the space of half an hour, came the signal with which his father was in the habit of calling him when he used to sit in that room, and he hastened to him.

The laird held out his old hand.

"Come, my son," he said, "an' lat 's commune thegither like twa o' the heirs o' all things. It's unco easy for me to regaird wi' equaneemity the loss o' a hoose I was o' the p'int o' leavin' onygait for the hame o' a' hames, the dwallin' o' a' the loves, withoot the dim memory or foresicht o' which—I'm thinkin' they maun be aboot the same thing—we cud never hae lo'ed the auld place as we du, whaur ance I'm in, a'thing doon here maun dwin'le, ootworthied by reason o' the glory that excelleth—I dinna mean the glory o' pearls an' gowd, or even o' licht, but the glory o' love an' trowth.

Gien ever I've had onything to ca' an ambition, Cosmo, it 's been to hae my son ane o' the wise, wi' faith to believe what his father had learnt afore him, an' sae start the farther on upo' the narrow way. It 's been my ambition, I say, 'at my endeevours and my experrience sud sae far avail for my boy, as to start him to mak his ain endeevours an' gether his ain experrience a wee bit nearer to that perfection o' life efter the which oor divine natur groans an' cries even whan it kensna what it wants. An' the Lord be praist! he has h'ard my petition, an' grantit my request. I may weel say wi' Dawvid the son o' Jesse, 'at the prayers o' Cosmo Warlock are en'it. Blessed be his name 'at tells us we maun forsake a', an' tak up oor cross, an' follow him, lowsin' oor life 'at he may luik efter 't! For whaur wad he hae 's follow him but til his ain hame, to the verra boasom o' his God an' oor God, there to be ane wi' Love itsel' for evermore!"

Such a son as Cosmo could not listen to such a father saying such things, and

not drop the world as if it too were but a burnt-out cinder like the moon.

"When men desire great things, then is God ready to hear them," he said; "an' so I trust, father, he *has* grantit your prayers for me: I desire nothing but to fulfil my calling."

"Ye can pairt wi' the auld hoose ohn grutten than?"

"As easy, father, as wi' a piece whan I wasna hungry. I dinna daur houp it'll aye be sae; for ye ken the flesh lusteth again' the speerit as weel 's the speerit again' the flesh; but i' my present licht an' peace, I even rej'ice to pairt wi' the hoose as a victory upo' the speerit-han'. Wull I gang til 's lordship at ance an' accep' his offer? I'm ready."

"Du ye that, my son. I haena lang to live, an' the price, though sma', 's muckle siller, for it'll pey the last o' my debts, an' lat me dee an' you live a free man. Ye'll easy provide for yersel' an' Grizzie! For Jeames, he'll hae his share o' the siller in richt o' the craft, an' wi' Aggie he'll no want muckle mair i'

this warl'. For her, she'll be safe's an angel whaurever she gang. An' you, Cosmo, ye'll hae an abundant entrance ministered tu ye intil the kingdom o' oor Lord an' Saviour, an' be content wi' that. What but that gat the Lord himsel', an' wha daur luik for a better fate nor his! There was them 'at by faith subdued kingdoms, an' them 'at by faith war sawn asun'er: baith war martyrdoms. What God sen's, we s' tak."

"Ye'll tak the twa hun'er than for craft an' a', father?"

"Dinna ye ettle at a penny mair; he micht gang back upo' 't. Regaird it as his final offer."

Without a word more Cosmo rose and went—strong-hearted, not a thought pulling back from the sacrifice. There was even a pleasure in doing the thing just because in a lower mood it would have torn his heart: the spirit was glorying against the flesh. He felt somewhat as the young man would have felt had he given all to the poor and followed the master. The weight of the castle was

already off his heart. With the strength of a young giant he strode to meet the oppressor.

There stood his lordship at the gate where he had left him.

"I thought the old cock had more sense than the young one!" he said; "so I waited to protect my gate."

But he did not move to open it.

"My father accepts your lordship's offer," said Cosmo.

"When you left me," said lord Lumbiggin, speaking slowly and with emphasis, "I was on the point of adding another fifty to my offer, to make sure of getting rid of you, but as you are content——"

"We will take the two hundred, my lord," said Cosmo.

"Deil, but ye winna!" cried Lumbiggin. "I hae changed my min'. I'm gaein' to bide till the roup (*sale by auction*)."

"Good evening, then, my lord," said Cosmo, and turning left him grinning over the gate—but with an odd look, as if he were a little ashamed of himself,

thinking he had perhaps gone too far teasing the young fellow. For Cosmo, in such peace was his heart that he was not even angry with him.

As he went the hope awoke and began once again to whisper itself, that they might not be able to sell the place; that some other way would be provided; and that he would be allowed, if not to live, yet to die in it when his time came. Then up started conscience, jealously watchful lest hope should undermine submission, or weaken resolve. God *might* indeed intend they should not be driven from the house! but did he not keep Abraham in constant removal, not ever letting him own a foot of land, save so much as would hold his dead: their cave was the earnest of his promised possession; he held the land by his dead! And there was our Lord: he had not a place to lay his head —had to go out of doors to pray to his father in secret! Let God's will be done, modified no hair's-breadth by lack of faith or obedience or submission. Then would it be God's very own will that was

done, and not something composite, not something modified to the conquest of his unchildlike reluctancy! God's pure will done, he must rejoice equally whether it took or gave the castle!

Thus thinking he returned to his father.

The laird expressed no surprise at the result of his visit.

"He maks the verra wrath o' man praise 'im!" he said. "This 'll be to oor side."

That day there was not another allusion to the matter. They turned to their ordinary doings, and first of all Cosmo read his father a ballad he had written the night before. The old man found no fault with what most critics would have counted a great defect in Cosmo's literary faculty, namely, that his imagination could seldom or never find scope enough in this world by itself; to him the end of things never came; nothing that had an end was worth employing his art upon.

"Who would write *Finis* at the end of a chapter?" said Mr. Simon.

The poem erred in the over-development of an eternal symbol, but it falsified nothing of the meaning folded in it.

"*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*"

The miser lay on his lonely bed;
Life's candle was burning dim.
His heart in his iron chest was hid
Under heaps of gold and an iron lid;
And whether it were alive or dead,
It never troubled him.

Slowly out of his body he crept.
He said, "I am just the same!
"Only I want my heart in my breast;
"I will go and fetch it out of the chest."
Thorough the dark like a gloom he leapt—
He was dead, but had no shame!

He opened the lid—oh, hell and night!
Ghost-eyes could not see the gold;
Empty and swept! not a gleam was there!
His heart lay alone in the chest so bare!
Ghost-hands felt nothing—they had no might
To finger and clasp and hold!

But his heart he saw, and at it did clutch.
A heart, or a puff-ball of sin?
Eaten with moths, and fretted with rust,
He grasped a handful of dry-rotted dust!
He shrieked, as ghosts may, at the crumbling touch,
But hid it his breast within.

And some there are who can see him sit
Under the church apart,
Counting what seems to him rounds of gold,
Heap upon heap, on the dank death-mould:
Alas, poor ghost! how he lacks of wit!—
They breed in the dust of his heart!

Another miser has his chest,
And it hoards of wealth yet more;
Like ferrets his hands go in and out,
Burrowing, tossing the gold about;
And *his* heart too is out of his breast,
The cold heap's bloodless core!

Now wherein differ the ghost that sits
And counts ghost-coins all day,
And the man that clings with spirit prone
To that which could not be his own,
Till out of the world with nothing he flits,
But a heart all eaten away?

That same night Cosmo made up his mind to set out for the city the next morning on foot, begging his way thither if he must, to acquaint Mr. Burns with the straits they were in, and consult with him as to what he might best do to gain a livelihood for his household. As soon as his father had had his breakfast he would let him know his resolve, and if he were pretty well and did not object, would go at once. His spirits rose as he lay brood-

ing. What a happy thing it was that lord Lumbiggin had not accepted their offer! In their poor lodging in some noisy street, they would see in their mind's eye their strong silent castle waiting for them!

"Anyhow," said Cosmo, "such a castle we have! *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott!*"

One part of the discipline of some people seems to be that they shall never settle down or imagine themselves at home, until they are at home in very fact. "Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

To be lord of space, a man must be unbound from place. For a heart to be heir of all things, it must have no *things* inside it. The man must be like one who makes things, not one who puts them in his pocket. He must stand on the upper, not the lower side of them. He must be as the poet, not the collector of his editions. God, having made a sunset, lets it pass, and makes no second such. He has no picture-gallery, no library, no museum. I fancy that in heaven men

will be so busy being and growing, as to have no time to write or read.

How blessed would he be, Cosmo thought, in the great city with his father and Grizzie and his books—the only trouble that he could not be with his father all day! So much the happier would it be then to come home at night!

Thus imagining, he fell asleep, and dreamed that he had been going about the streets with a barrow of oranges all day trying to sell them. He had not sold even one, and was now returning home, his barrow piled heavy with the golden fruit, consoling himself that his father was fond of oranges, and might have as many as he pleased. But the barrow seemed to grow heavier and heavier as he wheeled it, and he sickened at the thought that his strength was failing him, and he would never get back to his father. Heavier and heavier it grew, until at last he could but barely force it along. At last he reached the door, and setting it down with a great sigh, proceeded to choose as many of the best oranges as he could

carry to his father. But the first he laid his hand on seemed frozen to the heap. It was a lump of gold! Another and another—every orange was a lump of solid gold! Then he said to himself, "My father is dead!" and woke in misery. Rising he went to his bedside, found him in a quiet sleep, lay down comforted, nor that night dreamed any more.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN OLD STORY.

Wise plans are perhaps just as seldom carried out as foolish ones. Cosmo's intent was the next morning frustrated.

He was roused before sunrise by his father's cough. After a bad fit of it, he lay weary and restless. In such case, no unfrequent one, Cosmo could almost invariably put him to sleep by reading to him; he therefore got one of the Border Tales, and began to read. It soon had the desired effect, which however did not last; in a little while he woke, and began to talk about the story. It was of a king's ship so disguising herself that a pirate took her for a merchantman, and was herself taken. Cosmo made some remark about the old captain.

"You needn't believe," said his father,

"all they told you about that uncle of ours. He was a rough enough sailor-fellow, no doubt, but I do not believe there was ground sufficient for calling him a pirate. He was nothing worse than a privateer, I fancy; God knows that may have been bad enough! I am nearly sure that for the most part of his sea-life he was owner and captain of an east-Indiaman, trading on his own account."

"You once told me an amusing story about an east-Indiaman and a frigate: was that his ship?"

"No, no; it was a cousin of your mother's was captain of that. I was thinking of the anecdote as you read."

"I should like much to hear it again. I shall ask you to tell it me sometime when you are able."

"You shall read it; I have got it among my Marion's papers. You will find in the bureau in the book-closet, in the pigeon-hole farthest to the left, a packet tied with red tape: bring it me, and I will find it for you."

Cosmo brought the packet. His father with trembling hand pulled out one of the papers and handed it to him, saying—

"It is the writing of a brother of your mother's, and seems to have formed part of a more extended narrative. The captain Macintosh who is the hero of the story, was a cousin of her mother's, and at the time of the event related must have been somewhat advanced in years, for he had taken again to the sea after losing a fortune in the attempt to establish a brewery on the island of St. Helena."

Cosmo unfolded the manuscript and read as follows.

"'An incident occurring on the voyage to India when my brother went out, exhibits Captain Macintosh's character *very practically*, and not a little to his professional credit. On a fine evening, some days after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, sailing with a light breeze and smooth water, a strange sail of large size, hove in sight, and apparently bearing down direct upon the "*Union*"—Captain Macintosh's ship; evidently a ship of

war, but showing *no colours*—a very suspicious fact. All English ships at that time trading to and from India, by admiralty rules, were obliged to carry armament, proportioned to their tonnage, and crew sufficient to man and work the guns carried.—The strange sail was *nearing* them, or "the big stranger," as the seamen immediately named her. My brother, many years afterwards, more than once told me, that the change, or rather the *transformation,* which Captain Macintosh *underwent,* was one of the most remarkable facts he had ever witnessed; more bordering on the *marvellous,* than any thing else. When he had carefully and deliberately viewed "the big stranger"—and deliberately laying down his glass, his eyes seemed to have catched *fire!* and his whole countenance lighted up: a new spirit seemed to possess him—while he preserved the utmost coolness: advancing deliberately to what is called the poop railing—and steadily looking forward,—"Boatswain! Pipe to quarters." Muster-roll called.—"Now, my men, we

shall *fight!*" "I *know* you will do it well! —Clear ship for action." I have certainly but my brother's word and judgment upon the fact, who had never been *under fire;* but his opinion was that no British ship of war could have been more *speedily*, or more completely cleared for action, both in rigging, decks, and guns—guns *double shotted* and run out into position. "The big stranger" was now *nearing*,—no ports opened, and no colours shewn—*all*, increased cause of suspicion that there was some ill intent in the wind—and it was very evident, from the *size* of "the big stranger"—nearly *thrice*—the size of the little "Union,"—that, one Broadside from the former, might send the latter at once to the bottom:—the whole crew, my brother related, were in the highest spirits, more as if preparing for a *dance*, than for work of life and death. Suddenly, the captain gives the command, —"Boarders,—Prepare to board!"—"Lower away—boarding Boats"—and no sooner said than done. The stranger was now at musket shot. It was worthy the

courage of a *Nelson* or a *Cochrane*, to think of *boarding* at such odds—a mere handful of men, to a full complement of a heavy Frigate's crew! The idea was altogether in keeping with the best naval tactics and skill. Foreseeing that one broadside from such an enemy would sink him—he must *anticipate* such a crisis. Boarding would at least divert the enemy from their *guns;* and he knew what British seamen could do, in clearing an enemy's decks! *There was* British spirit in those days. Let us hope it shall again appear, should the occasion arise. The captain himself was the first in the foremost Boarding Boat—and the first in the enemy's main chains, and to set his foot on the enemy's main deck! when a most magic-like scene saluted the *Boarders;* but did not *yet* allay suspicion:—not a single enemy on deck!—Here, a characteristic act of a British *tar*—the Union's Boatswain,—must not be omitted—an old man of war's man:—no sooner had his foot touched the *enemy's* deck—than *rushing aft*—(or towards the ship's

stern)—to the *wheel*,—the *only man on deck* being he at the wheel,—a big, lubberly looking man,—the Union's boatswain in less than a *moment* had his hands to the steersman's throat,—and with one *fell shove*, sent him spinning, heels over head—all the full length of the ship's quarter-deck, to land on the main-deck;—one may suppose rather *astonished!* The manly boatswain himself was the only man *hurt* in the affair—his boarding pistol, by some untoward accident, went off—its double shot running up his fore-arm, and lodging in the bones of his elbow. Amputation became necessary; and the dear old fellow soon afterwards died.—But what did all this *hullybaloo* come to? Breathe—and we shall hear! "The big stranger" turned out to be a large, heavy armed Portuguese Frigate! —actually the *war-ship solitary* of the Portuguese navy then afloat!—a fine specimen of Portuguese naval discipline, no doubt! not a *watch* even on deck!—They had seen immediately on seeing her, that the "Union" was *English*, and

a merchant ship—which a practised seaman's eye can do at once; and they had quietly gone to take their *siesta*, after their country's fashion,—Portugal, at that time, being one of Britain's allies, and not an enemy;—a grievous *disappointment* to the Crew of the "Union."'

"My uncle seems to have got excited over his tale," said Cosmo, "to judge by the number of words he has underlined!"

"He enters into the speerit o' the affair no ill for a minnister!" said the laird with a smile.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SMALL DISCOVERY.

When they had had a little talk over the story, the laird desired Cosmo to lay the bundle of papers again in the bureau. As he approached the closet to do so, the first beams of the rising sun were shining upon the door of it. The window through which they entered was a small one, and the mornings of the year in which they so fell were not many. When he opened the door, they shot straight to the back of the closet, lighting it with rare illumination. Even with the door wide open it was commonly so dusky that in it one book could hardly be distinguished from another. It was as if a sudden angel had entered a dungeon. When the door fell to behind him, as was its custom, the

place felt so dark that he seemed to have lost memory as well as sight, and not to know where he was. He propped it open, and proceeded to replace the packet. But the presence there of such a light was so strange, and it was such a thing actually to see what the dingy little closet, to him the treasure-chamber of the house, was like, that he stood for a moment gazing around the light-invaded recess, as if he had suddenly found himself in Aladdin's cave. Old to him beyond all memory, it looked new and wonderful; what had hitherto been scarcely known but to his hands, was now suddenly revealed in radiance to his eyes also. Gazing thus he saw that the bureau did not stand against a rough wall as he had imagined, but a foot or so from what seemed a lining of oak. He leaned over, and tapped it with his knuckles.

"There's a wainscot 'ahin' the desk, father," he said, re-entering the room, "an' it soon's how (*hollow*). I never noticed it afore."

"An inch 'atween timmer an' stane wad gar 't soon' how," answered the laird.

"I wad like to draw the desk oot a bit, an' hae a nearer luik. I canna weel win at it as 't is."

"Du as ye like, laddie. The hoose is mair yours nor mine.—But, noo ye hae putten 't i' my heid, I min' my mother sayin' there was ance a passage 'atween the twa tooers: could it hae been there, no? I aye thoucht it had been 'atween her room an' the drawin'-room. My father had it closed up, she said. That 'atween the kitchen an' the dinin'-room, whaur the rufe's fa'en in, I closed up mysel'. But gien prosperity ever return, it 'll be easy to open an' rufe again."

Cosmo stood gazing towards the closet from the bed-side.

"Surely it gangs far'er back nor the thickness o' the wa'!" he said, and going to the western window looked out of it, then turned again towards the closet.—"I canna think," he resumed, with something like annoyance, "hoo it cud be I never noticed that afore! A body wad

suppose I had nae heid for the un'erstan'-in' o' hoo things are putten' thegither! The closet rins richt intil what I thoucht was but a great blin' wa' 'atween the twa hooses! I took it for naething but a kin' o' a curtain-wa'!"

So saying he re-entered the closet, and proceeded to move the bureau—not an easy task, for it was large, and nearly filled the breadth of the closet. The sun had left the window before he got behind it.

"I wad sair like to brak throuw the buirds, father," he said, going again to the laird.

"Onything ye like, I tell ye, laddie! I'm growin' curious mysel', forby," he answered.

"I'm feart I mak ower muckle din for ye, father."

"Nae fear; nae fear! I haena a sair heid; the Lord be praist, that 's a thing I'm seldom triblet wi'. Gang an' get yer tules, an' gang at it, an' dinna spare. Ye'll mar nae mair nor ye'll sune men'."

Cosmo fetched his tool-basket, and set

to work. The partition was strong and sound, but with a centre-bit and a saw he soon made an opening large enough to creep through. As he worked, a cold air from within seemed to warn him off. There was no wall behind. When he entered, it felt like a cellar.

Groping with his hands he found it was no closet, but apparently a deserted passage. His feet told him the floor was of slate, and his hands that the walls were of rough stones, damp and cold. A little way on it took a sharp turn, then another, and then his hands came upon wood, and he felt the panels of a door. Feeling along its frame he found a lock, but the handle was gone. Too eager for delay or caution, he went back a little, and threw himself against the door. Lock and hinges yielded, the lock first, and it went sideways out before him. He followed staggering, came against something, and was brought up by falling half across a bed. He was in the guest-chamber, the gruesome centre of legend, the home of ghostly awe! Not yet had its shadows

forsaken it, for his every nerve thrilled. From his father's room to this, was an immediate transition from the homely to the eerie, from the place of familiar use and daily custom to a hollow in the far-away past, an ancient cave of time, full of withering history. Its windows were all to the north; it was lustreless, dank, and musty. For a moment he stood motionless, gazing about him. Wide awake, he had tumbled into a dream! He turned to see how he had got into it: there lay the door; there lay too the old screen; and there was the open passage! He lifted the door: the other side of it was covered with stamped leather like the wall, from which it had torn a great piece as it fell. He went back through passage and partition, rejoined his father, and in eager excitement told him what he had discovered.

"I h'ard the racket the door made," rejoined his father. "—I wadna won'er noo," he added, "gien we fan' a w'y throuw to the third tooer!"

"Eh, father!" said Cosmo with a

sigh, "what a comfort this door wad hae been! an' jist as we're like to lea' the hoose for ever, we come upo' 't!"

"But hoo weel we hae gotten on wantin' 't!" returned his father.

"What *could* hae made my gran'father close 't up?"

"Some fule ghost-story, I believe—aiblins the same Grannie tellt ye."

"I won'er my gran'mother never spak o' 't!"

"Maybe she was shy o' ony reference til 't."

"I daursay she believt it!"

"Weel, I daursay! I wadna won'er!"

"What for did ye ca' 't fule, father?"

"For thouchtlessness, I doobt. But wadna it be some fule to think to kep (*intercept*) a ghost by paperin', or leather-in', ower a door? Gien there be ony trowth i' sic tales, the ghaist gangs throuw a stane wa' jist as easy's the air. But surely o' a' fules a ghaist 'at hings aboot a place maun be the warst!"

"Maybe it's to haud awa' frae a waur. An' wadna it be a queer thing gien a

ghaist 'at had been a fule a' his life was to turn a wise man the minute he dee'd! An' forby that, michtna it be a pairt o' his punishment to hae to see hoo things gaed on efter he was awa'? What cud be sairer, for instance, upon a miser, nor to see his heir gang scatterin' what he gaed to the deevil getherin'?"

"'Deed ye 're richt eneuch there, my son!" answered the old man. "—An' troth, it's aye siller—or banes—'at fesses them back! I can weel un'erstan' their reluctance to tak a last leave o' the siller they ca'd their ain; but for the banes—eh, but I'll be pleased to be rid o' mine! *I* s' no come back to see what 's come o' mine!"

"But whaur banes are concernt, there's aye been fause play," suggested Cosmo.

"Think ye it's the hunger for revenge 'at winna lat them gang?"

"Maybe: maist o' the ghost-stories o' that kin' bring the murderer an' justice acquant. But the human bein' wad seem in a' ages to hae had a great dislike to the thocht o' his banes lyin' aboot. I

hae h'ard my gran'mother say the warst servan'-lass was aye cleanly twa days o' her time—the day she cam an' the day she gaed."

"Ye hae thoucht mair aboot it nor me, laddie! But that wadna haud wi' the Parsees, I doobt, wha lay their deid to be devoored by the birds o' the air."

"They swipe up their banes at the last, hooever. An' though the livin' expose the deid, the deid mayna like it."

"I daursay. An' I grant it's weel to lea' as little dirt as possible 'ahin' ye, an' tak nane wi' ye. For my ain pairt I wad fain gang clean an' lea' clean!"

"Gien onybody gang clean an' lea' clean, father, ye wull."

"I luik to the Lord, my son.—But," he resumed after a pause, "gien he hae't in his min' to haud 's i' this place, yon passage 'ill be a great convainience."

"Ye dinna think it wad be worth while openin' 't up direc'ly?"

"I wad bide for the warmer weather. I think the room 's jist some caller the noo by rizzon o' 't."

"I'll close 't up at ance," said Cosmo.

In a few minutes he had screwed a box-lid over the hole in the partition.

"An' noo," he said, "I'll gang an' set up the door o' the ither side."

Before he went however, he told his father what he had been thinking of doing, and said, if he approved of it, and were well enough to be left, he should like to go the next day.

"It 's no an ill idea," said the laird. "We'll see whan the morn comes. There's a nicht 'atween; an' wha kens what may come ony nicht!"

When Cosmo entered the guest-chamber from the other side, he stood and stared as of old: the gaping door where had seemed solid wall but added to the ancient terror of the place. But he gathered himself, and proceeded to examine the hinges. They were broken; the half of each remained fast to the door-post, the other half to the door. For the present he must be content to prop it up. Having done so, he threw one of the windows wide open, and left

it open, for the room was much in want of fresh air.

His father continuing better through the day, he went to bed early, in the hope of starting at sunrise.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A GREATER DISCOVERY.

In the middle of the night he was wakened by a loud noise. He had been too sound asleep to know what it was like; he only knew it had waked him. He sprang out of bed, found to his relief his father undisturbed, and stood for a monent wondering. All at once it came into his thought that he had left the window of the guest-room open; the wind had risen, and was now almost a gale; something must have been blown down! Taking his candle, he groped his way down the stair, out through the kitchen, and along to the great door.

As he neared the top of the second stair and approached the room, the old faint horror suddenly seized him, the

same as ever. He stood still. Must he not be dreaming? Could he be there actually—in the middle of the night? With an effort he dismissed the folly and entered the room, if not with indifference yet with composure. There was just light enough to see the curtains of the terrible bed waving wide in the torrent of wind that followed the opening of the door. He shut the window, lighted his candle, and then saw that the door of the new-found passage was again flat on the floor, with the screen he had placed against it. But he was puzzled to think how the wind could have got a hold of it. He placed the candle beside it, and proceeded once more to raise it. But casting his eyes up as he did so, he saw something which made him lay it down again.

The candle on the floor shone half-way into the passage, lighting a portion of the wall on the left, just within the doorway, and showing the rough gray stones of it. Something about these stones had drawn his attention. He took the

candle, examined them, turned away, left the room, and went up to the one over it. There he took from his secretary the unintelligible drawing, and with beating heart unfolded it. Certainly its lines did more or less correspond with the shapes of those stones!—but he must bring them face to face!

Down the stair he went again, every remnant of childish terror gone. He went to the passage, and stood there, the candle in one hand, the paper in the other, his eyes going and coming steadily between the paper and the wall. The lines on the paper, and the joints of the stones over a space of about two yards square, corresponded.

But in comparing the two, another thing had caught his eye: on one of the stones, remarkable neither by position, for it was towards one side of the figure, nor by shape, for it was trapezoidal, he spied what seemed a rude drawing; but as it was higher than his head, and the candle cast up shadows from the irregular surfaces of the stones, he could not with

certainty distinguish it. He got a chair, therefore, and standing upon it, saw plainly enough, scratched upon the stone, which was of rough slate, a horse such as a child might have drawn. Beneath it, easily legible to one who knew them so well, were the lines, written apparently with an iron point,

> catch your Nag, and pull his Tail
> in his hind Hele ca a Nail
> rug his Lugs from one another
> stand up and call the King your Brother

How were these directions to be followed with such a horse as the one on the flat before him? That would be scanned! The solution lay probably inside the wall! He would set the door up again, and go back to bed.

For he was alarmed at the turmoil these signs caused in him. He dreaded *possession* by any spirit but the one. Whatever he did he must do calmly. To bed he went, and having prayed God to watch him, lest in the giddiness of hope some earthy fume should rise between him and the light eternal, gave himself up to sleep.

For the man in whom any hope dims the heavenly presence and weakens his mastery of himself, is on the bypath across the meadow to the castle of Giant Despair.

But in the morning he rose early, and went to look at the stone. It was so close jointed with its neighbours that not one of his tools could get in between. He got an old breakfast-knife from Grizzie; but the mortar was so hard he could not with that make any impression upon it. He must find something fitter! The job was likely to be a difficult one!

He took his porridge to his father's bedside, and as they were eating their breakfast together, described to him the discovery he had made. The laird listened with the light of a smile rather than the smile itself, and when he had ended made him no answer: Cosmo saw by the scarce perceptible motion of his lips that he was praying.

"I wuss I cud help ye, laddie," he said at length.

"There isna room for mair nor ane at

a time, father," answered Cosmo. "Ye can be Moses prayin', an' I'll be Joshua fechtin'."

"Prayin' again' waur enemies nor ever Joshua warstled wi'," returned his father; "for even in this my auld age, the mere thoucht o' the aff-liftin' o' the gravestane o' my debt fleys (*frightens*) me. I wadna hae my sowl tum'led aboot like a bledder, an' its auld wings tak to lang, flaggin', wallopin' strokes i' the ower thin aether o' joy. I thank my God for the weichts he has laid upo' me up to the noo. May he protec' 's baith frae his ain gifts! Wi'oot him they're ten times waur nor ony wiles o' the deevil's ain. But I'll pray, Cosmo; I'll pray."

The real might of temptation is in the lower and seemingly nearer loveliness as against the higher and seemingly farther.

Cosmo betook himself to the yard, and having on the grindstone fashioned a screw-driver to his purpose, went back to his work, and got on better. The stone was both well fitted and well fixed, but

after about three hours' work his tool went suddenly through, and it was then easy to knock away from the edges gained. As soon as he had cleared one side of the stone he made an attempt to prize it out, but he had to clear another side first. It then yielded so far that he got a hold with his fingers, and soon had it out. It disclosed a cavity in the wall, but there was not light enough to see into it, and he went to get a candle.

Now Grizzie had a curious dislike to any admission of the poverty of the house even to those most familiar with it, and having but one exiguous candle-end left, was as unwilling to confess it her last as to yield it.

"Them 'at burns daylicht, sune they 'll hae nae licht!" she said. "What wad ye want wi' a can'le? I'll haud a fir-can'le to ye, gien ye like."

"Grizzie," repeated Cosmo, a little impatient, "I want a can'le."

She went grumbling, and brought him her one miserable end.

"Hoot, Grizzie!" he expostulated,

"dinna be sae near. Ye wadna gien ye kenned what I was aboot."

"Eh! what are ye aboot, sir?"

"I'm no gaein' to tell ye yet. *Ye* maun hae patience, an' *I* maun hae a can'le."

"Ye maun tak what ye can get."

"Grizzie, I'm in earnest."

"'Deed an' in trowth sae am I! Ye s' hae nae mair nor that—no gien it was to scrape the girnel—an' that 's dune a'ready."

"Grizzie, I'm feart ye'll anger me."

"Ye s' get nae mair!"

Cosmo burst out laughing.

"Grizzie, I dinna believe ye hae an inch mair can'le i' the hoose!"

"It needs na a warlock to tell me that! Gien I had it, what for sudna ye hae 't 'at has the best richt?"

Cosmo took his candle, and was as chary over it as Grizzie herself could have been.

CHAPTER XIX.

A GREAT DISCOVERY.

THE instant the rays of the candle-end were thrown into the cavity, he saw what made him, expectant as he was, utter a cry. Through the hole he had made he looked into a miniature stable. Before him was a stall, and a horse standing in it with its tail towards him. He put in his hand and felt it over. It had a skin with hair, dry and comfortable. He would fain have got it out at once, but, alas, there was not room! Three or four stones more must be removed ere it could pass from the cavern where, like the horses of Charlemagne, it had been waiting its hour so many years.

He blew out his precious candle-end, and again set to work—with a will and

what light the day afforded. Nor was the task much easier for the removal of the slab: each of the stones was more or less imbedded in the solid bulk of the wall.

When their poor dinner-time came, he was tired as well as hungry. He locked the door of the room, and having just told his father what he had found, left him and made haste over his meal, for night was coming, and no candle. Back to his labour he went; and struck and heaved "till the toil-drops fell from his brows like rain." At last he laid hold of the horse by its hind legs, and would have drawn it from the stall. A little way it came, and would come no farther. He had to light the candle. Peeping then into the stall he spied a chain attached halter-wise to its head and stretched tight. He dared not use force to break it, and clearly it had been fastened before the stall was completed. Especially now he needed light, but he could only afford to let his candle burn for an instant's inspection at a time.

He proceeded nevertheless, induced by the appearance of one of the two stones forming the sides of the stall, to attempt its removal in the dark, feeling for the spot where he must set the one end of his chisel before he struck the other with his hammer. For a long time he seemed to make no progress, but the stone at last yielded a hair's-breadth, and the minute after, he had it out. Then for the last time he lighted his candle: there was just enough of it to show him how the chain was fastened. With a pair of pincers he detached it, and lifted out the horse.

He must carry it straight to his father, but first, unwilling to take it through the kitchen, he went to his room without it, and reopening the hole in the closet, passed through, and returning with the horse in his arms, placed it on a chair beside him, where he was seated by the fire. The laird looked it all over ere he said a word, and Cosmo thought he delayed from a desire to still his son's impatience. But at length he spoke.

"I' the name o' God, the gi'er o' ilka

guid an' perfec' gift, see, Cosmo," he said, "gien ye can win at the entrails o' the animal. It canna be fu' o' men like the Trojan horse, or they maun be enchantit sma', like the deevils in Paradise Lost whan they war ower mony for the cooncil-ha' o' Pandemonium; but it may weel be 'at what 's intil 't may cairry a heap waur danger to you an' me nor ony nummer o' airmit men or hornit deevils!"

"We'll sune see!" answered Cosmo, taking the horse on his knees. "Ye min' the rime, father?"

"No sae weel 's the twenty-third psalm," returned the laird with a smile.

"The first line o' 't rins, 'Catch yer naig, an' pu' his tail.' Wi' muckle diffeeclety, we hae catcht oor naig, an' noo for the tail o' 'im!—There! that's dune!—though there's little to shaw for 't. The neist line is—'In his hin' heel caw a nail:' we s' turn up his fower feet thegither, 'cause they're co-inoperant!—An' noo lat 's mak the discovery o' the proper spot for the cawin' o' the said nail."

Cosmo had now the horse lying on its back upon his knees. Its shoes were large, and the hole where a nail was missing had not long to be sought. He took a fine bradawl, and pushed it gently into the hoof. A loud whirring noise followed, but without visible result.

"The next line," said Cosmo, "is—'Rug his lugs frae ane anither.'—Noo, father, God be wi' 's! an' gien it please him we be disapp'intit, may we hae grace to beir 't as he wad hae 's beir 't."

"I pray the same," said the laird.

Cosmo set the horse upright again, and pulled its two ears in opposite directions. A line began to appear down the hairy back, which opened slowly and reluctantly, as if during the long years the sides of the cleft had been growing together. Scarcely had it opened half an inch when he sprang from his seat. The laird looked after him with a gentle surprise. But he had not jumped up either to rush from the room, or to execute a frantic dance with the horse for a partner.

The largest window of the room looked

westward into the court, and at this season of the year the descending sun looked straight in at that window. He was looking in now, and made a glowing pool of light in the middle of the floor. Beside this pool Cosmo dropped with the horse in his arms like a child with his toy, and pulled lustily at its ears. Into the pool began to tumble a small cataract of shredded rainbows, flashing all the colours visible to human eye—and more. As he slowly turned the horse upside down, the flow increased, then gradually diminished, and presently ceased in a few stray drops. He shook the horse, put in his hand and searched it, threw one or two drops more after the rest, then flung it aside.

The stream that flowed from it had not spread and sunk and vanished. Based and heaped it lay where it fell, a silent, motionless tempest of conflicting yet utterly harmonious hues, with a foamy spray of spiky flashes, and spots that ate into the eyes with their fierce colour. In every direction shot from it blinding rays. It was a cairn of diamonds, of all the

shapes into which diamonds are fashioned. Ah, the splendrous show of deep-hued burning, flashing, stinging light! the heaviest of its colours borne light as those of a foam-bubble on the strength of its triumphing radiance. There pulsed the mystical glowing red—heart and lord of colour; there the jubilant yellow—light crowned to ethereal gold; there the wide-eyed, spirit blue—the truth unfathomable; there the green that haunts the brain—storeland of Nature's boundless secrets!—all together striving yet atoning, fighting and fleeing and following, parting and blending, an illimitable play of infinite force and endlessly delicate gradation. All the gems were there—sapphires, emeralds, and rubies; but they were scarce to be noted in the glorious mass of ever new-born, ever dying colour that gushed from the fountains of the light-dividing diamonds.

Cosmo rose, and returning to his father, sat down beside him. For a few moments they regarded in silence the stony mound, smoking, like an altar of sacrifice, with

light and colour. The eyes of the old man as he gazed seemed at once to sparkle with pleasure and quail with some shadowy fear. Without turning his face he said at last,

"Cosmo, are they what they luik?"

"What luik they, father?" asked Cosmo.

"Bonny bits o' glaiss they luik," answered the old man. "But," he went on, "I canna but believe them something better—they come til 's in sic a time o' need. But be they this or be they that, the Lord's wull be dune—noo an' for ever mair—be it, I say, what it like!"

"I wuss it, father!" responded Cosmo. "But I ken something aboot sic-like things, bein' sae muckle in Mr. Burns's shop, an' haudin' a heap o' conference wi' 'im; an' I tell ye, sir, they're di'mon's an' feow ither. But the nummer o' thoosan' poun' they maun be worth gien they be worth a saxpence, I daurna guiss!"

"They 'll be eneuch to pey oor debts, ye think, Cosmo?"

"Ay, mony a hun'er times ower. They're maistly a guid size, an' no a feow o' them lairge."

"Cosmo, we're ower lang ohn thankit! Come, my son; gang doon upo' yer knees, an' lat's tell the Lord what he kens a'ready."

Cosmo obeyed, and knelt at his father's knee. His father laid his hand on his head, that so they might the better pray in one, and said,

"Lord, although there's naething a man can tak intil his han' can ever be his ain, no bein' o' his natur made i' thy image, yet, O Lord, the thing 'at's thine, made by thee efter thy holy wull an' pleesur, man may touch an' no be defiled. Yea, he may tak pleesur i' the same, an' it no hurt 'im, sae lang as he han'les 't whaur it lies, i' the how o' thy han', no grippin' at it, no ca'in' 't his ain, an' like a rouch bairn seekin' to snap it awa' to hae his fule wull o' 't. They're bonny stanes, O Lord, an' fu' o' licht: forbid at their beaouty an' licht sud breed oogliness an' darkness i' the hert o' Cosmo an' me. O

God, raither nor it sud raise in us ae thoucht or ae feelin' thoo wadna wullin'ly see, we pray thee tak again the gift. An' gien i' thy mercy, for it's a' mercy wi' thee, it turn oot efter a' 'at they're no stanes o' thy makin', but the produc' o' airt an' man's device, we 'll lay them a' thegither, an' haud them safe, an' luik upo' them frae time to time as a token o' what thoo wadst glaidly hae dune for 's gien we had been to be trustit wi' sae muckle for the safity an' clean-throuwness o' oor sowls ;—ay, an' a better token o' what ae day thoo wilt du for us, whan we're ayont drawin' ill oot o' thy guid—whan for braiss thoo wilt bring gowd, an' for iron silver. O my God, latna the sunshiny Mammon creep intil my Cosmo's hert an' mak a' mirk; latna the licht that is in him turn to darkness. God hae mercy on his bairns, an' no lat the playocks tak their e'en frae the han' 'at gies them! May the licht noo streamin' frae the hert o' thae bonny stanes be the bodily presence o' thy speerit, as ance was the doo descendin' upo' the maister,

an' the buss 'at burned wi' fire an' wasna conshumet. Thoo art the father o' lichts, an' a' licht is thine: gar oor herts burn like thae stanes—a' licht an' nae reek! An' gien ony o' them in auld time cam in by a wrang door, grant ilk ane to gang oot by a richt ane. Thy wull be dune, which is the purifyin' fire o' a' thing, an' a' sowl! Amen."

He ceased and was silent, praying still. Nor did Cosmo yet rise from his knees. The new room about his heart was filled with fear, lest, no longer spurred by equal sense of need, he should lose his hold on the garment of the guiding God. Alas! how is it with our hearts? In trouble they cry and in joy forget! think it hard that God should let them cry so long, and when he has answered abundantly, turn away as if they needed him no more!

Cosmo rose at length from his knees, and looked his father in the face with wet eyes.

"Oh, father!" he said, "the fear an' oppression o' ages are gane like a clood swallowed up o' space. Father, fain wad I

believe a' human ills doomed to vainish at last i' the licht eternal o' the love-burnin' God!"

"He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," rejoined the laird; and a pause followed.

"An' noo, father, what 's neist to be dune?" resumed Cosmo, turning his eyes again to the heap of jewels.

The sunrays had left them, and they lay cold and almost colourless, but icy-bright. It was not dark enough yet for some of them to shine with the light they had just gathered after long-during dark.

"It pleases me, father," Cosmo went on, "to see nane o' them set. It pruves naething, but maks 't a wheen mair likly he got them first han'. Eh, the queer things! sae hard, an' yet 'maist bodiless! naething but skinfu's o' licht! blobs o' glory!"

"Hooever they war gotten," rejoined the laird, "the only w'y o' cleansin' them, sae be they want cleansin', is to put them to their holiest use."

"An' what ca' ye that, father?"

"Whatever enables a man to be a neebour; whatever ten's o' twa to mak ane. A true life 's the sairest bash to Sawtan. To gie yer siller to ither fowk to spread is to jink the wark laid oot for yersel'.—But we maunna ley them lyin' there. The rottans micht come an' cairry aff some o' them; they're thievin' craturs. Ye maun beery yer deid again—for deid they are as yet. They maun lie i' the mirk, like human sowls no yet perswaudit to the deeds o' licht."

"I think, wi' yer leave, sir," said Cosmo, "I'll set oot the morn, an' gang straucht to Mr. Burns—but eh, sic a different eeran' as I'll hae! He maun put 's i' the w'y o' turnin' the bonny things til accoont. They canna lie to be luikit at!"

"Better ye canna du, my son," answered the laird.

Cosmo gathered the gems again into the horse, liting them in double handfuls. But peeping first into the hollow of the animal to make sure he had found all its

content, he caught sight of a bit of paper stuck in a corner. It was a five-hundred-pound-note. It would have been riches an hour ago—now it was only a convenience—and not much of that.

"It 's queer to think," said Cosmo, "'at wi' a' this siller, I maun tramp it the morn like ony caird! There's nane i' Muir o' Warlock to change 't—an' wad I gang til 'im gien there was ony?"

His father rejoined with the words of St. Paul:

"'Noo I say, 'at the heir, sae lang 's he 's but a bairn, differeth naething frae a servan', though he be lord o' a'.'—Eh, Cosmo," he added, "but the word admits o' mony an illustration!"

Having given the horse his supper of diamonds, Cosmo set him again in his old stall, and loosely replaced the stones that had shut him in. After that he wedged up the door between posts and lintel, and as there was no flour in the house with which to make paste, glued the leather torn from it again to the wall. Then he sought the kitchen and Grizzie.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. BURNS.

"GRIZZIE," he said, "I'm gaein' a lang tramp the morn, an' maun hae a poochfu' o' breid."

"Eh sirs! An' what's takin' ye frae hame in sic haste, sir?" returned Grizzie.

"I'm no gaein' to tell ye the nicht, Grizzie. It's my turn to hae a secret noo! But ye ken weel it's lang sin' there was ony thing to be gotten by bidin' at hame."

"Eh, but, sir! ye're never gaein' to lea' the laird! Bide an dee wi' him, sir," implored Grizzie.

"God bless ye, Grizzie!—Hae ye ony baubees?" was all Cosmo's answer.

"Ay; what for no!—sax shillin's, fower pennies, an' a baubee fardin'!"

She did not tell him that it was the remnant of a sum borrowed from a sister in service like herself. And it was out of her own wages she repaid it. As the laird had called her so would she be—one of the family!

"Weel, ye maun jist len' me half a croon o' 't," said Cosmo.

"Half a croon!" echoed Grizzie, staggered at the hugeness of the demand. "Haith, sir, ye're no blate (*bashful*)!"

"I dinna think it's ower muckle," said Cosmo, "seein' I hae to tramp thirty mile the morn. But bake ye plenty o' breid, an' that'll haud doon the expense. Only, gien a body can help it, he sudna be wantin' a baubee in 's pooch. Gien ye hae nane to gie me, I maun set oot bare. Jist as ye like, Grizzie!—I cud beg fine, noo ye hae shawn the gait," he added, taking the old woman by the arm with a laugh, "but whan ye ken ye sudna speir, an' whan ye hae, ye maunna beg."

"Weel, I'll gie ye auchteen pence,"

she returned, pulling away her arm crossly, "an' considerin' a' 'at's to be dune wi' a' 'at's left, ye'll grant it's no a sma' portion ye tak wi' ye."

"Weel, weel, Grizzie! I'm thinkin' I'll hae to be content."

"'Deed, an' ye wull, sir! Ye s' get nae mair."

That night the old laird slept a long and sound sleep. Cosmo was continually blown back from the very brink of unconsciousness by ever a fresh gust of gladness. The morning came golden and brave, and his father was wondrous well. He set out, and, in the strength of his joy and the oat-cakes with which his pockets were filled, went all the way without changing even the sixpence of Grizzie's eighteen pence. Two days ago, he would consult his friend how to avoid the deepest mire of poverty; now he must learn from him how to make the most of great riches!

He did not tell Mr. Burns, however, what his object was when he begged him, for the sake of friendship and old times,

to go with him for a day or two to Castle Warlock.

"But," objected the jeweller, "that would be to take the play in school-hours! We're to be diligent in business, you know."

"I want you for business," replied Cosmo.

"Then what's to be done with the shop? I have no one I can trust it with."

"Shut it up, and give them a holiday. You can put up a notice of when you will be back."

"The most unbusiness-like proposal I ever heard of! The thing is impossible."

"Why, sir, your business is not like a doctor's, or even a baker's. People can live without diamonds."

"Don't speak disrespectfully of diamonds, Mr. Warlock. If you knew them as I do, you would know they had a thing or two to say for themselves."

"Speak of them disrespectfully you never heard me, Mr. Burns."

"Like all things else, they give a man

according to what he has," pursued the jeweller. "The fine lady may see in her diamonds victory over a rival; the philosopher may read in them law inexorable; the poet—I have read my Spenser, Mr. Warlock—sees in the diamond the only substance fit to make the shield of faith out of. Like the gospel itself, diamonds are a savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death, according to the eyes that look upon them."

"That is true. Every gift of God is good, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.—But will you come?"

After a long refusal Mr. Burns did at length actually consent to close his shop for three days, and go with Cosmo.

"It will not be a bad preparation," he said, as if to justify himself in his own eyes, "for retiring altogether—which I might have done long ago," he added, "but for you, sir!"

In the mean time things went well at Castle Warlock—with, shall I say?—one exception: Grizzie had a severe fit of repentance, mourning bitterly that she

had sent away the youth she worshipped with but eighteen pence in his pocket.

"He'll come to grief for the want o' jist ae shillin' mair!" she said over and over to herself; "an' it'll be a' an' only my wite! What gien we never see 'im again! Eh, sirs! it's a terrible thing to be contrived sae contrairy! What 's to come o' me i' the neist warl', it 's hard to say!"

On the second evening, however, as she was *washing up* in the gloomiest frame, in walked Cosmo with a strange gentleman.

"Hoo's my father, Grizzie?" asked Cosmo.

"Won'erfu' weel, sir. An' walcome hame!" answered Grizzie.

"This is Grizzie, Mr. Burns, of whom I have told you—that takes care of us all!"

"How do you do, Grizzie?" said Mr. Burns, and shook hands with her. "I am glad to make your acquaintance."

"Here, Grizzie!" said Cosmo, having drawn her aside to the corner where stood the meal-chest, "here's the auchteen

pence ye alloot me for expenses. An' luik here!—Tell naebody."

He showed her a bunch of bank-notes. All she had ever seen in her life would not have made so many! He gave her ten pounds.

"Mr. Burns," he said, "will be staying with us over to-morrow."

Grizzie *glowered* at the money as if it could not possibly be *canny;* but the next minute, like one suddenly raised to power, began to order Aggie about, an imperious mistress. Within ten minutes she had her bonnet on, and was setting out for Muir o' Warlock.

But oh the pride and victory that rose and towered in her, and sank weary only to rise and tower again, as she walked to the village with that money in her pocket! The dignity of the house of Warlock had rushed aloft like a sudden tidal wave, and on its crest was Grizzie borne triumphing heavenwards. From one who begged at strange doors for the daily bread of a decayed family, in an instant she was the housekeeper of the most ancient and

honourable castle in all Scotland, steering the great ship of its fortunes! With a reserve as impressive as provoking to the gossips of the village, from one shop to another she went, buying carefully but freely, and rousing endless curiosity by her evident consciousness of infinite resource. When last of all she went to the Warlock Arms, and bought half a dozen of port at six shillings a bottle, and half a dozen of sherry at four, not a doubt remained in the Muir that "the auld laird" had somehow come in for a great fortune, and there was no small rejoicing of honest hearts in consequence. She returned laden, and driving before her two boys with a large basket between them.

Cosmo and Mr. Burns found the laird seated as usual, when able to be out of bed, by the fire in his room. There first, in his presence, Cosmo recounted to their guest the story of the finding of the gems. He began far back with the tales concerning the old captain as they had come to his knowledge;

just touched on the finding of the bamboo and its contents; and then described minutely the process of his last discovery, but without giving the jeweller a hint of what was at hand. In relating the nearer events he led him from very scene to scene, re-enacting his part, and forestalling nothing. Not once did he mention stone or gem, but, opening the horse, poured out the diamonds on the rug in the fire-light.

CHAPTER XXI.

TOO SURE, TOO LATE.

About noon of the same day on which Cosmo started for the great town, lord Lick-my-loof sent to the castle the message that he wanted to see young Mr. Warlock. The laird returned answer that Cosmo was from home, and would not be back till the day following.

In the afternoon came his lordship, desiring an interview with the laird; which, not a little against his liking, the laird granted.

"Sit ye doon, my lord," said Grizzie, returning with his consent, "an' rist yer shins. The ro'd atween this an' the ludge maun be slithery."

His lordship took the chair she offered. He would rather propitiate than annoy

her, for he was at last more afraid of Grizzie than aught in creation except dogs. And Grizzie, appreciating his behaviour, had compassion and spared him.

"His lairdship," she said, "maunna be hurried puttin' on his dressin'-goon. He's no used to see onybody sae ear'. I s' come an' lat ye ken whan he's ready for yer lordship."

Relieved by her departure, lord Lumbiggin began to look about the place, and then first spying Agnes, asked how her grandfather was. She replied he was but poorly.

"Getting old!"

"Surely, my lord. He's makin' ready to gang."

"Poor old man!"

"What wad yer lordship hae? Ye wadna live on i' this warl' for ever an' a day?"

"'Deed and I would—so long at least as pretty girls like you were in it."

"Suppose the lasses had their ch'ice tu, my lord—to gang or bide as they likit?"

"Well? Which would they do?"

"Gang, I'm thinkin'—sae lang as auld men like yer lordship war intil 't."

"Ha! ha! Sharp!—What makes you so spiteful, Aggie?"

"My lord," said Agnes, "ye ken the story o' the guid Samerritan?"

"I read my bible, I hope."

"Weel, I'll tell ye a bit 'at 's no i' your bible. The Levite an' the Pharisee—naebody ever said yer lordship was like aither ane o' them——"

"No, thank God! nobody could say that."

"—they gaed by o' the ither side, an' loot 'im lie. But there was ane cam ower the lan', an' tuik him by the legs, an' wad hae trailt 'im intil the middle o' the ro'd, only, jist i' the nick o' time, up cam the guid Samerritan, an' set him rinnin'; sae 'at he didna muckle ill to onybody but himsel', wha cudna weel gang straucht to paradise: Ahbraham wad hae a fine time o' 't wi' sic a bairn in 's boasom!"

"Damn the women! Young and old

they're too many for me!" said his lordship.

The same moment Grizzie returned, and invited him to walk up to the laird's room. There at once he communicated the object of his visit.

"I told your son, Glenwarlock, when he came to me the other morning, that I would not buy."

"Yes, my lord."

"I have changed my mind, and am come to renew my offer."

"In the meantime we have changed our minds, my lord, and do not want to sell."

"That's very foolish of you."

"It may seem so, my lord; but you must permit us to do our best with what modicum of judgment we have."

"What can have made you come to such a fatal resolution? I am convinced you will not get such a price from another, be he who he may."

"I do not doubt you are right, my lord, but I repeat we do not want to sell."

"Nobody will make you an equal offer."

"It cannot be worth more, I grant, to anyone else, your lordship's property shutting it in on every side; but to your lordship——"

"That is my affair; what it is worth to you is the question."

"It is worth more to us than you can calculate."

"I daresay, in a market where sentiment sends the prices up! But that is not your market now. Take my advice and a good offer. You can't go on like this, you know. Why, what are you thinking of?"

"I am thinking, my lord, of the fact that you have scarcely been such a neighbour as to make it prudent to confide our plans to you. I have said we will not sell—and as I am something of an invalid,——"

Lord Lick-my-loof rose, feeling fooled—annoyed with himself, and hating everybody in "the cursed place."

"Good morning, Glenwarlock!" he

said. "You will live to repent this morning!"

"I hope not, my lord; I have lived nearly long enough. Good morning."

His lordship went softly down the stair, hurried through the kitchen, and walked slowly home, thinking whether it might not be worth his while to buy up Glenwarlock's few remaining debts.

CHAPTER XXII.

A LIFE WELL ROUNDED.

"PIRATE or not, the old gentleman was a good judge of diamonds!" said Mr. Burns, laying down one of the largest. "Not an inferior stone in all I have gone over! Your uncle was a knowing man, sir: diamonds are worth much more now than when he brought these home. The rough ones will, I trust, also turn out well; we cannot be so sure of them; but they are not many."

"How much suffering they might have forestalled!" said the laird; "and how much more welcome they are that we have had that good first!"

"Sapphires!—and all of the finest quality!" remarked Mr. Burns, in no mood for reflection. "Mr. Cosmo, you

must get a few sheets of paper, and wrap up every stone separately—a long job, but the better worth doing! Why, there must be a couple of thousands of them!"

"Why should they be wrapt up?" asked Cosmo.

"To keep them from being hurt, of course."

"How can they hurt, being the hardest things in the world?"

"Put them in any company you please but each others'—wheel them to the equator in a barrowful of gravel, or expose them to an eternal sand-storm, and you may leave them naked as they were born. But bless thy five wits! did you never hear the proverb, 'Diamond cut diamond'? I'd as soon shut up two thousand game-cocks in the same cellar! I don't say they'll scratch each other, but they may, and they could, and they would—in a word, they *might* scratch each other. It was very well so long as they lay dark and still in the wall of this your old diamond-mine, but now

you'll be constantly playing with them! Wrap each one up by itself, I say."

"We are so far from likely to keep fingering them, Mr. Burns," said Cosmo, "that our chief reason for wishing you to look at them was the hope that you would oblige us by taking them away, and disposing of them for us!"

"A-a-ah!" rejoined Mr. Burns, "I fear I am getting too old for such a transaction. I should have to go to Amsterdam—to London—to Paris—who knows where?—perhaps to America! And you know I was thinking of retiring!"

"Let this be your last piece of business to finish up with. You can make it a good thing for us all."

"If I undertake it, it must be at a fixed percentage. There will be no risk, but a good deal of labour. I wish you would come with me. I should be able to show you some things you would not otherwise likely see."

"I should enjoy it greatly, but I could not leave my father."

As he went home again, Mr. Burns was a little nervous about the safety of his portmanteau, and would not go inside the coach although it rained, but kept in sight of his luggage.

I will not mention how much the diamonds brought. I would not have my book bristle with pounds as a French novel bristles with francs. It is enough to say that they more than answered even Mr. Burns's expectations.

When all his hope for this world was gone, absorbed in assured solvency, the oil in the lamp of the laird's life began to fail. Cosmo was yet on his way with Mr. Burns and his portmanteau to meet the coach, when his father said to his old friend—than whom none was ever more faithful,

"I'm tired, Grizzie; I'll gang to my bed, I think. Gie me a han'; I winna bide for Cosmo."

"Eh, sir! what for be in sic a hurry to sleep awa' bonny daylicht?" remonstrated Grizzie, shot through with sudden fear, nor daring allow to herself her alarm.

"Hae patience till the yoong laird come back; he winna be lang."

"Gien ye haena time to help me, Grizzie, I can manage my lane. Gang yer wa's, lass. Ye hae been a richt guid freen' to yer auld mistress, for ye hae dune yer best, an' a richt guid best, for him 'at she left to yer care!"

"Eh, sir, dinna speyk like that!" expostulated Grizzie. "It's terrible to hear til ye—fleein' i' the verra face o' the providence 'at 's been at sic pains to mak up to ye for a' 'at's come an' gane! Wad ye noo, whan a' 's weel, an' like to be weel, turn roon' upo' 'im like this, an' speyk o' gaein' to yer bed! It's no worthy o' ye, laird!"

He was so diverted with her rebuke that he burst out laughing, brightened up, and did not go to bed even after Cosmo came—retired only as the sun was leaving his western window.

The next day, however, he did not rise. He had no suffering to speak of, and his face was serene, as the gathering of the sunrays to go down together, with a

perfect yet deepening peace. Cosmo scarcely left him—watched and waited with a cold spot at his heart, which kept growing bigger and colder as he saw him slowly drifting out on the ebb-tide from the earthly bay. He had now to pass through that most painful experience when the loved seem gradually withdrawing, not from human contact only, but even from human affection, while their cares part farther and farther from the cares of those they are leaving, and the gulf between, already impassable as the lapse of ages can make it, is ever widening. But when separation had left the mind free to work for the heart, said Cosmo to himself—"What if the dying who seem thus divided from us, are but only looking over the tops of insignificant earthly things? What if the heart within them is lying content in a closer contact with ours than our dull fears and too level out-look will permit us to share? One thing their apparent withdrawal means—that we must go over to them; we too must rise, forsake, and follow; they are on

the way, and they cannot retrograde; they have already begun to learn the language and ways of the old world, begun to be children afresh, while we are still the slaves of new, low-bred habits of unbelief and self-preservation, to them as unwise as unlovely; but our turn will come, and we shall go after, and be taught of them; and in the meantime must so live that it may be the easier in dying to let the loved ones know that we are loving them all the time."

The laird ceased to eat, and spoke seldom, but often murmured the one word *peace*. He would often smile, but there was in his smile too that far off something which troubled his son. Two or three times came as it were a check in the slow drift seaward, and then he spoke plainly. Something much like this he said on one of these occasions:

"Peace! peace!—Cosmo, my son, ye dinna ken hoo strong it can be! Naebody can ken what it's like till it comes. I hae been troubled a' my life, an' noo the verra peace is 'maist ower muckle for

me! It's like as gien the sun wad put oot the fire. I seem whiles to be lyin' here naething but waitin' for you to come intil my peace, an' be ane wi' me! But ye hae a lang this warl's life afore ye yet. Eh! winna it be gran' whan it's weel ower, an' you come hame! You an' me an' oor Mar'on an' Jesus an' God an' Grizzie an' a'! Somehoo I dinna seem to be lea'in' ye— no half as whan first ye left me, an' that although ye're ten times mair to me noo than ye war than."

Another time he said something like this:

"There maun be a heap o' fowk unco dreary an' fusionless i' the warl' deith taks us til; an' the mair I think aboot it, the mair likly it seems we'll hae muckle to du wi' them—a sair wark lattin' them ken what they are, an' whaur they cam frae, an' hoo they maun gang to win hame; for deith can no more be yer hame nor a sair fa' upo' the ro'd be yer bed. Mony ane we ca'd auld here, we may hae to tak like a bairn upo' oor knees, an' bring up. Auld bairns as weel

as yoong hae to be fed wi' the spune. I see na anither w'y o' 't. The Lord may ken a better, but I think he 's shawn me this. Them 'at 's Christ's maun hae wark like his, an' what for no the personal ministration o' redemption to them 'at 's deid, that they may come alive by the kennin' o' him?"

The day before that on which he went, he seemed to wake up suddenly:

"Cosmo," he said, "I'm no inclined to mak a promise wi' regaird to ony possible communication wi' ye frae the ither warl', nor do I i' the least expec' to appear or speyk to ye. But ye needna for that conclude me awa' frae ye a'thegither. Fowk may hae a hantle o' communication ohn aither o' them kent it at the time, I'm thinkin'. Min' this ony gait: God 's oor hame, an' gien ye be at hame an' I be at hame, we canna be far sun'ert!"

As the sun was going down, closing a lovely day full of promises, the boat of sleep, a gentle wind of life and birth filling its sail, bore, softly gliding, the old

pilgrim across the faint border between this and that. Then, for a season, it may be, like a babe new-born, he needed gentle hands and careful nursing; and if so, and for any necessity wherein one immortal could help another, there was his wife waiting him, who must by that time have grown strong!

Their son wept and was lonely, but not broken-hearted; for he was a live man with a mighty hope and great duties, each of them ready to become a great joy. Such a man I do not think even diamonds could hurt, certainly not death.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A BREAKING UP.

THINGS in the castle went on in the same quiet way as before for some time. Cosmo settled himself in his father's room, and read and wrote, and pondered and aspired. The household led the same homely, simple life, only fared well. The housekeeping was in Grizzie's hands, and she was a liberal soul—a true *bread-giver*.

James Gracie did not linger long behind his friend. His last words were,

"I won'er gien I hae a chance o' winnin' up wi' the laird!"

On the morning that followed his funeral, when breakfast was over, Agnes sought Cosmo where he sat in the garden with a book in his hand.

"Whaur are ye gaein', Aggie?" he asked, as she approached in her bonnet and shawl.

"*My* hoor's come," she answered, "an' it's time I was awa."

"I dinna un'erstan' ye, Aggie," he returned.

"Hoo sud ye, Cosmo? Ilka body kens, or sud ken, what lies to their ain han'. It lies to mine to gang. I'm no wantit langer. Ye wadna hae me ait the breid o' idleset!"

"But, Aggie!" remonstrated Cosmo, "ye're ane o' the faimily! I wad as sune think o' seein' my ain sister, gien I had ane, gang frae hame for sic a nae-rizzon as that!"

The tears rose in her eyes, and her voice trembled.

"It canna be helpit; I maun gang," she said.

Cosmo was dumb. He had never thought of such a possibility. Aggie stood silent before him.

"What hae ye i' yer heid, Aggie? What thoucht ye o' duin' wi' yersel'?"

he asked at length, his heart swelling so that he could scarcely send out the words.

"I'm gaein' to luik for a place."

"But, Aggie, gien it canna be helpit, an' gang ye maun, *ye* ken I'm rich, an' *I* ken there's naebody i' the haill warl' wi' a better richt to what I hae: what for sud ye seek a place? what for no gang til a first-rate school, an' learn a heap o' things?"

"Na na. It's naething but hard wark 'ill haud me i' the richt ro'd. I can aye learn what I hunger for, an' what ye dinna desire ye'll never learn. Thanks to yersel', Cosmo, an' Maister Simon, ye hae putten me i' the w'y o' gettin' what I want! It's no kennin' things—it's kennin' things upo' the ro'd ye gang, 'at 's o' consequence to ye. The lave I mak naething o'."

"But a time micht come whan ye wad want the thing ye micht hae learnt afore."

"Whan sic a time comes, I'll learn the thing than—wi' half the trouble, an'

in half the time. Noo, it wad but tak me frae the things I can an' maun mak use o'—an' use is a'thing. Na, Cosmo; I'm b'un' to du something wi' what I hae, an' no bide till I get mair. I'll be aye gettin'!"

"Weel, Aggie, I daurna temp' ye to bide gien ye think ye oucht to gang; an' ye wad but despise me gien I was fule eneuch to try 't. But ye canna refuse to share wi' me. That wadna be like ane 'at had the same Father an' the same Maister. Tak siller wi' ye, an' gang an' get a place whaur ye'll hae some time to yersel', an' winna hae to warstle yersel' to the deith wi' rouch wark. I canna bide to think o' 't. Come awa' intil the hoose."

"Cosmo, I wad hae thocht ye had mair sense! What wad the like o' me du wi' a heap o' siller? What wad baudrins (*pussy-cat*) there du wi' a silk goon? Ye can gie me the twa poun' ten I gae to Grizzie to help haud the life in 's a'. It's better to hae something in a body's pooch nae doobt, gien she can;

but it's jist won'erfu' hoo little 's wantit whaur there's but ane!"

Cosmo was miserable.

"Ye winna surely gang ohn seen Maister Simon!" he said.

"I tried to see him last nicht, but auld Dorty wadna lat me near him. I *wad* fain say fareweel til him."

"Put aff gaein' awa' till the morn, an' we s' gang thegither the nicht an' see him. Dorty winna haud *me* oot."

Aggie hesitated, thought, and consented. Leaving Cosmo more distressed than she knew, she went to the kitchen, took off her bonnet, and telling Grizzie she was not going till the morrow, sat down, and proceeded to pare the potatoes.

"Ance mair," said Grizzie, resuming an unclosed difference, "what for ye sud gang 's clean 'ayont me. It's true the auld men are awa', but here's the auld wife left, an' she'll be a mither to ye, as weel 's she kens hoo, an' a lass o' your sense is easy to mither. I' the name o' God I say 't, the warl' micht as weel objec' to twa angels bidin' i' h'aven

thegither as to you an' the yoong laird bein' in ae hoose! Ye're but a servan' lass, an' here am I ower ye!—Aggie, I'm growin' auld, an' no fit to mak a bed my lane—no to mention scoorin' the flure! It's ill considert o' ye, Aggie—jist 'cause yer father—hoots, he was but yer gran'father!—jist 'cause yer gran'-father's deid o' a guid auld age, an' gaithert til *his* gran'fathers, to gang an' lea' me my lane, wi' mair to du nor I'm able for. Whaur, I beg, am I to get a body I cud bide i' my sicht an' you awa'—you 'at's been like bane o' my bane to me! It's no guid o' ye, Aggie! There maun be temper intil't! I'm sure I ken no cause ever I gae ye!"

Aggie answered not a word. She had said all she could say, over and over. So she pared her potatoes, and was silent. Her heart was sore, but her mind was clear, and her will strong.

Up and down the little garden Cosmo walked, revolving many things. "What is this world and its ways," he said, "but a dream that dreams itself out and is gone!"

The majority of men, whether they think or not, worship solidity and fact: to such, this conclusion of Cosmo's must seem both foolish and dangerous. But a dream may be full of truth, and a fact may be a mere shred for the winds of the limbo of vanities. Everything that *can* pass belongs to the same category with the dream. The question is whether the passing body leaves a live soul, whether the dream has been dreamed, the life lived aright. For there is a reality beyond all facts of suns and systems. Solidity itself is but the shadow of a divine necessity. There may be more truth in a fable than in the most correct biography. Where life and truth are one, there is no passing, no dreaming more. To that waking all dreams truly dreamed are guiding the dreamer. And the last thing any dreamer needs regard, is the judgment of other dreamers upon his dream. The all-pervading, ill-odoured phantom called Society, is but the ghost of a false God. The fear of man, the trust in man, the deference to the opinion

of man, is the merest worship of a rag-stuffed idol. The man who *seeks* the judgment of God will smile at the unsolicited approval as carelessly as at the condemnation of self-styled Society: there is a true Society—another thing quite. The judgment of the world is of some good to those capable of regarding it; to deprive a thief of the influence of the code of thieves' honour, would be to do him irreparable wrong; to deprive the tradesman whose law is the custom of his trade, of the restraint of that law, would be to render him yet more dishonest than he is; but God demands an uprightness, a dignity, a greatness and beauty of very being, altogether beyond and different from that demanded by man of his fellow. He who is taught of God is lifted up out of sight above such law as that of thieves' honour, trade-custom, or social recognition—which are all of the same quality, and is subjected instead to a law which obeyed is liberty, disobeyed is a hell deeper and fouler than even Society's own attendant slums.

But Cosmo had been meditating a very different phase of the matter.

"Here is a woman," he had said to himself, "who, with her earnings and her labour both, ministered to the bodily life of my father and myself, and to our spiritual life with her whole nature and presence! She has been to us an angel of God—the noblest, truest of women! She has ten times as much genuine education as most men take with them from college!—her brain is second only to her heart!—If it had but pleased God to make her my sister! And now, because the house is mine she must leave it! There is, alas! no way to pull out the tongue of Slander, but there is a way to muzzle her mouth!"

The evening was Mr. Simon's best time, and they let the sun go down before they started to visit him. On their way they had a right pleasant talk about old things, now the one now the other bringing some half-faded event from the store-closet of memory.

"I doobt ye winna min' me takin' ye

oot o' the Warlock ae day there was a gey bit o' a spait on?" said Agnes at length, looking up in Cosmo's face.

"Eh, I never h'ard o' that, Aggie!" replied Cosmo.

"I canna think to this day hoo it was ye fell in," she went on: "I hadna the chairge o' ye at the time. Ye maun hae run oot o' the hoose an' me efter ye. I was very near taen awa' wi' ye. Hoo we wan oot o' the watter I dinna un'erstan'. A' 'at I ken is 'at whan I cam to mysel' we war lyin' grippit til ane anither upo' the meadow, for the watter was mair nor bank-fou."

"But hoo cam 't 'at naebody ever said a word aboot it? What for did I never hear o' 't?" asked Cosmo.

"I never tellt onybody, an' ye wasna auld eneuch no to forget."

"What for didna ye tell?"

"I was feart they wad think it was my wite, an' no lat me tak chairge o' ye for ever efter. I kent ye was safer wi' me nor wi' ony ither aboot the place, for whan I had ye I 'maist tuikna my e'en aff

o' ye. Gien it had been my wite, I cudna hae hauden my tongue; but as 't was, I didna see I was b'un' to tell."

"Hoo did ye hide it?"

"I ran wi' ye hame to oor ain hoose, whaur there was naebody, an' tuik aff yer weet claes, an' pat ye intil my bed till I got them dry."

"An' hoo did ye wi' yer ain?"

"By the time yours was dry, mine was dry tu."

When they reached the cottage, Dorty demurred; but her master heard Cosmo's voice and rang his bell.

"I little thought your father would be home before me!" said Mr. Simon. "I believe I was aware of his death. I saw nothing, heard nothing, but he seemed to come to me when I was not thinking about him; and I said to myself, 'He is on his way.'"

Agnes told him she had come to bid him good-bye; she was going to seek a place.

"Well," he answered, after a thoughtful pause, "while we obey the light in us,

and that light is not darkness, we can't go wrong. If we should mistake, he will turn things round for us; and if we be to blame, he will let us see it."

He was weak, and they did not stay long.

"Don't judge my heart by my words, dear scholars," he said. "My heart is right towards you, but I am weary. God bless you both. I may not see you again, Agnes, but I shall think of you there, and if I can do anything for you, be sure I will."

When they left the cottage, the twilight was half-way towards the night, and a softness in the east prophesied the moon. Cosmo led Agnes through fields no longer his to the little valley where she had so often gone in search of him. There they sat down in the grass, and as they waited for the moon Cosmo pointed out the exact spot where she rose that night she looked at him through the legs of the cow.

"Ye min' Grizzie's rime?" he said:

> "Whan the coo loups ower the mune,
> The reid gowd rains intil men's shune.

I believe Grizzie tuik the queer sicht for

a sign o' guid. It's unco strange hoo fowk 'ill mix up God an' chance, seein' there cud hardly be twa mair contradictory ideas! I min' ance hearin' a man say, 'It's 'maist a providence'!"

"I doobt wi' maist fowk," said Aggie, "it's only at best, 'There's nearhan' bein' a God!' For my pairt I see nae room 'atween no believin' in him at a', an' believin' in him a'thegither, an' lattin' him du what he likes wi' a body."

"I'm o' your min' there, Aggie, oot an' oot," responded Cosmo.

As he spoke the moon came peering up, and he turned to Agnes to share the vision with her. The yellow light was reflected from tears on her face!

"Aggie, Aggie!" he said, in much concern, "what are ye greitin' for?"

She made no answer, but wiped away her tears, and tried to smile. After a little pause,

"A body wad think," she said, "'at gien I believed in a God, he maun be a sma' ane! What for sud onybody greit 'at had but a far awa' notion o' sic a God

as you, Cosmo, an' the laird, an' Maister Simon believes in!"

"Ye may weel say that, Aggie!" rejoined Cosmo—yet sighed as he said it, for he thought of lady Joan. A long pause followed. Then he spoke again.

"Aggie," he said, "there canna weel be twa i' this warl' 'at kens ane anither better nor you an' me. We hae been bairns thegither; we hae been to the schuil thegither; we hae had the same teacher sin' syne; we hae come throuw dour times thegither—I doobt we hae been hungry thegither though ye saidna a word; we hae warstlet wi' poverty, ay, an' wi' unbelief; we loe the same fowk best; an' abune a' we baith set the wull o' God. It wad be a sair vex to me 'at the first thing w'alth did for me was to sen' my best freen' frae me. It wad 'maist brak my hert to think o' her 'at cam throuw the lan' o' drouth wi' me—ay, tuik me throuw 't, for, wantin' her, I wad hae fa'en to rise nae mair—gaein' on an' on climmin' the dry hill ro'd, an' me lyin' i' the bonny meadow-gerse at the fut o' 't.

It canna be rizzon, Aggie! What for sud ye gang? Merry me, Aggie, an' bide. Bide, an' ca' the castel yer ain."

"Hoots! wad ye merry yer mither?" cried Agnes, and burst into laughter and tears together. I believe it was the sole time in her life she ever gave way to discordant emotion.

Cosmo stared speechless. It was as if an angel had made a poor human joke! He was much too bewildered to feel hurt.

But Aggie was not pleased with herself. She choked her tears, crushed down her laughter, and conquering herself entirely, took his hand in hers, and said,

"I beg yer pardon, Cosmo; I sudna hae lauchen. Lauchin', I'm sure, 's far eneuch frae my hert! I kenna hoo I cam to du 't.—But ye're sic a bairn, Cosmo! Ye dinna ken what ye wad hae! an' me bein' a kin' o' a mither to ye a' yer days, I maun lat ye see what ye're aboot.—I wadna insist ower sair upo' the years 'atween 's, though that's no naething; but surely ye haena to be tellt at this time o' day, 'at for fowk to merry 'at dinna loe

ane anither, 's little, gien it be onything, short o' a sin."

"I hae aye loed *you*, Aggie," said Cosmo, with a touch of reproach.

"Weel ken I that! An ill hert wad be mine gien it didna tell me that! But, Cosmo, whan ye said the word, didna *your* hert tell ye it didna mean jist the same ye wad hae me un'erstan' by 't?"

"Aggie!" sighed Cosmo, "I wad aye loe ye better an' better."

"Ay, ye wad, gien ye cud, Cosmo. But ye're ower honest to see throuw yersel'; an' I'm no sae honest but I see throuw you. Ye wad merry me 'cause ye're no wullin' to pairt wi' me, likin' me better nor ony but ane, an' her ye canna get! Gien I was a leddy, Cosmo, maybe I michtna be ower prood to tak ye upo' thae terms, but bein' what I am I daurna. It wad need love as roon' 's a sphere for that 'atween you an' me. Gien I war to tak it intil my heid I was ae hair i' yer gait, or ye was ae hair freer-like wi' me oot o' yer sicht, I wad be like to rin to the back-wa' o' creation! Na; it was

weel eneuch as we hae been, but *merried!* —Ye wad be guid to me aye, I ken that, but aye wad I be wantin' to be deid to hae ye loe me a wee better. I say naething o' what the warl' wad say to the laird o' Glenwarlock merryin' his servan' lass, for ye care as little for the warl' as I du, an' we're baith some wiser nor hit. But efter a', Cosmo, I wad be some oot o' my place!—wadna I noo? The hen-birds doobtless are aye the soberer to luik at; they haena the gran' colours nor the gran' w'ys wi' them 'at the cocks hae; but still there's a measur i' a'thing. It wad ill set a common hen to hae a paicock til her man. My sowl, I ken, wad gang han' in han', in a heumble w'y, wi' yours, for I un'erstan' ye, Cosmo; but wha like me cud help a sense o' oonfitness, gien it war but gaein' to the kirk side by side wi' the like o' you? Luik at the twa o' 's i' the munelicht thegither! Dinna ye see 'at we dinna match?"

"It wad be naething gien ye loed me, Aggie."

"Gien *ye* loed *me*, say, Cosmo—loed

me eneuch to be prood o' me. But that ye dinna, that ye canna. Exem' yer ain hert, an' ye'll see 'at ye dinna.—An' what for sud ye!"

Here Agnes broke down. A burst of silent weeping, like that of one desiring no comfort, followed. Suddenly she ceased and rose, and they walked back without a word.

They had been sitting in the very place where the body of the old captain was found; and they knew it; but neither of them had thought of him. The clouds had returned after the rain, and for these clouds his diamonds could do nothing.

When Cosmo came down in the morning, Agnes was gone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

REPOSE.

Cosmo had no need of a searching examination of his heart to discover that it was mainly the wish to make her some poor return for her devotion, conjoined with the sincere desire to retain her company, that had influenced him in the offer she had been too wise and too genuinely loving to accept. He did not fall into any depth of self-blame, for, whatever its kind, his love was of quality pure and good. The only bitterness the memory of the proposal bore was its justification of Agnes's departure.

Grizzie saw no justification of it.

"What I'm to du wantin' her, I div not ken," she insisted. "'*No becomin'*,'

quo' he, '*for a lass like her to bide wi' a bachelor like mysel'*'? H'ard ever onybody sic styte! Jist as gien she had been a leddy! I micht wi' as muckle sense objec' to bidin' wi' 'im mysel'! But I s' du what I like, an' lat fowk say 'at they like, sae lang 's I'm nae fule i' my ain e'en!—I'm ower white, Mr. Gled (*hawk*), for you. Ow na! ye're no that, bonny doo (*pigeon*)."

But by degrees Cosmo grew gently ashamed that he had so addressed Agnes. He saw in the action a failure of respect, a wrong to her dignity. That she had taken it so sweetly could not alter its character. Seeming to himself at the time to be going against the judgment of the world, and treating it with the contempt it always more or less deserves, he had in reality and in no small measure been going with it. For had there not been in him a vague condescension operant throughout? Had he not been acting on the idea, conscious of it too, though never calling it to account, that his position made up for any want in

his love? Had she been conventionally a lady, instead of an angel in peasant-form, would he have been so ready to return her kindness with an offer of marriage? There was little conceit in supposing there were some, even of higher position than his own, who would have accepted the offer on even lower terms; but he ought to have known Aggie better, and not have made it to her: she was too large and too fine for such an experiment. This he now fully understood; and had he not been brought up with her from childhood as with an elder sister, the thought of her might even now have begun a powerful rivalry with the sweet memories of Joan's lady-hood. For he saw in her that which is at the root, not only of all virtue, but of all beauty, of all grandeur, of all growth, of all attraction. Every charm —in its essence, in its development, in its embodiment, is a flower of the tree of life, whose root is the truth. I see the smile of the shallow philosopher, thinking of some lady full of charm, with

no more love for the truth than a mole for the light. But that lady's charm is not hers; it springs from a source too deep for her knowledge, her conscious and chosen life is antagonistic to it, and by and by she will have destroyed it. From truth elsewhere it comes; she will not have the truth, and its garment which is her beauty will one day leave her naked and not lovely. In Agnes the truth was merely supreme. To have asked such a woman to marry him for reasons lower than the highest, was good ground for shame. Not therefore even then was he *painfully* ashamed, for he loved Agnes so truly that he felt safe with her, as with the elder sister that pardons everything.

It was some little time before they had any news of her; but they heard at last that she had rented Grannie's cottage from her granddaughter, her own aunt, and was going to have a school there for young children. Cosmo was greatly pleased, for the work would give scope to some of her highest gifts and best

qualities, while it would keep her within reach of his service.

Cosmo now gave himself heartily to study, and not only read but wrote regularly every day—no more with the design of printing, but to shape more thoroughly and so test more certainly his thinkings and conclusions. I scorn the idea that a man cannot think without words, but words are endlessly helpful towards the clarifying and crystallizing of thought. Accuracy of utterance reacts in accuracy of thought. A slovenly writer can hardly be a correct thinker. Cosmo strove to utter accurately, that is, to say the thing he meant, and keep from saying the thing he did not mean.

Again he occupied the room over the kitchen, which had been his grandmother's, making it his study. From it to the drawing-room, with the assistance of a mason, he excavated a passage—it was little less than excavation—under that in which had lain the diamonds.

But he had already long discovered how little place without person is to the

human soul. So dreary was the castle and its surroundings, so without *raison d'être*, that he seemed to care for it only through Grizzie. He thought sometimes that if she were to go, he would forsake it at once, and travel for a few years at least. It was to him almost like the presence of a dear friend waiting in idiocy for death to release him. The man was gone out of it, the soul vanished! But a dream in which his father came to him, not in the old body, but in the new, most like the old, and wandered with him lovingly about the place, talking of the past, did much to restore the home-feeling to the stones of his Jerusalem.

The first main issue Grizzie's new command of money found was in a torrent of cleaning. If she could have had her way, she would, I fancy, have erected scaffolds all over the outside of the house, and scrubbed it from chimneys to foundations. On the opposite side of the Warlock river, the laird rented a meadow, and there she soon had the long unaccustomed delight of seeing two

cows she could call hers, the finest cows in the country, feeding with a vague satisfaction in the general order of things. The stable housed a horse after the laird's own heart, on which he made solitary *chevachie* after land in the market.

All he allowed to be known concerning the change in his circumstances was, that he had come into a large fortune by the death—its date he did not mention—of a relative with whom for many years they had had no very direct communication. The inquisitive Lick-my-loof made repeated endeavours to gain some knowledge of particulars in regard of this relative, but remained foiled, and was of course vaguely suspicious.

How the spending of the money thus committed to him was to change the earthly course of his life, Cosmo had not yet learned, and was waiting for light on the matter. A man is not bound to walk in the dark, or work in the night; for the mere sake of doing something, he must not run the risk of doing evil.

"He that believeth shall not make haste;" and he that believeth not shall come no speed. Cosmo had nothing of the usual mammonistic feeling of the enormous importance of money, neither felt that his new fortune laid upon him so heavy a weight of duty as others of the gifts God had given him. If a man is not bound to rush into the world with his poem, surely a man is not bound to rush into the world with his money. Rather a herd of wild horses loose in a city! A man must know first how to *use* his money, then begin to spend it. And the way to use money is not so easily discovered as some would think, for it is not one of God's ready means of doing good. It is not the potent instrument for the betterment of the world that so many who would fain do the impossible and serve both God and Mammon imagine it. The rich man has no reason to look upon himself as specially favoured. He has reason to ask whether he be not specially tried. Jesus loving a certain youth, and doing

him the greatest kindness he could, counselled him to give his wealth to the poor, and follow him in poverty. The first question is not how to do good with money, but how to keep from doing evil with it. Money is important as dynamite is important—mainly because it is exceeding dangerous. A man must first of all do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God; so, be he rich or poor, will he learn of God how to spend. There must be ways in which, even now, a man may give the half, or even the whole of his goods to the poor without helping the devil; but who yet has discovered any one of those ways? It is not because of God's poverty that the world is so slowly redeemed. Not the most righteous expenditure of money will save it, but the pouring forth of life and soul and spirit, carrying with it nerve and muscle, blood and brain—and money too if there be any. All those our Lord spent—spent them in Godlike fashion—but not this, no money. Therefore I say, that of all means for the

saving of the world, or for doing good as it is called, money comes last, and far behind.

Out of the loneliness in which his father left him, grew a great peace and new strength. More real than ever was the other world to him now. His father could not have vanished like a sea-bubble on the sand! To have known a great man—perhaps I do not mean such a man as my reader may be thinking of—is to have some assurance of immortality. One of the best of men said to me once that he did not feel any longing after immortality, but when he thought of certain persons he could not for a moment believe they had ceased. He had beheld the lovely—believed therefore in the endless.

Castle Warlock was not soon altered in its general appearance. In its worst poverty it had kept its look of dignity. There was more life about it now, and more freedom, but not so much happiness. The diamonds had come and the debt was gone, but his father was gone

too, Aggie was gone, Mr. Simon was going, and Joan would not come! Cosmo had scarce a hope for this world. Yet not the less he waited the will of The Will. What that was, time would show, for God works in time!

CHAPTER XXV.

THE THIRD HARVEST.

As the days went by, Cosmo saw his engagement to Mr. Henderson drawing near, nor had he the smallest inclination to back out of it. The farmer would have let him off at once, no doubt; but Cosmo felt, without thinking, that it would be undignified, morally sneaking, even to desire to avoid, because he was now in plenty, the engagement granted by friendship to his need. Nor was this the whole; for to avoid it would almost be to allow that, driven by necessity, he had undertaken a thing unworthy, or degrading; whereas no degree of hunger could justify a poor man in doing what would disgrace a rich man. Neither will

any true man ever ask fellow-creature, man or woman, on terms however extravagant, to do a thing he could not himself do without a sense of degradation. Were the thing conceivable to him as necessary, the conception would involve the doing of it himself, and not by his brother. There is no leveller like christianity—but it levels by uplifting to a table-land accessible only to humility. He alone who is humble can rise—and rising he lifts with him.

In thus holding to what he had undertaken, a man of lower nature might have had respect to the example he would so give: Cosmo thought only of the honourable and grateful fulfilment of his contract. Not merely would it have been a poor return for Mr. Henderson's kindness to treat his service as something beneath him now, but, worst of all, it would have been to accept ennoblement at the hands of Mammon, as of a power able to exalt his station in God's world. To change the spirit of one's ways because of money is to confess oneself a born slave, a thing

of outsides, a knight of Riches, with a maggot for his crest.

When the time came, therefore, Cosmo presented himself. With a look of astonishment, in which were mingled both pleasure and disappointment, the worthy farmer held out his hand.

"Laird," he said, "I didna expec' *you!*"

"What for no?" returned Cosmo. "Haena I been yer fee'd man for months?"

"Ye pit me in a painfu' doobt, laird! Fowk tellt me ye had fa'en heir til a sicht o' siller!"

"Allooin', hoo sud that affec' my bargain wi' you, Mr. Henderson? Siller i' the pooch canna tak obligation frae the back."

"Drivin' things to the wa', nae doobt!" rejoined the farmer: "I micht certainly hae taen the law o' ye, failin' yer appearance. But amo' freen's, Mr. Warlock! An' 'deed, sir, gien a body wad be captious, michtna he say it wad hae been mair gracious to beg aff?"

"A bargain 's a bargain," answered Cosmo; "an' to beg aff o' ane, 'cause I was nae langer i' the same necessity as whan I made it, wad be a mere shame. Gien my father had been wi' me, an' no weel eneuch to hae me oot o' 's sicht gien it cud be helpit, I wad hae beggit aff fest eneuch, but wi' nae sic rizzon it wad hae been ill-mainnert, no to say dishonest an' oongratefu'. Gien ye hae spoken to ony ither i' my place, he s' hae the fee, but I maun hae the wark. Lat things stan', Mr. Henderson."

"Laird!" returned the farmer, not a little moved, "there isna a man I wad raither see at my wark nor yersel'. A' o' them, men an' women, work the better for haein' you amo' them. They wad be affrontit no to haud up wi' a gentleman! Sae come awa' an' walcome!—Ye'll tak something afore we fa' tu?"

Cosmo accepted a jug of milk—half cream it was, from the hand of Elsie.

The girl was much improved, having partially unlearned a good deal of the nonsense gathered at school, and now

took a fair share with her sisters in the work of the house and farm—enlightened doubtless thereto by her admiration for Cosmo.

When the laird reached the end of the first bout, and stood to sharpen his scythe, he was startled to see, a little way off, gathering, a form he could not mistake. She did not look up, but he knew her every movement too well to take her for other than Aggie. *She* had known he would keep his troth! That she exposed herself to misinterpretation and misrepresentation Aggie was well enough aware, but with the knowledge of how things stood between her and Cosmo, she was above heeding the danger. Those who do the truth are raised even above defying the world. Defiance betrays latent respect, but Aggie gave herself no more trouble about the opinion of the world than that of a lower animal. Those who are of the world may defy, but cannot ignore its judgments.

She had declined being a party to

Cosmo's marrying his mother, but was not therefore prepared to expose him undefended to any she that might wish to have him, and Agnes knew one who would at least be hampered by no scruples arising from conscious unfitness. It were even better he should marry the cottar's than the farmer's daughter! She must keep an eye on the young woman so long as Cosmo was within her swoop. He was chivalrous and credulous, and who could tell what Elsie might not dare? Her own refusal to be his wife did not deprive her of her antecedent maternal rights! And so there she was, gathering behind Cosmo, as the year before!

The instant she was free, she set out for home, not having exchanged a word with Cosmo, but meaning to linger on the way in the hope of his overtaking her. The Hendersons would have had him stay the night, but he had given his man orders to wait him with his horse at a certain point on the road. Aggie had not gone far before he came up with her.

Whatever was or had been the state of her feelings towards Cosmo, she had never mistaken his towards her, neither had failed to see that his heart was nowise wounded by her refusal of his offer. I will be so far treacherous towards her as to confess that it would have been a comfort to her, having had to be more or less severe with herself, to see some little sign of suffering in him; but she had got over much, and was now not the least annoyed at the cheery unembarrassed tone in which he called out when he saw her before him. Turning she greeted him with like unconstraint.

"An' sae yer gaein' to tak the bairnies 'aneth yer wing, Aggie," said Cosmo as they walked along. "They're lucky little things 'at gang to your schuil! What pat it i' yer heid?"

"Mr. Simon advised it," answered Aggie; "but I believe I pat it in his heid first, sayin' hoo little was dune for the bairnies jist at the time they war easiest to guide, an' easiest to misguide.

Rouch wark maks the han's rouch, an' rouch words maks the hert rouch."

"The haill country-side 'ill be gratefu' to ye, Aggie!—Ye'll lat me come an' see ye whiles?"

"Nane sae welcome," replied Aggie. "But wull ye be bidin' on, noo 'at ye haena him 'at's gane? Winna ye be gaein' awa' to write buiks, to gar fowk fin' oot what's the maitter wi' them?"

"I dinna ken yet what I'm gaein' to du," answered Cosmo. "But for writin' buiks, I could du that better at hame nor ony ither gait, wi' a'thing min'in' me o' my father, an' you near at han' to gie me coonsel."

"I hae aye been yours to comman', Cosmo," replied Aggie, looking down for one moment, then immediately up again in his ;

"An' ye're no angert wi' me, Aggie?"

"Angert!" repeated Aggie, and looked at him with a glow angelic in her honest handsome face and her eyes as true as the heavens. "It was only 'at ye didna ken what ye was aboot; an' bein' sae

muckle yoonger nor mysel', I was b'un' to tak care o' ye; a wuman as weel's a man maun be her brither's keeper. Ye see yersel' I was richt!"

"Ay was ye, Aggie," answered Cosmo, ashamed and almost vexed at having to make the confession.

He did not see the heave of Aggie's bosom, nor how she held back and broke into nothing the sigh that would have followed.

"But," she resumed after a moment's pause, "a' lasses michtna ken sae weel what was fittin' them, or care sae muckle what was guid for you! Naebody livin' can ken ye as I du; an' it micht weel be 'at gien ye war to lat a lass think ye cared aboot her, though it micht be but as a freen', she micht sae misun'erstan' ye, an' sae be taen wi' ye—'at—'at maybe she micht gar ye think she cudna live wantin' ye;—an' syne what wad ye du than, Cosmo?"

It was a situation in which Cosmo had never imagined himself, and he looked at Aggie a little bewildered.

"I dinna freely un'erstan' ye," he said.

"Na, I reckon no! Hoo sud ye! Ye're jist ower semple for this warl', Cosmo! But I'll put it plainer:—What wad ye du gien a lass was to fa' a greitin' an' a wailin', an' fling hersel' intil yer airms, an' mak as gien she wad dee?—What wad ye du than, Cosmo? What wad ye du wi' her?"

"'Deed I dinna ken!" replied Cosmo with embarrassment. "What wad ye hae me du, Aggie?"

"I wad hae ye set her doon whaur ye stude, gien upo' the ro'd, than upo' the dyke, gien i' the hoose, than upo' the nearest cheir, an' tak to yer legs an' rin. Bidena for yer bonnet, but rin for yer life. Rin an' rin till ye're better nor sure she canna win up wi' ye. An' specially gien the name o' the lass sud begin wi' an E an' gang on til an L, I wad hae ye rin as gien the auld captain was efter ye."

"I hae had sma' occasion to rin frae *him*," said Cosmo with a laugh.

And therewith, partly to change the subject, for he could not talk even about

a suppositional girl as if she might conduct herself in the manner supposed, partly because he had long desired an opportunity of telling her, he began at the beginning, and gave her the whole story of the discovery of the diamonds, omitting nothing, even where the tale involved mention of lady Joan's part in it. Just as he got to the end, they reached the place where the man stood with his horse, and as that was the point where Aggie must turn off to go the nearest way to Muir o' Warlock, there they parted.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A DUET, TRIO, AND QUARTET.

THE next day Elsie was not in the field. Cosmo, who had been thinking much over what Aggie had said, and was not flattered that she should take him for the goose he did not know himself to be, could hardly wait for the evening to have another talk with her.

"Aggie," he said, as he overtook her in a hollow not many yards beyond the march-ditch, "I dinna like ye to think me sic a gowk! No 'at I believe ony lass wad behave sae oon-lass-like 's yon! Whan cam ye to fancy sae ill o' yer ain kin'? There 's nae siccan a lass."

"What maitter whether there be siccan a lass or no, sae lang as gien there was ane, she wad be ane ower mony for ye?"

"That's ower again what I'm compleenin' o'!—an' gien it war onybody but yersel' 'at has a richt, I wad be angry, Aggie."

"Cosmo," said Aggie solemnly, "ye 're ower saft-hertit to the women-fowk. I do believe—an' I tell ye 't again in as mony words—I do believe ye wad merry ony lass raither nor see her greit."

"Ance mair, Aggie, what gies ye a richt to think sae ill o' me?" demanded Cosmo.

"Jist the w'y ye behaved to mysel'."

"*Ye* never tellt me ye cudna du wantin' me!"

"I houp no, for it wadna hae been true. I can du wantin' ye weel eneuch. But ye alloo it wasna richt!"

"Ay—it was a presumption."

"Ay! but what made it a presumption?"

Cosmo could not bring himself to say plainly to the girl he loved so much, that he did not love her so as to have a richt to ask her to marry him. He hesitated.

"Ye didna loe me eneuch; that was it," said Aggie looking up in his face.

"Aggie," returned Cosmo, "I'm ready to merry ye the morn gien ye'll hae me!"

"There noo!" exclaimed Aggie, in a sort of provoked triumph, "didna I tell ye! There ye are, duin' 't a' ower again! Wasna I richt? Ye're fit to tak care o' onybody but yersel'—an' the lass 'at wad fain hae ye! Eh, but, sir, ye need a mitherly body like mysel' to luik efter ye!"

"Tak me, than, an' luik efter me at yer wull, Aggie; I mean what I say!" persisted Cosmo, bewildered with embarrassment and momentary stupidity.

"Ance mair, Cosmo, dinna be a gowk," said Agnes with severity. "Ye loe *me* ower little, an' I loe *you* ower muckle for that."

"Ye 're no angry at me, Aggie?" said Cosmo yet again, almost timidly.

"*Angry at ye*, my bonny lad!" cried Aggie, and looking up with a world of tenderness in her eyes, and a divine glow

of affection on her face—for hers was a love that knew not shame—she threw her two strong shapely honest arms round his neck. He bent his head, she kissed him heartily on the mouth, and burst into tears.

Surely but for that other love that lay patient and hopeless in the depth of Cosmo's heart, he would now have loved Aggie in a way to satisfy her, and to justify him in saying he loved her! And to that it might have come in time. But where is the use of saying what might have been, when all things are ever moving towards the highest and best for the individual as well as for the universe! —nor the less that hell may be the only path to it for some—the hell of an absolute self-loathing!

At that very moment, who should appear on the top of a moorland mound, where the light of the setting sun seemed to centre upon her, but Elsie, neatly dressed, glowing and handsome! A moment she stood, then descended, a dark scorn shadowing in her eyes, and a some-

thing that tried to be a smile showing the whitest of teeth.

"Mr. Warlock," she said, "my father sent me efter ye in a hurry,"—and she heaved a deep breath—"to say he forgot to tell ye 'at he doesna think the bear on the Gowan-brae 'ill be fit for cuttin' this two days, an' they'll gang to the corn upo' the heuch instead."

"I'm muckle obleeged to ye, miss Elsie," returned Cosmo. "Ye hae saved me a half mile i' the mornin'."

"An' my father says," resumed Elsie, turning to Agnes, "yer wark 's no worth yer wages."

Aggie faced round on her with flashing eyes.

"I dinna believe ye, miss Elsie," she said. "I dinna believe yer father said ever sic a word. He kens my wark 's worth my wages whatever he likes to set me til. I s' gang back an' speir."

She turned, and set off at a rapid pace.

Cosmo looked at Elsie. She had turned white—with the whiteness of fear, not of wrath. She had not expected such de-

cisive action. She would be at once exposed! Her father was a terrible man in his anger, and her conscience told her he would be angry indeed, angrier than she had ever seen him. She stood like a statue, her eyes fixed on the retreating form of the indignant Agnes. She had reached the top of the rising ground, and was beginning to disappear, ere the spell of her terror gave way. She turned with clasped hands to Cosmo, and murmured, her white lips hardly able to fashion the words.

"Mr. Warlock, for God's sake, cry her back. Dinna lat her gang to my father."

"Was the thing ye said no true?" asked Cosmo.

"Weel," faltered Elsie, searching inside for some escape from admission, "maybe he didna jist say the verra words!——"

"Aggie maun gang," said Cosmo.

"'T was a lee! 't was a lee!" gasped Elsie.

Cosmo ran, and from the top of the rise, called aloud,

"Aggie! Aggie! come back."

Beyond her he saw another woman approaching. Aggie turned at his call, and came to him quickly.

"She confesses it's a lee, Aggie," he said.

"She wadna, gien she hadna seen I was gaein' straucht til her father!" replied Agnes, shaking her head a little vindictively.

"I daursay; but God only can see intil the true differ 'atween what we du o' oorsel's an' what we're gart (*compelled*). We maun hae mercy, an' i' the meantime she's ashamed eneuch. At least she has the luik o' 't."

"It's ae thing to be ashamed 'cause ye hae dune wrang, an' anither to be ashamed 'cause ye're f'un' oot!" insisted Agnes with a touch of obstinacy.

"Ay; but there compassion comes in to fill up. An' whan ye trait a body wi' generosity, the hert wauks up to be worthy o' 't."

"Cosmo, ye ken maist aboot the guid in fowk, an' I ken maist aboot the ill!" said Aggie.

Here the woman, who had been nearing them scarce observed while they talked, came up, and as they went back to Elsie where she still stood, followed them at her own pace.

"I beg yer pardon, Aggie," said Elsie, holding out her hand. "I was ill-natert, an' spak the thing wasna true. My father says there isna a better gaitherer i' the country-side nor yersel'."

Aggie took her offered hand, and said frankly,

"Lat by-ganes be by-ganes. Be true to me an' I'll be true to you. An' I winna lee whether or no."

And now the stranger joined them. She was a young woman in the garb of a peasant, but with something about her not of the peasant. At the first glance Aggie took her for a superior servant out for a holiday, but the second glance was bewildering.

She stopped, with a half timid, quiet look.

"Will you please tell me if I am on the way to Castle Warlock?" she said,

and dropped her eyes with a blush, and a quiver about the mouth which made her look like a child trying not to smile.

Cosmo had been gazing at her. The moment he heard her voice, he began to tremble. The next, he gave a cry, and was on his knees before her.

"Joan!" he gasped, and seizing her hand drew it to his lips, and held it there.

She made neither sound nor movement; her colour went and came; her head drooped; she would have fallen, but Cosmo rising received her in his arms, and taking her like a child, began to walk swiftly homeward.

Aggie had one short fierce struggle with her rising heart, then turned to Elsie and said quietly,

"Ye see we're no wantit!"

"I see," returned Elsie. "But eh, she's a puir cratur!"

"No sae puir!" answered Aggie. "Wad *ye* dress up like a gran' leddy to gang efter yer laad?"

"Ay wad I—fest eneuch!" answered Elsie with scorn.

Aggie saw her mistake.

"Did ye tak nottice o' her han's?" she said.

"No, I didna."

"Ye never saw sic han's! Did ye tak nottice o' her feet?"

"No, I didna."

"Ye never saw sic feet! Yon's ane 'at canna gether, nor bin', nor stook, but she's bonny a' throuw, an' her voice is a sang, an' it's throuw fire an' throuw watter she'll gang, ohn blinkit, for her love's sake. Yon's the lass for oor laird! The like o' you an' me needsna trible heid nor hert aboot the likes o' *him*."

"Speyk for yersel', lass," said Elsie.

"I tellt ye," returned Aggie quietly, "'at gien ye wad be true to me, I wad be true to you; but gie yersel' airs, an' I say guid nicht, an' gang efter my fowk."

She turned and departed, leaving Elsie more annoyed than repentant. It may take a whole life to render a person capable of shame, not to say sorrow, for the meanest thing he has done.

As she followed Cosmo with his treasure, Aggie's heart lay stone-like within her, but her brain was alive and active for his sake. Cosmo set Joan down, and they went walking on side by side.

"What are they gaein' to du?" thought Aggie. "Are they gaein' straucht hame thegither? What for cam she never till the auld laird was awa'? An' what for comes she noo?" Question after question she kept asking herself in her carefulness over Cosmo.

They passed the turning Aggie must take to go home. She passed it too, following them steadily.—That old Grizzie was no good! She must go with them! If the reason for which she left the castle was a good one, she must now for the same reason go back to it! Those two must not be there with nobody to make them feel comfortable and taken care of! They must not be left to awkwardness together! She would be a human atmosphere about them, to shield them, and make home for them! Love itself may

be too lonely! It needs some reflection of its too lavish radiation!—Such was practically, though not altogether in form, what Agnes thought, or rather felt.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ANOTHER DUET.

In the meantime, the first whelming joy-wave having retired, and life and thought having resumed their operations, the two had begun to talk.

"Where have you come from?" asked Cosmo.

"From Cairntod, the same place we came from that first fierce winter night," answered Joan.

"But you are . . . When were you . . . How long . . . have you been married?"

"*Married!*" echoed Joan. "Cosmo!"

She looked up in his face, wild and frightened.

"Well, you never wrote, and——"

"It was you never wrote!"

"I did not, but my father did, and got no answer."

"I wrote and wrote again, and *begged* for an answer, but none came. If it hadn't been for the way I dreamed about you, I don't know what would have become of me!"

"Some one has been at such tricks as I should have thought out of fashion!"

"Doubtless! I fear. . . . I dare hardly. . . ."

"And Mr. Jermyn?" said Cosmo, with a look half shy, half fearful, as if after all some bolt must be about to descend upon him.

"I can tell you very little about him. I have scarcely seen him since he brought me the money you sent me."

"Then he didn't . . . ."

"Well, what didn't he?"

"I have no right to ask."

"Ask me *anything*."

"Then—didn't he ask you to marry him?"

Joan laughed.

"I had begun to fear he had some-

thing of the kind in his head, when all at once I saw no more of him."

"How was that?"

"I can only guess: he may have spoken to my brother."

"You must have missed him!"

"Life *was* a little duller."

"If he *had* asked you to marry him, Joan?"

"Well?"

"Would you?"

"*Cosmo!*"

"You told me I might ask you anything!"

She stood, turned to the roadside, and sat down on the low earth-dyke. Her face was white.

"Joan! Joan!" cried Cosmo, darting to her side; "what is it, Joan?"

"Nothing; only a little faintness. I have walked a long way and am tired."

"What a brute I am," cried Cosmo, "to let you walk! I will carry you."

"Indeed you will not!" she answered, moving a little from him.

"Do you think then you could ride on a man's saddle!"

"I think so. I could well enough if I were not tired. But let me be quiet a little."

They were near the place where Cosmo's horse must be waiting him: he had told his groom not to come so far as the night before. He hurried on to bring the horse, and send the man home with a message to Grizzie.

To Joan it was a terrible moment. Had she, frightful thought! acted on a holy faith which yet had no foundation? Had she come to him to be asked whether she would not have married his friend! Alas, she had taken much for understood that was not understood!

When she sat down, Agnes stopped—a good way off: till the moment of service should arrive she would be nothing. Once and again she started to run to her, for she feared something had gone wrong, but checked herself lest she should cause more mischief. When, however, she saw her at last sink sideways on the dyke, she ran; but seeing Cosmo hastening back, she stopped yet again.

Before he reached her Joan had sat up. The same faith, or perhaps rather hope, which had taken shape in her dreams, now woke to meet the necessity of the hour. She rose as Cosmo came near, said she felt better now, and let him put her on the horse.

But now Joan was determined to face the worst—to learn her position, and know what she had to do.

"Has the day not come yet, Cosmo?" she said. "Will you not now tell me why you left me so suddenly?"

"It *may* come with your answer to my question whether——"

"You are cruel, Cosmo!"

"Am I? How? I don't understand."

This was worse and worse! It made Joan more than almost angry. It is so horrid when the man you love *will* be stupid! She turned her face away, and did not speak.

A man must sometimes take his life in his hand, and at the risk of even unpardonable presumption, suppose a thing yielded, that he may know whether

it be or not; but Cosmo was truly somewhat of the innocent Aggie took him for.

"Joan, I don't see how I am wrong, after the permission you gave me!" persisted he, too modest. "Agnes would have answered me straight out!"

"How do you know that?" she asked, almost imperiously, turning towards him, but widening the distance between them.

"I asked her to marry me," replied Cosmo.

"*You asked her to marry you!*"

"Yes; but she wouldn't."

"Why wouldn't she?"

Joan's face was now red as fire, and she was biting her lip hard. It was well she was angry, or the blood would have gone elsewhere.

"She had more reasons than one. Oh, Joan, she *is* so good!"

"And you are going to marry her?"

Cosmo turned and called to Agnes, following some thirty yards behind them:

"Come here, Aggie," he said.

Agnes came quickly.

"Tell lady Joan, Aggie," he said, "what for ye wadna merry me."

"'Deed, my leddy," said Agnes, her face also like a setting sun, "ye may believe onything he tells ye, jist as gien it war clean gospel. He disna ken hoo to mak a lee!"

"I know that as well as you," replied lady Joan.

"Na, ye canna du that, 'cause ye haena kent him sae lang."

"Will you tell me why you would not marry him?"

"For ae thing, 'cause he likit you better nor me. Only he thoucht ye was merriet, an' he didna like lattin' me gang frae the hoose."

"Thank you, Agnes," said Joan, with a smile nothing less than heavenly.

And therewith she slipped from the saddle, threw her arms round Aggie's neck, and kissed her.

Aggie returned her embrace with simple truth, then disengaged herself gently, and said, putting her hand before her eyes as

if she found the level sun too strong for them,

"It's verra weel for you, my leddy, but it's some sair upo' me; for I tellt him he cudna merry his mither, an' ye're ful as aul' 's mysel'!"

Joan gave a sigh.

"I am a year older, I believe," she answered, "but I cannot help it! Nor would I if I could; for three years ago I was still less worthy of him than I am now. And after all, time is but a trifle."

"Na, my leddy, it's no a triffle. But some fowk cairry their years lichter nor ithers."

Here Cosmo set Joan up again, and as they went on gave her a full explanation of his leaving her as he did. Neither of them thought of suppression because of Aggie's presence. She would have fallen behind, but Joan would not let her. She put down her hand, and made Agnes give her hers, and so kept her: she walked alongside of the horse, and heard all the story—with the rest of it, how Cosmo yielded Joan because poor Jermyn loved

her. She now laughed and now cried as she listened.

When Cosmo ceased, she put the hand that was free upon his shoulder, said, "Cosmo, ye're worth it a'!" then without removing her hand, turned her face to Joan and said,

"My leddy, I dinna grudge him to ye a bit noo 'at he's yours, an' a' 's come aboot as it sud. I'll be mysel' again noo —an' that ye'll see. But ye'll mak allooance, my leddy! for ye hae a true hert, an' maun ken 'at whan a wuman sees a man beirin' a'thing as gien it was naething—'maist like a god, no kennin' he's duin' onything by or'nar', she can no more help loein' him nor she can help loein' the mither 'at bore her, or the God 'at made her. An' mair, my leddy, I mean to loe him yet. But seein' 'at them 'at God has j'ined, man nor wuman maunna sun'er, I winna pairt ye even i' my min'. Whan I think o' the tane it'll be to think o' the tither; an' the love 'at gangs to him 'ill aye rin ower upo' you—forby what I beir ye on yer ain accoont.—Noo ye'll

gang on thegither again, an' I'll come 'ahin'."

It was now to Agnes as if they were all three dead and in the blessed world together—only she had brought with her an ache which it would take time to get tuned. Pain is discord.

"Ye see, my leddy," she concluded, as she turned aside to sit a moment on the bordering turf, "I hae been a mither til 'im!"

Who will care to hear how Joan went to visit relatives who to her surprise had begun to take notice of her! how she came with them, more gladly than they knew, on a visit to Cairntod! how such a longing seized her there that, careless of consequences, she donned a peasant's dress, and set out for Castle Warlock! how she thought she had lost her way, and was growing very uneasy, when she saw Cosmo against the sky before her!

"But what am I to do now, Cosmo?" she said. "What account of myself and my absence am I to give to my people?

You must get me out of the scrape somehow."

"I won't."

"What is to become of me then?"

"You'll have to stop in it. You must just tell them that you met an old lover, and finding him now a rich man, like a prudent woman consented to marry him off-hand."

"I must not tell a story."

"Pray, who asks you to tell a story?"

"You do, telling me to say I found my lover a rich man!"

"I do not. I am rich."

"Not in money."

"Yes, in money."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I forgot. How could I remember with you there, filling up all my seeing and thinking!"

"But what am I to do to-night?"

"To-night?—Oh!—I hadn't thought of that!—Aggie!"

Aggie came again to his call, and was consulted. She thought for a minute.

"As sune 's ye're hame, Cosmo," she

said, "ye'll sen' yer man straucht awa' upo' the horse to lat my leddy's fowk ken what's come o' her. She better write them a bit letter, an' jist tell them she's fa'en in wi' an auld acquantance, a lass ca'd Agnes Gracie, a dacent yoong wuman, an' haein' lost her ro'd,—for ye did lowse the straucht ane, my leddy, an' hae come far aboot—an' bein' unco tired, she's gaein' hame wi' her to sleep. That w'y the' 'll be nae lees tellt, an' no ower muckle o' the trowth."

Cosmo began to criticize, but Joan insisted it should be as Aggie said.

When they arrived at the castle, Grizzie was not a little scandalized to see her young master with a country-lass on his horse, and making so much of her. But when she was given to understand who she was, and that she had *dressed up* in order to make her way to Castle Warlock on foot, she was filled with approbation even to delight.

"Eh, but ye 're a lass to mak a man prood, my leddy!" she exclaimed. "Sit ye doon, my leddy, an' be richt walcome.

—I' the auld laird's ain cheir, my leddy ! —Eh, but ye 're bonny, as ever was ony ! An' eh, but ye 're steady as never was leddy ! May the Lord bless ye, an' the laird kiss ye ! "

This outbreak of benediction rather confused Cosmo, but Joan laughed merrily, being happy as a child. Aggie turned an expostulating face to Grizzie in dread of more ; but the true improviser seldom, I fancy, utters more than six lines together.

They had supper. And then a cart came rumbling to the door, half full of straw, into which Joan and Aggie scrambled. A few eggs, and some milk, and several other things were handed in, and thus the friends set out for Muir o' Warlock. In the morning lady Joan declared she had never slept sounder than in old Grannie's box-bed.

Cosmo and Joan were married almost immediately, and nobody's leave asked. Cosmo wrote informing lord Mergwain of the fact, and had in return, from one writing as his lordship's secretary, an

acknowledgment of the receipt of his letter.

Of what they told each other, and what they did; of the way they lived, and how blessed they were even when not altogether happy—of these things, I say nothing, leaving them to the imagination of him who has any, while for him who has none I grudge the labour, thinking he would rather hear how much Cosmo got for his diamonds, and whether lord Mergwain married, or Cairncarque came to lady Joan. But neither will I tell him these, for upon such things even *he* is capable of employing his fancy, and it would be a pity to prevent his doing the little he can.

I will close my book with a poem Cosmo wrote—not that night, but soon after. In the height of joy the poet may flash out in a phrase or two, but he writes no poem then. The joy has begun to be garnered ere the soul to sing of it. How we shall sing when we believe and know and *feel* that *our life is hid with Christ in God!*

Here is my spiritual colophon.

All things are shadows of thee, Lord;
  The sun himself is but thy shade;
My spirit is the shadow of thy word,
  Thy candle sun-bedayed!

Diamonds are shadows of the sun;
  They gleam as after him they hark:
My soul some arrows of thy light hath won,
  And round me slays the dark!

All knowledge is but broken shades—
  In gulfs of dark a wandering horde:
Together rush the parted glory-grades—
  And lo, thy garment, Lord!

My soul, the shadow, still is light,
  Because the shadow falls from thee;
I turn, dull candle, to the centre bright,
  And home flit shadowy.

Shine, shine; make me thy shadow still—
  The brighter still the more thy shade;
My motion be thy lovely moveless will!
  My darkness, light delayed!

THE END.

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