THE AYRSHIRE ASSOCIATION
PRIZE STORY.

CRAIGIELINN;
BY F. E. RENWICK.

"Aye be Ladd!"

EDITED BY VINCENT PYKE,
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
WILLIAM MACDONALD, L.L.D.,
RECTOR OF THE HIGH SCHOOL OF OTAGO.

Dunedin:
PUBLISHED FOR THE AYRSHIRE ASSOCIATION BY JOSEPH BRAITHWAITE.
1881.
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PRINTED BY "OTAGO DAILY TIMES" AND "WITNESS" COMPANY, LIMITED.

MDCCCLXXXIV.
INTRODUCTION.

"CRAIGIELINN" won the first prize in the competition for Scottish stories held by the Ayrshire Association. There was some difference of opinion among the judges as to which should be second, but there was none as to which should be first. In these circumstances this tale might well have been left to make its own way with the world; but its author has been good enough to ask me to write a few lines of introduction to it, and I have consented to do so.

The first recommendation of this story is the excellent knowledge of the Scottish language which it displays. Nor is this slight praise. The old Doric language seems dying out, and there is none to do it honour. William Black, Charles Gibbon, and George Macdonald have done much to keep it alive in the pages of contemporary fiction. It is not too much to say that, in his own humble way, our author is not unworthy to be mentioned beside these great names. Then the story itself has claims upon our notice. It is simple, natural, and easy. There is no straining after effect. The characters are clearly drawn, and, so far as the size of the canvas allows, well filled in. Thirdly, one must not forget the beautiful descriptive passages that occur here and there throughout the story. These are quietly introduced, and fit well in to the general flow of the narrative. They are well conceived, and well expressed. And, lastly, there are the touches of humour—for what would a Scottish story be without humour?

Whoever writes a story in the Scottish language necessarily appeals to a somewhat narrow circle of readers. Let all within that circle—all who appreciate a simple and truthful Scottish tale—read this little book. They will not be disappointed.

W. MACDONALD, LL.D.,
Rector of the High School of Otago.

DUNEDIN,
6th April, 1884.
[COPY.]

St. Andrew's Manse,

Dunedin, January 8th, 1884.

Mr. C. F. MacLean,

Hon. Secretary Ayrshire Association,

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to make known to you the decision of the Examiners on Tales submitted to them for examination.

The Examiners recommend for first prize the story "Craigielin"—and for second, "Caberfeidh."

Yours very truly,

Rutherford Waddell,

On behalf of self and the Examiners.
PREFATORY EPISTLE.

To my dear Bairns.

I am just writing this for the information o' my bairns, but mair especial for the lassies, who may tak' twa-three hints frae their auld mither's experience, that may be o' service till them when they win their way through the world. I hae heard it taunt that there's a lesson in every life and a warnin' in too mony. I dinna ken that there's ony special warnin in my ain; but ye may gather frae it, that the maist leal friends are no them that flitter round ye when ye're simmerin' in the golden sunlicht o' prosperity, but thae that hund till ye wi' a gude honest grip, in the cauld days o' distress, an' the dark hour o' difficulty.

I am no very gude at the hand-write; for I didna get the fine schoolin' that's gi'en noo wi' sic open hand to a' folk, gentle and simple alike, and for which ye should be abundantly thankfu'. But I couldna bide to 'lay me down an' dee,' as the sang says, without leaving an account o' how your faither and mysel' forgathered in the braw lang syne, in the dear auld land, that ye hae never seen.

Frae your loving Mither,

JANET DAVIDSON.

Craigielinn, Otago,
1st June, 1883.
Folk hae aften wondered what for our place is ca’d Craigielinn when it is maistly fine open land wi’ no a craig or a linn on’t. Wiel we just gave it the name out o’ richt-doun love and affection for the auld house at hame, where I was born and dwelt till the event happened that I hae set forth to relate. A bonnie bit spot was auld Craigielinn, an’ it was no misca’d; for about a mile, or aiblins a bittock mair, aboon the house, there was a grand fall o’ water comin’ doun through the rocks. The burn that wimpled in the strath came a long way frae the mountains, danderin’ and singin’ amang the bracken an’ the heather; some said it came trae the tapinest crown o’ the Carricks. I canna say how that may be; but it was sic a weary way that it seemed glad to fall intil a sma’ loch in the upper glen, and to rest a while in its peacefu’ bosom. Then it creepit quietly out again, and keepit on its appointed course, atween tall owre-hangin’ craigs where the sun never got sight o’ it, till, wi’ a great leap, it spang oot o’ the darkness, and owre the grey rocks intil the strath wi’ a great burst o’ song, as if it rejoiced in its deliverance frae bondage. Aboot half-way doun it dunted on a big stane which pairted the
waters, and made twa fine showers o' spray that mounted up again, glintin' like rainbows in the sunlight. On account o' this particularity it was ca'd the Twasome Linn; and sketcher bodies aften travelled up the glen to mak' pictures o' the scene. Ance out in the strath, the Linnburn went saftly on its way—its waters clear as the lift, and sweet as mornin' dew, and just aboon the house it was joined by anither stream that we ca'd the Birkburn, on account o' the bonnie sweet-scented birks that sat upon its banks. Aften in the dead o' nicht bae I lain in my bed, listenin' till the music o' thae twa burns as they brattled owre the peebles, croonin' and swellin' wi' delightsome murmurs, an' aye sendin' up praises till the Creator. No but I'm fain to confess that it was to ither things, sic as sangs an' frolicsome reels, that I maistly even'd it till in thae days. An' what for no? I was but a slip o' a lassie, an' youth is the proper season for enjoyment. Age is aye the time for reflection, an' the remembrance o' a weel-spent, canty youth is the finest cordial in a' the world to ease the carkin' cares o' life, when the e'en grow dim, and the ears grow dull, and we feel that the end o' our earthly pilgrimage is near at hand.

Farther down, the burn was joined by ither streams that came boundin' and brattlin' frae the hillsides wi' gladsome sounds; and the hail went dancin' through the strath, laughin' and daffin' like a wheen weans at the skailin' o' a schule, till they fell in with the Doon, aboon the Loch, just where the hills an' glens o' Carrick melt awa' intil the fertile leas and bonnie haughs o' Kyle. Ye'll bae heard the auld sayin'—"Kyle for a man, an' Carrick for a coo." Weel, I got my ain
gudeman frae Carrick, an' I'm bauld to say, there's no a better or a brawer in Kyle or Cunningham.

Craigielinn wasna muckle to speak o' as a house. Mr. McGelpin, the minister wha visited wi' us at orra times, an' was unco fu' o' learnin', used to say it was just "a parallelogram in stane." But it was a cosy build for a' that, an' my father—James Cranston—held house and lands in his ain richt as his forbears had done for mony generations. He was a grand auld man, aye tender and thochtful' in his ain dealin's wi' his bairns, an' wi' folk about him, an' much respectit by the neighbours; but he was awfu' stiff in his religious opinions, an' very strict in matters o' discipline. The Bible was his guide an' councillor in a' things; and onything that couldn'a be justified by reference to the Book, he reckoned o' sua' account. I mind bein' much impressed by his manner on one occasion when some o' the harvest folk conceited they were no sae weil paid as they should be, an' pit forward Willie Caird, the tinkler, as spokesman. Willie, he says—"Ye ken, laird, it's writ—'The labourer is worthy o' his hire.'"—"Eh, man," quo my father, "I se gie ye a better text than that in your loof. Is't no also writ—'Be content wi' your wage?"—An' he wadna bide mair contention about it. He was a dour man wi' wrang-headed folk, an' such as thawed him, or wadna tak' a richt view o' matters, like hinsel'.

I canna mind onything about my mither, for she passed out o' the world when I was a wee wean. An' I had nae brither, but only ae sister who was just twa years mair advanced in age than mysel'. Maggie was promised to young Robin Grant, the eldest son an'
heritour o' Gowanbraes, whose lands marched wi Craigielinn, an' the weddin' was fixed to tak' place after the ingatherin' o' the hair'st. On the strength o' her promotion, Maggie used to tak' maist amusin' matronly airs upon hersel', just by way o' gettin' her hand in. I dinna cast up ony blame till her for that. It is weel to be prepared aforhand for a' emergencies, but her meddlin' ways sometimes brought about unexpected consequences, as ye will see in the course o' my story. I maun tell ye, we were baith o' the same stature, an' much alike in features, only Maggie had brown hair an' mine was licht. Gowden the laddies ca'd it in thae days, but there's mair siller than gowd intilt noo, as is only richt. Folk said I favoured maist o' the mither's side, an' Meg o' the faither's. I canna tell; but it was settled that she was to hae house an' land as her portion, an' mine was to be in siller. My faither thocht to mak' a fine lairdship by combinin' Craigielinn wi Gowan-braes. While I hae had a notion that he was disappointed in no haein' a son to carry on the family; but he never sought anither wife. He wadna pit a step-mither owre us when we were weans for our ain sake, an' when we grew up he was raither auld, an' owre sensible to fash himsel' wi' the cares an' responsibilities o' matrimony. He said an auld body wadna suit him, an' as for a young lassie, he wadna suit her, sae he wad just bide his lane like the gudeman o' Uz.

We were a sma' family. Sae far as I kent, our only near kinswoman was Madam Cranston — my faither's aunt—an ancient lady, wha faithfully preserved the manners and virtues o' her youth. She
was a grand auld dame o' majestic proportions, wi' strongly-marked features, an' a firm but pleasin' expression o' countenance. I mind her weil, clad in a handsome gown o' pearl-grey silk, sae stiff that it could stand its lane, an' rustled like autumn leaves when she moved. She aye wore a fine white muslin kerchief owre her shoulders, drawn in tight till the waist, an' lang sleeves o' rich auld yellow lace reachin' down till her fingers, a' covered wi' rings. Her cap was trimmed wi' mair o' the same bonnie lace, an' fastened wi' braid bands under the chin. She had auld-fashioned high-heeled shoon wi' siller buckles; and though very upright and active for her age, she aye walked wi' a gowden-headed cane, as it seems was the custom o' ladies in her youthfu' days. An' she carried a torty-shell snuff-box a' mounted wi' gowd; but it was mair for ornament than use, though whiles she wad mak a great pretence o' takin' a sneeshin wi' a ivory spoon that was laid intil't. In fact Madam Cranston was just the same as a picture that had gotten awa frae the frame an' steppit out for a bit walk. But she was a kind hearted couthy auld leddy, an' we lasses were aye weil pleased to gie her a welcome at Craigielinn.

An' noo that I hae made ye acquaint wi' the auld house-place, and a' things needfu' for the richt understan' in' o' my story, I shall gae on till the relation o' what befel me in the maist eventful pairt o' my life.
PART SECOND.

I have aften observed how wisely things are ordered for our welfare, contrary till our ain inclinations at the outset. I had no thocht o' what the day would see the foundation o' when my faither forbade my gaein' amang the stocks when the hair'st was being gathered in. Every autumn afore I had a paint in the bindin', an' I was for awa out as usual when Mistress Maggie interposed in a masterfu' way that was richt-down vexatious. "Dae ye no think Janet's owre auld to be allowed amang the rigs?"—she asked at my faither. "She's no a wean noo ye ken."

"Aye," he said; "I believe ye're in the richt o'it, Maggie. The lassie has certainly grown in a won-nerfu' degree o' late; an' as ye say, its no fittin' for the laird's dochter to mix an' mell wi' the harvest folk."

I protested against this decision as stoutly as I kent how, but his will was like the laws o' the Medes and Persians. "Janet," he said, "tax down the Book, an' apply Ephesians, Sixth and First. Ye'll just stop at hame, and help your sister an' the maids at the housework. It's far mair seemly for ye than to be warslin' in the corn-rigs."

Then, seein' I was like to greet, he strokit my hair kindly, and said in a mair gentle tone o' voice—
"I ken weel my bonnie Janet will be a guid bairn, an' no vex her faither."

For a' that; when he was gane I sat me doun an' grat as if my heart wad break. I wanted out so sairly. The morn was fair as fair, wi' the sun shinin' brightly in the clear blue lift owre head; an' a saft breeze, sweet wi' the perfume o' heather, an' whins, an' clover-soukies, cam' waftlin doun frae the brae side, an' the lintie and the laverock made it sweeter wi' their blithsome carols. But the troubles o' the young are sune through, an' it wasna lang afore I was flittin' frae but to ben wi' a licht step, lilting like the happy birdies themsel's, sae that Meg was fair vexed at me, an' bade me no to be aye dinging senseless sangs in her lug.

I just laughed at her. "I didna ken it was forbidden to sing," quo' I. "It's a dour house ye'll be mak'in for Robin when ye're the leddy o' Gowanbraes, if a bit sang'll deave ye."

I should hae tell't ye that my faither selected the history o' Jepthah an' his dochter for the mornin' portion; an' on the ending o't he enlarged in a maist powerfu' manner on the virtues o' filial obedience, an' the blessings that waited on dutiful children. I kent fine this discourse was for my special benefit, even if Maggie had no dunted me with her elbow at the maist impressive passages. Sae I speered in a pauky way what was the special blessing vouchsafed till the Hebrew maiden? My faither respondit that her name an' fame had been handed down to posterity and keepit in reverence by a' the generations o' man.
"Aye," quo' I; "that's a fine thing; but I'm thinkin' I'll prefer to hae my name handed doun by my ain posterity."

Mistress Maggie made a pretence o' being awfu' shocked by this speech o' mine; but the laird seemed mair amused by it. "Weel, weel, Janet," he answered back; "ye're no that far wrang. It's just pure nature. When Maggie's awa, I'll hae to find a mon for yersel'. Eh! but it will be unco grievous to paint wi' baih. A toom house, an' a mirk ingle-neuk will'it be when I sit doun my lane. But richt is richt, an' I'll no allow my ain pleasure to stand in the way o' my bairn's manifest destiny."

"Dinna fash yersel' aboot it, faither," quo' I. "I'm no in ony haste to gang awa frae Craigielinn."

But I am rinnin' on an' on, an' I hae no yet specified the remarkable circumstance that cam' to pass on that day. While I fancy I am like a bairn that hauds a tight grip o' his bawbee as long as he can fend off the desire for sweeties. There cam' twa visitors to Craigielinn afore the sun draped ahint the Carricks that c'en.

Our lands being near the upper end o' Strathlinn, it was no aften that strangers came that way, only a wheen skether folk wanting to see the Twasome Linn, as I tell't ye, an' some that had business wi' the laird. Sae when I took the stoops an' the gir'\(^*\) to fetch water frae the burn, I had nae expectation o' meetin' onybody out o' the common. My gown was kilted aboon my waist an' I had pit aff my shoon an' stockings for mair comfort. It was late in the day;

\(^*\) "The stoops and the gir'"—The buckets and hoop (girdle).
the sun was fast westernin', an' the wind had died clean awa'. As I dandered down the way till the burn, the swish o' the reaper's scythes an' the cheerfu' voices o' the lads an' lasses laughin' amang the stooks were the only sounds that reached me, forbye the ripplin' o' the burn itsel'. The water looked sae cool an' temptin' that I didna fash mysel' to hasten back, but just stood quietly paidlin' in'it. Not bein' conscious o' the presence o' onybody, I kilted up my coatinies an' steppit out intil the middle o' the stream, croonin' a bit sang a' the while—

"Ca' the ewes to the knowes,
Ca' thein where the heather grows,
Ca' them where the burnie rows,
My bonnie dearie!"

Ye'll mind I was little mair than a wean, though sister Maggie wad hae't I was a woman. 'Deed I had arrived at the happy border-land atween the twa—the brawest and bonniest pairt o' existence. I was still lilting, and was stooping down to fill the stoups when someone near by spake—"Gude e'en till ye, lassie."

I lookit up and saw twa men stamin at the burn-side glowerin' at me. I was sae seaert that I didna wait to speer at them what they sought, but drappin' the stoups in the burn I sped up till the house as fast as my feet could take me. The strangers would be greatly amused nae doubt, to see me flecin' awa' in siccan a fearsome manner, wi bare legs, an' my hair loose about my shouthers. My snood cam' aff in my flight, an' when next I got it I had nae mair use for't. I burst through the yett and drave in at the door, pechin an out o' breath, like ane possessed. Maggie
was in the spence seein' till the ordering o' the supper, an' afore I could let out a word she turned on me wi' anger—"What's wrang wi' ye noo, ye daft hizzie?" she cried.

"Oh! Maggie, Maggie," I sobbed out, "There's twa ill-faur'd stranger folk down at the burn, an'"—keekin' out o' the window—"they are comin' up till the place."

Maggie looked too, an' sure eneuch the twa men were walkin' up frae the burn an' one o' them had my stoups carryin'. For a moment she seemed amaist as much pit aboot as mysel', but eh! she quickly recovered her dignity. "Tibbie," she said to ane o' the maids, "There's twa men comin' to see the laird. Ca' them in an' bid them sit down awhile."

Wi' that she carried me awa' to make me mair presentable as she said, and pairsty it was sae, for I stood in sair need o' a redding-up. But she didna forget to pit on her ain best gown, and to gie hersel' a general smartenin'. When I asked at her for a ribbon to busk my hair wi', she gave me a maist potential look. "Eh, Janet!" she cried, "a mair ominous and unchancy thing couldna possibly hae happened till ye than to hae tint your snood at sicht o' a man!" An' sic a lecture as she favoured me wi' aboot my behaviour, and the necessity o' beginning to prepare mysel' for takin' her place in the family, could surely only hae come frae the inspiration o' impending matrimony.

I am fain to confess that when I spake o' the visitors as being ill-faur'd, I was guilty o' a libel. They were no that. The elder o' the twa was a fine looking man, apparently aboot forty years auld, or may be a wee
mair, wi' keen grey een that seemed to observe everything. He wore a handsome beard, covering a' the lower pairt o' his face, an' flowin' down to his breast, which, wi' his weel-brownd complexioin, gave him quite a patriarchal appearance. It was easy to ken that he wasna frae our pairt o' the country, both by his manner, which was mair free an' open than was customary wi' our folk, an' also by his toun-made claes, though I couldna but observe that these were raither auld and worn. But what maist invited my attention was a peculiar burr in his speech. I was sure I hadn' seen him before, and still there was a strange familiar sound in his voice that I could in no way account for. He gave his name as Mr. Renwick, an' said he had come a long way, but didna mention what for.

"Maybe ye'll be wantin' the laird," quo' Maggie in her maist consequential style o' speech. "He's awa' wi' the hair'st-folk just noo, but he's aye hame about the gloaming."

"Just sae," he answered, "I came to see Craigielinn. I suppose ye'll be his daughter. My young friend here tells me there's no a son."

The "young friend" was Colin Davidson, a callant with whom we were slightly acquent, he being the son o' a sma' farmer frae the Shaws at the far end o' the Strath. I hae since learnt to appreciate his mony excellent qualities; but at that time I kent little aboot him, only that he had the name o' bein' one o' the best hands at the plough in the hail country-side. A' the same he was a braw laddie; I couldna but see that, as he sat there sae douce-like and quiet. An' I
confess my een rested wi' pleasure on his comely face, set in a frame o' curly brown locks, and on his buirdly weil-proportioned form. But no thocht had I o' ony personal feelin'. I was fain o' a' things bonnie, frae the kye in the byre to the paitrick on the brae, and the laverock in the lift; an' what for should I no entertain the same regard for ony ither thing, even though it happened to take the shape o' a strappin' chiel?

Colin an' I left the conversation maist entirely till our elders, as was becoming o' young folk. But indeed, I never had much to say in the presence o' strangers. My eyes and ears were aye owre busy to gie fair play to my tongue. Maggie plied Mr. Renwick wi' mony inquiries, but he wasna very communicative. —"Aiblins ye'll be frae Ayr," quo she, having the same thocht as mysel' aboot his bein' a far-awa visitor. "Aye, aye; an' a long way ayont. I'll wait," said he, "for my— I mean I'll bide a wee till Craigielinn comes hame."

He said this in a way that plainly expressed his desire no' to be questioned further. Meg bridled up, and putting on her maist matronly air, she said—"Ye'll excuse, me', Sirs, for leavin' ye. I hae the house-wark to min'; but sit ye down till I send ye in re-freshments. Janet'll keep ye company while I'm awa."

Sae aff she marched, leavin' puir me to do the honours. Tibbie cam wi' what Maggie grandly ca'd "refreshments," meaning cakes and scones and cheese and butter and honey, an' sic like—no forgettin' the whisky. An' there sat I, no able to find a word, or to say it if I'd gotten't. I was just cogitatin' how to slip
awa, when young Davidson, thinkin' maybe to hearten me, says—"I hope we didna gie ye a fright, Miss Janet."

He couldn'a hae hit on a mair confusin' theme. A' at ance as he spake a picture came intil my thochts o' the silly appearance I maun hae presented—rinnin' awa, kilted and bare-legged. I tried hard to answer, but something came intil my throat, an' choked my power o' speech. I felt I was takin' an awfu' red face, an' the tears were forcin' their way intil my een, in spite o' a' I could do to restrain them. I think Mr. Renwick understood my trouble, for he turned till Davidson, an' bade him seek my father. "Tell the laird," he said, "I'm waiting on him." An' as he walked to the door wi' Colin, I heard him sayin' very saftly—"Could ye no think o' onything pleasanter than yon to say till the lassie?"

Then he came back an' sat down, and takin' a dram in his hand, he began crackin' wi' me in such a gentle, kindly fashion that my tears ran back till their fountains, an' I found my voice, an' entered freely intil conversation. I was quite at hame wi' him at ance, and afore onybody came to interrupt us, he had gotten out o' me a' aboot my father, an' the mailin', an' the neighbours, an' the linn, an' the birken-shaw, an' I dinna ken what a'. When my father an' Colin came in I was in the full swing o' pleasant converse. I canna richtly say if it was the presence o' the laird or that o' young Davidson that daunted me; but frae the time they entered my tongue stoppit waggin', and I wadna say anither word mair than just "Aye," or "No." Now I come to think o't, I incline to the
opinion that Colin was the cause o' my silence. Ilka
time I caught the glance o' his blue een, that weary
picture o' me fleelin' frae the burn would come up afore
me. When I had been alane wi' Mr. Renwick I never
once took thocht o' it. Ye ken he was by comparison
an auld man, which makes a' the differ till a young
lassie.

PART THIRD.

It aye behoves bairns to speak well o' their
parents, though it's to be feared that mony must do so
wi' a sair heart, bein' forced till't by what Mr.
McGelpin ca'd "a pious fraud." But it's no flattery
nor filial affection on my part gars me to say, that
when my faither was dispensing hospitality he was a
prince in his demeanour. The McCallum Mohr himself'
couldna hae displayed mair dignity than the Laird
o' Craigiellinn on such occasions. It was a sight to
witness the stately way he steppit ben the house and
bade his guest welcome. I observed Mr. Renwick cast
a quick, anxious glance at him as he came through the
door, as though he expectit something unusual: an' I
fancied the light died out o' his een, an' a shadow
creepit owre his face, after the first few words had been
spoken atween them.

Supper bein' laid my father bade the stranger an'
Colin Davidson sit intil the table, an' partake o' the
mercies. "We'll no be fashed wi' business till the cravin's o' the natural man hae been satisfied," he said. An' now a singular thing happened;—I dinna think anybody remarked it only mysel'. When the laird askit a blessing on the gude things sae bountifully provided for our sustenance, an' on a' the people in the house, he pit in a special petition for "the stranger under oor roof." Just at this point, Mr. Renwick was visibly affected. His hand that rested on the table trembled, an' looking up till his face I saw a big tear drop tricklin' doun his beard. But immediately he recovered himsel' an' joined in the conversation as canty as ever. It seemed he had been a great traveller in various pairs o' the earth, an' maist specially in Australia and New Zealand. He tauld us o' the big sheep runs and cattle farms, the amazin' extent o' which fair astonished us a'; an' when he said one man often held as much as fifty, an' even a hundred thousand acres o' land for a sheep-walk, payin' an inconsiderable trifle o' rent for the use on't, we set it doun as pure romancing. 'My faither who thocht himsel' a man o' gude standin', on the strength o' possessing nearly three hundred acres o' his ain, an' rentin' anither hundred acres, evidently didna believe a word o'it. He couldn' contradict a guest in his ain house, but I could see that his manner changed. No man was mair keen to resent ony attempt at misleadin' him, an' he thocht Mr. Renwick was far exceeding the ordinary license o' travellers.

"A'weel, Mr. Renwick," quo' he; "it's a far cry till thae countries ye speak o', an' aiblins the land eateth up the inhabitants thereof, as was reported o'
Canaan. Ye ken the auld sayin'—'Better a wee house than nae build.' I tak' ye for a countryman, though ye hae a foreign-like tongue in your heid, which comes nae dout o' being' sae lang abroad. In fac' I dinna ken but maybe we're sib. My ain mither was a Renwick, frae Langholm, in Dumfries."

If the laird's mither had been a gun, the firing o't couldna hae startled our guest mair than this sudden mention o' her name. He didna immediately make ony answer, for wrastlin' wi' his neb, which he blew baith loud an' lang. When he had gotten the mastery o't, he said very saftly that it was quite within the limits o' possibility that we were kinsfolk. "And, indeed," said he "I will be very well pleased if it is so; for I have aye heard James Cranston o' Craighielinn spoken of wi' great respect, which I am sure is weel deserved."

This gracious speech restored my faither's good humour; and, supper being owre, he invited Mr. Renwick to give the be-thanked, which he did in a maist eloquent manner, fervently beseeching Providence to bestow his choicest gifts on the family an' to prosper a' their undertakings. I mind ane pairt which made a great impression on me, when he askit help an' mercy for a' wanderers by sea and land, an' a speedy return to the fauld frae which they had strayed. My faither was sensibly affected; an' frae that moment the stranger rose in his estimation. I'm sure he pit aside ony vexation he might hae felt on account o' Mr. Renwick's havers aboot thae big sheep-farms; for, biddin' Meg hae the guest-chamber got ready, he went
bon wi' him till the best room, tae hae a quiet twa-handed crack, leaving us young folk till oursels.

I need scarcey say that Colin Davidson got sma' peace till he had tauld us a' he kent aboot the stranger. But its ill drinkin' frae a toon quaich; an' it sune appeared that Colin kent nae mair than that Mr. Renwick cam till the Shaws on the previous day an' bided on till the mornin'. He made searchin' inquiries, Colin said, aboot our folk, an' frae his questions it wad seem that he had been acquaint wi' the laird in his early days.

"'Deed then," quo Maggie; "gin that's a' ye ken aboot him what for did ye bring him on here?"

"Weel, Miss Maggie," said Colin, "I was comin' mysel, onyway, to gie a hand at the hairst, and I thocht nae harm to let the auld man come wi' me. But I'll no deny I had some curiosity to find oot mair aboot him, an' I kent fine that Craigielinn wad sune sort him."

I may say here, that Colin had been in the way o' comin' to help at the hairst frae the time he was a bit haolin'. Our land lying mair intil the hills, the corn ripened later than in the open ground, an' it was a neighbourly action on the part o' young men who could be spared frae their ain mailin's to help at the ingathering. The weather was aye fickle towards the end o' the season, an' although Craigielinn lands were maistly pasture, an' no sae fit for corn, it was desirable to get in what corn there was wi' great expedition.

"Dae ye believe a' they screeds aboot the big farms in foreign pairs?" speered Meg.
Colin thocht awhile afore he answered. Then he said—"I hae been gatherin' information, and though I canna say that I believe Mr. Renwick's statements a'thegither, I'm free to admit there's a great openin' in yon countries for young folk, no fear'd o' work, wha dinna min' roughing it a wee at first startin'. There's a hantle o' folk gaun awa frae these pairs to make hames in the wilderness at a place ca'd Otago. I got the account o't frae the Greenock Advertiser, an' there's a minister gaun oot wi' them, an' what's mair—he's sib to Rabbie Burns."

This was such extraordinary news that we clean forgot the stranger. Maggie an' I sat spell-bound as ye may say, while Colin gave us a' the information he had aboot this wonderfu' thing. "An' whaur's Otago?" quo' I.

"That's mair than I can richtly tell," quo' he. "A' I ken aboot it is that it's on the ither side o' the warld, an' mony thousands o' miles awa."

"But Colin," said I, "gin it's on the vera ither side o' the warld how can folk stan'. The warld's round, ye ken, an' they wad fa' aff."

Colin tried to explain the matter, but we puir silly lassies couldna awa wi' his talk.—"Hoot awa wi' your blethers," cried Maggie. "Ye're just tryin' to stuff us wi' havers. Wad ye hae me believe that a wheen douce folk, an' a minister too, aboon a'—are gaein till a country where they maun walk wi' their heids doun—most. It's just impossible, an' maist outrageous. Whatna kind o' limmers wad venture at ony sic doin's? I'm richt doun angered wi' ye Colin Davidson for lattin' on aboot sic a thing till the dochters o' Craigielinn."
Afore he could answer back, she was up an’ out o’ the spence in a huff. The puir lad looked sae vexed and dounecast at Mistress Maggie’s rebuke that I felt sorry for him; an’ a’ the mair because my unfortunate question had provoked the storm. I couldn’a help gaein’ owre till his side. “Dinna min’ her flytin’, Colin,” quo’ I.

He took my hand intil his ain very gently, an’ in a broken voice he spereed at me—“Ye dinna think I’m leein’, Janet?”

There was an expression o’ great pain in his face, but the clear licht o’ truth shone frae his een, an’ my heart went fairly out till him. “No, Colin,” I said, “I am certain ye tauid na lee. It’s no that easy to understand how it can be as ye say, but I believe ye for a’ that.”

Ye hae aften seen when the lift has been owrecast wi’ darksome clouds, how the sun has brak through an’ brightened a’ the earth. The look o’ gladness that spread owre Colin’s countenance at my simple words was just like that. “Ye canna tell how much I’m behauden till ye,” quo’ he. “Mistress Maggie can be as dorty as she likes; if you believe me, I winna min’. Janet, lassie, I’m no gude at the explainin’. But I ken it’s a’ true that I tell’t ye. I wadna an’ I couldn’a lee to ye, Janet. Aye think that o’ me.”

I promised aye would I. It was no much he asked at me. My heart was sae full o’ sympathy for his distress at bein’ doubted that I wad hae done much mair than that to pleasure him.

Didna somebody say that Pity was the foster-mother o’ Love?
PART FOURTH.

A week had come and gone, and Mr. Renwick was still our guest. What was the business atween himsel' an' my faith' naebody kent but their twa selves. Many were the private confabs they held; but nothing was said afore folk. I got to hae a likin' for the auld gentleman—he was aye sae canty and pleasant-mannered. An' I may say that the likin' was mutual. Maggie he kind o' endured; but I was his constant companion whenever I could spare time frae my household duties. I mind one mornin' he bade me pit on my hood, and gang wi' him to the shaw at the heed o' the Birkburn. I was only owre weel pleased to be awa' frae Maggie, who seemed to be gettin' mair masterful an' camstairly, the nearer she approached the time o' her flittin'. That is just one o' the days I will never forget. Mr. Renwick and mysel' went gaily up the wee glen, stopping now an' again to listen till the chant o' the mavis and the cooin' o' the cushie-doo, while I pu'd deadmen's bells—that's foxglove ye ken—an' the bonnie hare-bells frae the mossy banks where they nestled. An' he tauld me that in thae far lands where he had spent maist pairt o' his life, there were nae sic sweet-voiced birds, nor ony flowers to equal the spontaneous beauties o' the auld country. His words had a sough o' tender music in them when he went on to express his delight at bein' amang auld sights and sounds again. He said, his one prayer had
been no for gold or gear, but to be permitted to come
back to the hame o' his forbears, afore he was ca'd
awa. Mony a time sin-syne the same longin' for hame
has taken hold o' mysel'; but eh! I hae my children
round me, an' my dear auld guidman by my side, and
puir Mr. Renwick had neither wife nor wean to bear
him company in his wanderings.

I felt convinced that the stranger to whom I was
sae powerfully attached kent mair o' the country than
he cared to let out. For ae thing he asked at me, was
the auld "muckle rowan" still standin'. Now there
was only the one, and that was in a neuk no aften
frequented. An' when I said — "Aye,"—he didna
inquire the way, but went straight till't like one weel
aequent wi' the place. But maist extraordinar' o' a',
he ca'd my attention to some letters carved in the
trunk o' the tree, sae faintly visible that I hadna
noticed them afore, aften as I had gathered berries frae
the branches. There they were—"D. R. C."—The
last letter couldna be seen till I had rubbed aff some
o' the moss that covered it. "An' what do they stan'
for?" quo' I.

"Well," he said, "they may be the initials o' Donald
Roy, the last laird o' Craigha'; but some say they
were placed there lang-syne by a ne'er-do-weel callant,
wha brought shame on himsel' and a' belonging to him,
an' had just sufficient sense to flee awa to the utter-
most ends o' the earth, an' obliterae himsel' an' his
shame frae a' human remembrance."

What could I say? The words "Puir fallow!" just
dropped frae my lips without any intervention
o' my ain.
Mr. Renwick turned on me wi' sic' a sudden jerk that it gart me jump. "Can ye feel ony pity for siccan a wretch?" quo he—wi' thae shairp een o' his keekin straight through me.

I lookit him in the face an' answered—"Aye, 'deed can I. I hae nae dount the 'wretch' as ye ca' him, suffered far mair than thae whose pride he laid laigh, aiblins by ane sempie act o' wrong-doin'; an' it wad hae been muckle mair to their credit as douce Christian folk if they had ta'en the misguided creature by the han' and held him wi' the steadfast grip o' love an' kindness, to save him frae black despair, and bring him back intil the fauld o' righteousness."

Mr. Renwick gave me such a look as an affectionate parent might bestow on a well-lo'ed child. "Janet," quo he, "Your mither must hae been a gude woman."

Aften an' aften hae I thocht upon thae words. "Your mither must hae been a gude woman!" I hope my sons will keep it in mind when they seek mither's for their ain weans. Eh! but it's an awfu' responsibility a man puts on himsel' when he undertakes to provide a mither for his children. Many dinna find it out till it's too late, and the mischief is past mendin'. An' owre aften the world, the flesh, an' the deevil hae the makin' o' the contract.

There were twa things needed explanation in Mr Renwick's words. Firstly, how did he ken sae weel to find thae letters in the muckle rowan; an' secondly, in what way had he gotten sic a insight intil their meaning? These questions darted through my mind as soon as my temporary excitement passed owre; an' I must hae shown my thocht in my face. My faither
aften said I couldna' keep a secret by ony possibility, for it came out in big print on my countenance, which, he said,—half daffin', half earnest—was like a horn lantern, showin' a glimmer o' the licht within. Mr. Renwick pit his arm on my shouther in his fatherly way, an' quo he—"Dinna mention onything o' what I hae said to ye till I gae awa." I pledged my word I would be as silent as the mools. "But," said I, "there's just ae' think I would be thankfu' to hae made plain to me, and that is—wha was Donald Roy, an' what is the Craigha' that ye spak' o'?"

"Eh?" quo he, seemingly greatly surprised at my ignorance; "Do ye no ken the traditions o' the house? Surely ye maun hae heard o' the auld prophecy:

When the linn shall be a loch,
   An' the loch shall be a linn,
The laird o' Craigie house,
   Craigha' shall shelter in."

"No, indeed," quo I, "but I have aften been tauld o' anither—

When the burnie rin's owre the mountain tap,
   An' the linn than the loch is higher,
The stot shall stable in Craigielinn's house,
   An' the laird shall lie out in the byre."

"My faither," I said, "aften dings it intil us, no that he thinks onything o'it, but just to exemplify the foolishness o' human beings tryin' to raise the veil o' futurity. 'I'm the last Cranston o' Craigielinn, says my faither, 'an' there's nae sign o' me lyin' out in the byre.' But I ken its only a fule-verse. What should make the burn rin owre the tap o' the mountain, an' how is't possible for the linn to raise aboon the loch?"
“Aye,” quo Mr. Renwick, “that’s sae. But I must inform you that Craigehea’ an’ the byre are the same, which makes the last line o’ each version o’ the prophecy rin alike ye’ll observe. There’s no difference atween lyin’ in the byre, an’ shelterin’ in Craigehea’.”

In order that ye may understand this, I must tell ye that just ayont the house, on a steep knowe, commanding a fine view o’ the strath, there were the remains o’ what had once been a considerable mansion. The only pairt standing was a big hall, wi’ a stane floor, an’ amazin’ thick walls, in which sma’ narrow windows were set at distant an’ regular intervals. These were less for givin’ light, it seemed, than for observation an’ defence, in the quarrelsome auld days when the hall was set up. The roof was quite gone, but the place made a snug byre for the kye an’ was sae used by us. At one end there was a round tower, over an arch which opened on the hall, an’ up in the tower there was a covered chamber, which had been a favourite neuk o’ mine in wet weather, but just then it was filled wi’ odds an’ ends o’ a’ sorts. This auld ruin was Craigehea’ the ancient place o’ the Roys, as I learned frae Mr. Renwick, who further tauld me that a’ the country round was at one time held by a family o’ that name. But it seems that when strife arose atween the king and the people, these Roys took up arms on the wrang side, an’ gettin’ the warst o’ the argument, their heritage passed away frae them an’ fell into possession o’ the Cranstons. By the “wrang side” I mean the losin’ side, for that’s aye in the wrang. The Roys fought for their king; and, a Cranston though I am, my sympathies gae wi’ them.
We are a' leal subjects o' Queen Victoria now, as is nae mair than fittin'. There's no a man in a' braid Scotland that wadna dee for her; But, eh! there's mony a heart that warms till our ain Stuarts yet, though they're a' dead an' gane lang syne. Weel, when Donald Roy, the last o' his race, was hunted like a tod frae his bield, he prophesied that evil should licht on them to whom house an' lands had been gifted. He said the rivers an' the mountains wad bear testimony against the reivers o' his patrimony,—and that a Cranston should never dee a natural death within the walls o' Craigha'. I'm no a believer in the power o' mortal man to ca' the vengeance o' Heaven on his fellow creatures; but strange eneuch, Robert Cranston, the first laird o' that name, was killed by a stane that fell on him as he passed aneath a broken arch. His son swore an awfu' oath that the curse o' Roy should nae mair prevail, for he would destroy the den that had sheltered the ungodly race, as he ca'd them. Sae he pulled down maist o' the auld place, an' wi' the stones o' Craigha' he set up the house o' Craigielinn. I hae heard it said, that one day an auld woman, who had been a retainer—some would hae it she was the foster-mother—o' Donald Roy, cam till the new house when the mason-folk were biggin o't, an' stretching out her bird-like claws, she skirl'd out the prophecy I hae writ doon. Folk were awfu' superstitious in thae days; an' I'm wae to confess that my forbear seized upon the puri auld creature, whose only fault was bein' leal to her chief, an' bindin' her hand and foot, tumm'led her owre intil the loch aboon the linn. An' because she couldna swim, a' bound as she
was—the right hand till the left tae, and the right tae till the left airm—it was accounted a righteous deed; for they said that her drounin’ was proof that she was in league wi’ the deil.

Eh, bairns! it’s richt to be thankful that the livin’ generation is mair enlightened in regard o’ sic things; but wha kens if they that come after us may not be warranted in entertaining the like pity for our ain ignorance that we hae for the darkness o’ them that went afore us.

When Mr. Renwick had done, he pit baith his hands on my shouthers, garrin’ me look straight intil his een, an’ in a maist emphatic manner he said—“Janet lassie, I ken I’m richt in trustin’ ye. That bonnie face o’ yours gies a warrant o’ fidelity and truth. (He said that.) Bide ye canny an’ dinna mention onything.”

I just said, “Aye! aye!”—Nae mair. But he was a man o’ large experience, an’ he understood me at once. Scoffers are fond o’ sayin’ women canna keep a secret. Can they no?—Let them that think sae haut till their opinion. A’ the better for the lassies, say I.

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PART FIFTH.

I find I am still like the bairnie that pits aff the fatal moment o’ pairtin’ wi’ his bawbee. The sweetest honey-drop o’ my story has yet to be distilled. The
simple truth is that afore the week was gone past, Colin an' mysel were deeply in love wi' ane anither. I dinna richtly ken how it came aboot, for the growth o' pure affection is just one o' thae things that canna be sought out. It springs up a' at ance, like the flowers o' the field, an' needs nae fosterin'. As Mr. McGelpin said at Maggie's weddin' (which I hae yet to speak o') "wha can comprehend the delicate organism o' a maiden's heart?" The well-spring o' love that rises unsought in her breast swells intil a mighty stream, down which she floats wi' content an' pleasure as her portion, till she passes through the gates o' life intil the vast ocean o' eternity; or it becomes a ragin' torrent wherein the distressed soul is tossed to and fro, and against cruel rocks, only to find peace and calm in the silence o' the grave. But the first outgoin' o' the heart is aye the same; the result is aften a matter o' guidance.

I hae to thank the ill manners o' Mistress Maggie for the happiness o' my ain voyage through life. It was her shair vp answer to Colin that brought it round. If she hadna doubted Colin's word aboot far-awa' countries there wadna hae been ony occasion to draw out my sympathy for him. An' if I hadna obeyed the natural instinct o' my heart to comfort the puir laddie in his distress, aiblins his heart might no hae turned to me.* Did I no say how strangely things were ordered for our good by a Higher Power?"

* Note by Colin.—That's no just the way o't. I aye lo'ed her for her goodness, no to speak o' her bein' sae winsome an' weel-faured lang afore the nicht Maggie flyted at me. But I'll no deny that Janet's kindness on that occasion helped matters on a wee bit.—Colin.
Nae words had passed atween us, but Colin was aye at hand to do ony service he could for me. And ilka time we forgathered, the beautiful lowe o' love shone out frae his een, and lichted up his countenance. I hae little doubt but my ain made answer. We baith were simple, unaffected, country folk, who kent nae reason why we should strive to subdue the natural expression o' our thochts—an art practised I am tauld by toun-bred folks, an the mincin' belles o' fashion. It just came to a head in a very common-place manner. One mornin' I was milkin' a camstairy beast o' a coo in the byre. The silly creature was fast in the bails, but she wouldna be still, and must needs endeavour to pit her dirty hoof in the pail, a feat which she maist certainly would hae accomplished had it no been for Colin, who keepit her quiet till the milking was done. When I raise up frae my work I said till him (I couldna help daein' it—it was just inspiration): "Your help's aye worth hae'in', Colin, an' ye dinna spair't. How will I thank ye?"

There was a hungry look in his een that gart me turn my face aside; but the next moment he pit his strong arm round my waist, an' I didna show mair resistance than was becomin' in a maiden when he prented the first best kiss o' love on my willing lips. "I'm thankit noo," quo he.

Frae that hour Colin and I were betrothed in the sicht o' Heaven. There was nae ither witness till't, —forbye the coo.

Eh! the happy—happy hour! Frae that time a' the earth seemed brighter an' better. I walkit on air, an' dwalt in an undefiled Paradise, intil which no serpent
entered to disturb my peace. I heard the voice o' love in the sang o' the merle, an' in the lilting o' the laverock. The whisper o' t was borne on ilka breeze, an' echoed in the brattlin' o' the burn. The very nicht was glorified by the knowledge that I had gotten the maist choice gift an' blessing o' a woman's life—the pure love o' a gude an' honest man.

PART SIXTH.

There was an auld creature that used to dander aboot the farm, at orra times when it pleased his fancy; a man sae ancient that naebody richtly kent his age, an' he had forgott'n himsel'. The saucy weans, that petted an' angered him by turns, ca'd him Jock-o-Noah; for they said he had been in the Ark at the time o' the Flood, an' whiles they would speer at him—"What for didna the corbie come hame?" He was a wee bit gane in the heid, an' he just made the maist o' t. It was equal till an annuity for him. On the strength o' bein' accounted a haveril, he was fed an' clad a' the year round, his only occupation bein' to wander frae toun till toun, doing just as much, or as little as he had a mind for. But they that set him up for bein' either daft or donnart made a fule's bargain o' t. He was douce eneuch to ken that his best policy was to play the pairt o' a natural. Travellers say that
monkeys winna speak for fear they should be made to work; and Jock Howieson was muckle o' the same mind.

Of course Jock was sure to pit in an appearance, as the lawyers say, when ony merrymakin' was on; sae we were na astonished to see him schauchlin up the glen at hair'st time, wi' his lang white hair fleein' ahint like the tail o' a comet. Jock never wore a bonnet on his head. Summer or winter, rain or shine, he aye went bareheaded. He didna come till the leadin'-in had commenced, an' then he was thoroughly happy, wi' a whip in his hand, seein' the horses wark while he drave.

When he first set een on Mr. Renwick I thocht he had gane clean dementit. He peered intil the face o' our guest wi' great pertinacity, restin' his hands on his knees, an' screwin' his mou intil a sin' "O." Mr. Renwick only laughed at this impudent behaviour; but what gart me jump was his sayin—"Weel, Jock; what ails ye noo?"

Ye mind he hadna been tauld Jock's name, but it's sic a common one that maybe he guessed it. That was my thocht at the time. But Jock turned on his heel wi' a maist uncanny whistle, an' burst intil a violent fit o' laughin'. Then he took anither inspection o' Mr. Renwick. "Mph! mph!"—quo he—"Ishmael's no kent o' Isaac; but the fule kens him fine. Gie's your loof, man."

Mr. Renwick held out his hand without speakin', an' this strange conduct o' Jock was set down to his foolishness. But I wasna o' that mind; for I observed a glint o' mutual understandin' flash atween thae twa,
which seemed to betoken auld acquaintance. I was confirmed in my thocht when, sune after, I chanced on them holding close confab at the byre-door. Now I was aye of an inquiring turn, which craikin' folk misca'd curiosity. But 'they that dinna spier, lose the chance o' gainin' lear,' as the proverb pits it. Sae when I got Jock alone, I inquired at him—'Did he ken onything aboot the stranger body?'

"Whisht!"—cried Jock, pittin' his finger till his lip, an' lookin' a' round as if he was charged wi' some tremendous secret—"Wad ye no lat on till onybody if I tell't ye?"

I promised I wadna.—"Aye," quo he, "ye say sae noo ye dinna ken. But will ye tak yer aith on't?"—I said "No." I wadna swear ony oath, but I would gie him my honest word.

"Pech!"—says Jock. "The bit word o' a tawpie lassie! That's fine surety. Weel, say 'sure's death!' an' I'll just try ye for ance."

An' then wi' much solemnity in his wizened auld countenance, after I had said the words, he bent owre me and whispered—"The corbie's come hame at last. Eh! but he's been lang fleecin' to and fro, seekin' rest for the sole o' his fit. But he's back noo, an' mair he's fetched the olive branch in his mou'." An' wi' that he hirpled awa as fast as his schauchlin' legs wad take him.

Weel this wasna muckle information; sae I tauld Maggie what I had observed, an' she tried her hand wi' him. But she fared no better than mysel. To a' her inquiries he only answered back wi' his fule's
"Eh, sirs! wadna that be gran'?"

"Noo, Jock," said Mistress Meg, in her maist gracious manner, "there's braw sheep's heid an' haggis for the hair' st supper, an' if ye just gie me a hint o' what ye ken aboot Maister Renwick, I'll see ye hae a twa-fauld helpin' ."

But Jock brak out in ane o' his sangs:—

"Come ben the house, guidman," she cried,
"An' sit ye doun alang wi' me;"
He wadna frae the ingle-neuk,
But snowkit aye the puddin' bree.

Maggie was sair vexed at bein' pit aff in sic a daft-like way. An' as temptation had nae effect on him, she tried the operation o' anither course.—"Gin ye dinna dae as I bid ye, ye'll get neither heid nor haggis."

The fuile-body went on wi' his sang:—

Up spak' the guidwife tae the carle—
"Sin' ye will no conform wi' me,
I'll tak the puddins till mysel',
An' ye shall hae the puddin' bree."

"I'll gie ye puddin' bree, ye donnart auld deevil," quo Maggie, dashing a tinnie o' no owre clean water intil his face. Jock loupit awa, till he pit a safe distance atween himsel' and ony mair o' the same commodity. When he turned round again his face was richtdown awsome wi' rage.

"Sure's death, ye'll be the waur o' that, Mistress Maggie," he skirled oot, in a voice shakin' wi' wrath.
"Dae ye ken o' the auld wife's mischance?"

"Nae, nae, guidwife, ye shall nae sce;"
"Guidman, ye're but a sumph," quo she;
He rax'd the puddins oot the pat,
An' bade her sup the puddin'-bree.
"Min' yer ain gaucy haggis disna flee awa' up the lum."

That back-spang gave puir Maggie a sair fricht. She was sae searst the halt-witted body would play some deil's wark wi' the haggis, that I dinna think she had ony peace o' mind, night or day, till she had it fairly placed afore the laird at the hairst supper. Jock grinned as he sat at the far end o' the table, next the door, watching her anxious face. The haggis was a' richt, but I misdoubted Jock had ta'en some ither way o' payin' her back for the dirty water she had washed his face wi'. An' sae he had. Maggie had thocht to show off her housewisely qualities before Robin Grant, who was there as belov'd him, by makin' some fruit pies an' puddings for the supper. One o' the pies was made wi' grosets,* which she had been at great trouble to preserve; an', by her special direction, it was set afore her to serve. When the pies came in, Jock got up frae his seat, an' sidled awa towards the door. Sure eneuch, when Meg opened her famous pie, the birds didna begin to sing, but twa big puddocks happened out, an' at the same time Jock happened out o' the door, an' awa wi' a mockin' laugh that proclaimed him the faither o' the mischievous pliskie. In some way o' his ain he had gotten at the pie, an' liftin' the pastry, had scoopit out the grosets an' pit the puddocks in their place. Jock didna make his appearance for a long while after this exploit, but the story o' Meg's puddock-pie spread far an' wide.

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*Gooseberries.
I should say here that we lassies made experiment o' our faither to ken who was Mr. Renwick. Onything in the shape o' mystery was a thing unkenit in our quiet hame-life; and we were unco pit aboot at having such a strange guest in the house. But the laird turned on us wi' a text. "'There's a time for a' things under the sun', quo he; "'a time for silence, an' a time to speak.' An'this is no a time to fash yersels about things ye canna understand. Maybe ye'll ken owre sune."

He spak' in such a solemn way that we kent right well it wadna be prudent to provoke his anger by speering ony mair aboot the matter.

"For a' that,"—quo Maggie,—"I wish he was awa. The place has na been the same sin' he first set foot intil't."

This was nae mair than the honest truth; for though none could say a wrong word o' Mr Renwick, there had been a dourness perceptible in my faither's manner of late which was quite out o' the common.

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**PART SEVENTH.**

The night o' the harvestin' I slippit out while the folk were a' blyth and busy, and met Colin at the Birkburn. I'll no sune pit past the remembrance o' that nicht. The bonnie moon, at the vera tap o' her silver beauty, glinted through the birken-boughs,
chequering the grass aneath wi' shifting patches o' licht an' shade, as the gentle breeze saftly swayed the tree tops to and fro; and whiles makin' the burn glimmer silver-bright atween. Colin said he maun be awa next mornin', and as ye'll suppose, we were unco sad an' dreary at the thocht. I kent weel that my faither wouldn'a approve of a puri tenant farmer's son asking at him for his dochter; an' I e'en grat an' sobbed in my trouble. But Colin, did the best possible thing to comfort me; for he took me intil his honest faithfu' airms, an' vowed he would either find or make a road out o' the difficulty. Syne he tauld me he had considered o' a way in which it could be accomplished; and he speered wad I meet him at the byre next Monday in the gloamin', an' then he would make me acquaint wi' his proposals. I gladly promised to keep tryst as he wished. Just then, while I was speakin', I thocht I heard a rustlin' sound as of somebody moving amang the birks, an' there was a sharp crack, as o' branches scrunchin' under foot. There wasn'a onything to be seen however; an' Colin said I was just a wee scart. "Dinna be feart, my pet lammie," he whispered. "Aye be leal, an' I'll mak' a gude hame for ye yet." An' wi' a lang strang embrace we pain'ted—he awa to the bothie, an' I to the house.

An' now I maun tell ye a bit ploy o' Colin's. I wanted him to set down what happened till him at the trysting, for a story is aye best at first hand, afore it gets glaured wi' our e muckle handlin'. Colin had a way o' tellin' o't that aye gart me laugh, though it was nae laughin' matter at the time. But he was awfu' fearsome o' venturin'. Sae I said, would he ca'
in young Colin wha had aye had the best o' schulin' and was considered a very promising laddie, aye at the tap o' his class an' handin' the highest o' characters frae his masters. Well, he 'greed to this, an' a nicht was fixed when the important work should be done. Young Colin was very proud o' the compliment, I'se warrant ye, and he set himsel' doun till the performance o' the task wi' a wise-like air that sat weel on his young shouters. "Noo," quo auld Colin, "ye'll be sure to pit down what I say in the best o' gude English, for this is just ane o' yer mither's whigmaleeries, and I wadna care to spoil her bit buik."

Sae auld Colin began to tell his story, and young Colin began to clerk it, an' this is what came o't:—

**COLIN'S ACCOUNT O' THE TRYSTING.**

"Atween the gloamin' an' the mirk I gaed till the byre to keep tryst wi' my luve, Jenny. I min' it was a gran' nicht. The moon wasna shawn', but the stars glimmered aboon wi' just licht eneuch, an' no owre muckle. My heart was just at the loupin'. Aiblins the bit lassie wadna care to leave faither an' sister, an' a', to gang awa wi' me till thae far lands ayont the sea that Maister Renwick sae aften spak' o'."

"Noo, my mon," said auld Colin to young Colin, "shaw me what ye hae pitten doun afore I gae ony further."

"Surely, faither," quo the braw lad, wi' a toss o' his bonnie broun heid, that spake volumes o' confidence. An' wi' the word, he started to read it out.
YOUNG COLIN'S VERSION.

"Between twilight and dusk I repaired to the cattle-yard to keep my appointment with my beloved Janet. The evening, I remember, was exceedingly fine. The moon had not yet risen above the horizon, but the minor luminaries of Heaven beamed with sufficient radiance to give light to my path, without unnecessary effulgence. My heart was throbbing violently. Perhaps the little girl might object to leave her parent and her sister, and all that she cared for, to depart with me to those distant countries beyond the ocean, which Mr Renwick so frequently made the subject of his conversation."

When he had finished he pit doun the paper, and lookit round for the applause owing till his performance. Eh! but he was sair disappointed. "Whatna trasherie's that?" quo his faither. "What for dae ye mak' me say that I repaired to a cattle yard when I telt ye I gaed till the byre? 'Ain' what's a that elishmaclaver aboot the moon? I dinna ken if she was aboon the horizon, as ye ca't, or ayont. I telt ye she wasna shawin'. 'Ain' the minor luminaries o' heaven tae! Wha's thae? I hope ye haena gotten infected wi' ony o' thae heresies that the deil's folk are sae busy preachin' e'en noo. There's nae minor luminaries in Heaven, lad; they're a' ane. 'Ain' dinna ye ken better than, to ca' a bit lassie a little girl? Eh, Colin, Colin! gin that's the best o' the English ye learn at schule, the maister disna ken muckle o' things in ordinar'."

I comforted the puir laddie as weel as I could, seein' his faither's disappointment was as keen his ain. But
'deed he was weel able to take his ain pairt. "For" said he—very prettily I thocht—"you wished me to write it in English, father. I would have done it better in my mother tongue, which," quo he, wi' a sly look to mysel, "I hope I'll never forget."

Weel the upshot o't was, that I had to take the post o' Colin's secretary, an' oor young student o' the beauties o' the English language had to be pacified wi' the promise o' a new fishin' rod an' tackle for the next trout season.

CO. LIN'S STORY CONTINUED.

Weel, I got till the byre an' lookit aboot, but Jenny was no there, sae I sat doon on ane o' the auld stanes and waited. A' at ane I heard the swift o' a woman's claes, an' started to my feet just in time to meet her in the door. She had a maud owre her heid an' shouters, and in the mirk I couldna see her face. "Is it you, Colin?" she whispered, in a frightenened kind of way I thocht. "Aye, Jenny," I answered, an' without anither word I took her intil my airms an' gied her a gude cuddlin', an' a maist hearty kiss, which she tried to jink at first; but on second thochts she received it very kindly, and rendered it back wi' interest. Then we sat oorsel's doon on the big stanes under the arch, an' she inquired at me what way was I expectin' to win at the laird's consent to our wooin'. Weel, I explained to the best o' my ability the advantages offered by the Otago Association that was aboot starting a gran' new settlement in New Zealand. I'm sure I didna ken whar' aboot New Zealand was, nor aught regardin' it, but it was aye accounted a fine country, whar gude land
could be had cheap, an' on easy terms. An' also there was a fine show o' lairds an' gentles, bankers, merchants, an' sic like at the heid o' affairs. To mak' a' sure I had gane to Glasco' an' gotten a' particulars o' the Association frae Maister Blackie, and Dunlop o' Craigton, the chairman o' the Glasco' Committee, wha happened to be there at the time.—“But Janet,” quo I, “its gey cauld the nicht. Can ye no spare a corner o' your plaidie?”

She pu'd it round and happed me intil 't, and I pit my airm about her jimp waist, an' to gie mair point till my remarks, I pree'd her mou at o'ra times—a method o' explainin' which I found to answer weel. Sae she led me on to reveal a' my plans—the punkie witch. I tauld her I had by me a matter o' thirty pounds in siller, forbye twa' three beasties o' my ain, an' maybe my father wad find a few pounds mair on sic an occasion. An' then I tell't her o' a big ship was to sail frae Greenock neist November, and how the cost o' our passage wad be nae mair than the thirty pounds, sae that a' the lave wad be till the gude. “And what will we dae,” she speered, “in yon place ye speak o', if we're no drown'd or wrecked on the way?”

I showed her that by the terms o' the Association we wad get a piece o' land o' oor ain, an' mak' a hame for oursel's. I was muckle pleased wi' the deep interest she seemed to take in a' I said; an' the fond manner in which her lips sought my ain, fair delighted me. Only there was just ae thing I couldna quite understand. Jenny's mou had aye been 'sweet as sugar-candy.' [That's just ding't in by Colin to
pleasure mysel. — JANET.] But that nicht there was
a flavour aboot them as though she had ta'en sybows* for kail.

At lang an' last I pit the question that had been
danglin' at my tongue's end a' the time. "Will ye no
gang wi' me, Jenny?" quo I.

The moon was just blinkin' owre the glen, sae that
ane could take a fair sicht o' things. She wrastled
awa' frae me, an' casting aff her plaid—"Colin
Davidson," she cried; "dae ye richtly ken wha ye're
talkin' tae?"

I never was sae richt down dumbfounded in a' my
life. The lassie I had been haudin' in my airms was
no Jenny—but just her sister, Maggie! Ye might
hae knockit me doun wi' the whuff o' a feather.

"Noo, Colin," she began, "I ken a' your designin's,
an' ye'll never get oor Janet for a wife. Never in the
world, Colin. Are ye no 'shamed to think o' evenin'
yersel till a dochter o' Craigielinn? A fine thing
wad it no be if laird's bairn's buckled wi' purr folk
like yersel, and gaed awa frae hame till ane o' thae
deevil's places ye and Maister Renwick are sae taken
wi', where folk stan' on their heids. I'll awa noo to
my faither and tell him a' ye hae been sayin'; an' it's
a miracle if ye dinna find oot your mistake the morn's
mornin'. How dare ye, Sir, to make sic a dishonour-
able endeavour?"

By the time she had done flytin', I had gripped at
the stalk o' earle-hemp in mysel. I took her by the
shouters, and lookin' her straight in the e'en, I said
till her—"Ye daurna!"

* Young onions.
"Daurna what?" quo she.

"Ye daurna speak till the laird o' this nicht's work; for if ye did sae, I wad o' en awa to Gowanbraes and tell the lave o' t. How wad Robin tak' it, that ye had been lyin' in my airms, an' ye ken what a', for mair than an hour, out by Craigielinn's byre?"

This pit a new face on the matter. "Ye wadna be sae unmanly," cried she. "Ye wadna daur dae sic a fause-hearted thing till a lassie."

"Will I no?" quo I. "But ye can dae a wrang thing till anither lassie, an' that ither your ain sister. Listen till me Maggie; richt or wrang's no the question noo. It's pit far past that. Jenny and I lo'e ane anither with affection sae true an' strang that the powers o' Hell will no prevail against it. An' as ye hae been sae sma'-minded as to pry intil oor secrets, the maist douce-like way for ye is to gie us your assistance. I'll no deny that Colin Davidson o' the Shaws is no a gran' match for Craigielinn's dochter sae far as worldly gear is concerned. An' in regard o' merit there's no a prince in' the land who wadna be honoured wi' Jenny's love. But there isna a lassie in a' braid Scotland owre gude for an honest man."

"An' dae ye ca' yersel an honest man to steal the affections o' a puir innocent wean wha disna richtly ken what she's doin' o' ?" cried Maggie—"Weel knowing too, that it's contra' to the will o' her faither?"

"It's nae gude ava ha'ein ony argay-bargey aboot it," quo I. "The thing is owre for gude or ill; sae I ask ye to tak' a sensible view o' the matter Mistress Maggie, an' no speak o' t till the laird; for that wad
only hae the effect o' makin' Jenny miserable, an' the end wad be just the same, I promise ye. An' mind what I'm sayin', ye canna possibly tell onything, without tellin' how ye got the information; an', if the haill business atween us twa is found out, there'll be mair clishmaclavers than ye wad care to thole."

Ye see, Maggie like some ither pawky folk, had got caught in her ain trap, an' had fa'en intil the pit she had dugg'd for anither. When she started out on her errand she didna richtly reckon on a' the circumstances belangin' till a love-talk, or maybe she wadna hae filed her breath wi' sybows. Aiblins Robin was no a very warm wooer, an' the puir lassie had nae ither experience o' sic matters. But ance in for it she wasna sae half-hearted as to draw back for a bit kiss or twa.

The end o't was that I won her owre to our side. She was very firm no to wink at our meetin' sae lang's the laird objected, but she gied me her promise to try an' talk him owre, and I kent I could depend on her. —"But eh! Colin Davidson" quo' she, "gin ye could but hae a crack wi' him yersel', wha kens but ye might persuade him wi' your ain fleechin tongue? But he's very camstairy, is the laird."

When we painted Maggie carried a message frae me to Janet.—"Ane mair," quo I, "just to handsel the bargain."—Sybows or nane, I wanted to make friends wi' her. But she fended me aff.—"Na, na," quo she, "Ye've had owre mony a' ready. But Colin, I think I s'e forgie ye the pliskies ye played under the plaidie." An' awa she flitted.
It's just a fact that Jenny an' Maggie were sae muckle alike, that when the hair o' either was covered owre, it was maist impossible to ken ane frae the ither in the gloamin,'—And how could I be expectit to dae sae in the mirk. I maun tell ye there was a neer-do-weel down in the clachan that thocht himsel as grand a poet as Robbie Burns, and was aye dingin' his sangs intil our lugs. He made ane aboot Craigielinn's twa dochters, that I gat frae him at the time, and hae aye keepit by me:—

Twa lovely rosebuds on ne stem,
    Twa flowers an' bush adornin',
Twa dewdrops sparklin' as ae gem
    On heather bells in mornin'.

And ilk' sae like the ither ane,
    That baith thae ither's sweeter;
And ither o' the twa is ta'en
    For fairest when ye meet her.

To wade atween the twa I'm baith,
    See even nature planned 'em;
If kirk allowed, I'd wed wi' baith,
    And pree them ilk' at random.

I wadna care to count how mony mutchkins o' whisky I paid for thae verses to stap the graceless loon frae roarin' them oot at the public-house. But I gied him to understand that I wadna hae Jenny an' her sister made sport o' in sic a fashin. It's muckle till his eredit that he only did sae ance, when I was by, an' on that occasion I gied him sic a dad i' the chafts as maist effectu-ally put a stop till his singin' for a haill week."

END OF COLIN'S STORY.
PART EIGHTH.

I now take up my story where I broke off to allow o' Colin tellin' his part o' the play. Why was I no at the tryst mysel? And what for did Maggie take my place?

The answer is simple eneuch. I didna ken o' Maggie's exploit for a lang time after; and my father hindered me frae keepin' the tryst. I hae no assured knowledge e'en now, whether the two planned the business atween them, or if each went to work independently. But if my father did ken o' Maggie's meetin' wi' Colin, I'll warrant she never let on till him what came o't.

Just as the gloamin' set in, the laird bade me gae ben, tellin' me that he would require my assistance to make up the hairst accounts, which was nae mair than ordinar', for the same wark aye fell to my lot. But it was a maist by-ordinar' thing that he should want it done on that nigh aboon a'. I tried to pit it aff wi' one excuse an' anither; but my father would no hear o' ony delay; for he said there were mony special reasons why he maun hae his accounts put in order at once. Sae there was nothing for it, but to submit. Many a scaudin' tear wat my cheek that nigh; but my father either didna, or wadna see them. I thocht o' puir Colin, as I pented him in my mind, danderin' round and round the auld byre, an' wonderin' what for I didna come till him as I had promised. An' a' the time he was just happ'd in a plaid, wi' that unconschionable jaud o' a sister o' mine cuddlin' in his airms. Sin syne, when Colin tauld me aboot it, I was gey well pleased she had filed her breath with sybows that e'en. That was
the only pairt o' the play that had ony savin' grace aboot it.

The weary time slippit awa, till at last the hair'st-buiks were quite finished. I still had a mind to rin out to the byre to see if Colin was still there; but the laird stappit me at ance. "Where are ye gaun?" sperced he.

"Just but the house," quo I, "to get a breath o' caller air. I've gotten a sair pain in the heid wi' thae buiks."

My father came owre to me, an' pit his hand on my burnin' head—for indeed it was no a pretence. "Puir lassie!" said he. He spake in such a pitiful voice that I cast my een up till his face, an' I saw it was very sorrowfu', an' that the water was risin' in his ain een. A' at ance it dirled through me that he kent a', an' was wae for me that I had gien awa my heart in a wrang quarter, as he thocht. "Puir—puir lassie!" he said again. If he had but thrawed me, or flyted at me, I wad hae had the boldness to hae dared him till his face, on my lover's behalf; but his tenderness melted me. I bowed my heid in my hands an' grat without restraint. My father was sae silent the while, that I thocht he maun hae gone away; but when I looked up again, he was aye standin' by my side, wi' the same signs o' love an' kindness in his een, an' I got sicht o' a big tear tricklin' doun his beard.

He raised me in his arms, and settin' me on his knee, wi' my face on his shouther, he said to me, very quietly; "Janet ye hae been a gude lassie, an' I'll no say ae word to vex ye, mair than it is my bounden duty to dae. What I am dacin' is for your ain future comfort an
peace o' mind. Ye winna think sae noo, maybe; but ye will sae in the years to come, lang after I am laid in the groun', an' then ye will thank me in your heart for savin' ye frae yoursell' the day. Colin Davidson is a fine fallow, I allow; I haec no a ill word to cast till him. But he's no fittin' to mate wi' my wee Jenny. Dinna answer me noo—I want nane. It's eneuch that ye ken my mind."

He paused for a minute or sae, and I could tell by the catching o' his breath, that he was wrastlin' wi' a sob. Presently he went on again.—

"If it hurts ye, Janet, to be tauld this, the Lord aboon ken's it hurts me far mair in the tellin'. There's no a tear fa's frae your een that disna gie a stang till my heart—no a sob ye gie oot that disna stab my ain soul."

What could I say to a father that spake sae tenderly? My heart was bursting wi' grief, an' it seemed as if life wad be very dreary without Colin. But I pit pain an' dool ahint me, as weel's I could, an' kissed the dear hand that gave the unwilling blow.

"Promise me, Jenny," said my father, "that ye'll no dae onything in regard o' Colin Davidson without my consent." And I promised.

"Noo," quo he, "ye're free to come an' gae as ye will. I will no watch ye, nor allow ye to be spied on by ither's. But I'm bound to lay the burden on your shouthers that ye'll no be ettlin' to meet wi' Colin unkent o' mysel'."

"Maun I no see the dear laddie?" I cried, "Oh faither! faither!"—And I went doun on my knees an' wi' a wild passion o' tears I besought him no to be
owre hard on twa young folk wha had done nae ill, but jist to love ane anither very fondly. He lifted me up an' cried—"Child, child! It's far better ye shouldn' meet wi' him. Ye'll learn to forget him mair easy, and it canna be—it maunna be. But," quo he, "ye shall see him ane mair, an' then ye maun tell him that ye may no lie in his bosom, nor bide in his fauld'.

But I needna weary ye wi' ony mair o' our sad discourse that nicht. It was brought to an end by my faither leadin' me up till my chamber; an' there, baith kneelin' at my bedside, wi' our airms owre each other's shoulthers, the dear auld man poured forth a heart-warm prayer for my peace and welfare, an' wrestled wi' Heaven to comfort me, an' gie me grace in my sair trial.

But afore leavin' the spence he raucht doun the Bible, and read frae Paul's epistle to the Hebrews:—

"No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit o' righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

When my faither left me I opened the window and drank in the caller air, sweet wi' the scent o' new-gathered corn. My een wandered owre the peaceful strath, lying bright in the silver licht of the moon, as I had hoped my life wad hae been; and then owre the dark hill o' Craigie Gower, risin' up ayont in deep shadow, as I now feart it wad be. The twa burns, singin' sae gaily as they hurried doun to lose themselves in ane anither, minded me o' Colin an' mysel', now pairted for ever, an' no' to meet again. A big black dyke seemed to raise itsel' up atween us, an' my thocht ran on our last meetin'. His last words—
"Aye be leal!"—kept ringin' in my ears. "Aye," I cried, "leal for life an' death; leal for aye!"

Next mornin' Maggie tauld me she had seen my Colin yestreen (she didna sae how). an' gave me word frae him that he was awa' early and wadna be able to see me for awhile; but I was to keep weel-hearted, for he would be sure to manage the business I kent o'. This gave me some sma' relief, for I shoulna be pit in the way o' breakin' the word I had gi'en to my faither, nor o' refusing to see Colin, which wad hae been the sairest of a'. But ch! I coulna feel canty. I just went aboot my work kind o' half-dazed. When my faither forgathered wi' me, he aye gi'ed me a sad smile, that minded me o' sunlicht in a misty lift. Maggie watched me out o' the corner o' her een, in a queer way that I didna' understan'. An' sae the days and nichts hirpled alang.

Mr. Renwick went away the same day. He said he had business in Glasco', but he would be our way again sune, an' wad bring me a gowden brooch an' some braws for Maggie's weddin'. We lassies were aye in a state o' mystification aboot him; but I got a hint o' his special business in an unexpected manner. I had gane up to the byre early in the mornin', an' intil the sma' chamber aboon the door for ae thing an' anither wanted down till the house. While I was seekin' them out I heard voices ancaith, an' keekin' out I spied Mr. Renwick and the laird. They were comin' doun the strath, an' I coulna' but hear some o' their conversation as they passed by.

"Then I'm to understan' that ye'll no move in't?" quo' Mr. Renwick. And my faither answered back:
“I maun dae as I can, not as I would. Pittin’ ither things by, there’s Maggie’s dochter to be provided for. I hae thocht it owre an’ owre, an’ sought counsel frae aboon, an’ it canna be done without roupin’ the auld place, which wad richt-doun kill me wi’ vexation.” They went past without my hearing any mair; but eneuch had been said to make me acquent wi’ the fact that my father was suffering and in trouble, an’ that the stranger some way had a hand in’t. The thocht o’ his tenderness to mysel’, an’ he, in his auld age, dreein’ pain and dool, that he keepit till his ain breast rather than afflict his bairns, gart me take shame to mysel’, that I shou’d hae been the means o’ causing him anither sorrow to increase the burden o’ his ain.

Just then I entertained a maist unwarrantable dislike o’ Mr. Renwick. The puir man had no’ wrought any harm that I kent o’, but it seemed plain to me that he was wearyin’ my faither, an’ my faither’s unfriends must be mine. It’s no far we can see in the licht, an’ it’s ill seekin’ in the mirk. Little did I think that the day was near at hand when I would be proud to acknowledge Mr. Renwick as a true an’ leal friend.

PART NINTE.

And now I must leap owre many weeks, in which there was no ony special event that I need set down. Once Colin sent me a bit note by Jock Howieson, who had made his peace wi’ Maggie, biddin’ me meet him o’ a certain e’en, an’ that he had news for me. I
was fu' fain to dae as he wished, but I minded the promise I had given, an' though it was a sair fight wi' inclination I wadna. I pit a few words on paper, wi' my love, tellin' him I couldn'a break my promise, e'en if it broke my heart to keep it, and I wad aye be leal. The written lines looked sae puir and cauld when I had won through wi' them that I was maist minded not to send it till him. But it had to be done; it was my duty, an' I let it gae, an' syne I grat. Maggie came to me, an' spake me fair. She had been much mair gentle wi' me o' late. "I ken your trouble, Jenny," said she; "an' I'll ask at the laird to lat ye see Colin ance mair."

"No, Maggie," I said; "it wad but mak matters waur." Then a thocht came intil my mind. "Maggie," quo I, "ye are no forbaid to see him. Will ye no gae till him an' try to gar him understand how I am hindered?"

"Feb's! no," cried she. Colin Davidson's no' a safe lad to forgather wi' in the gloamin'"; and she skelpit awa' laughin'. I was no' weel pleased wi' her at the time, for I didna ken what had happened at the byre.

But I'm feart I couldna hae held out against the many entreaties that in one way an' the ither Colin continued to convey to me. My faither meant weel by me, nae dout; but I dinna hau on richt to pit such heavy restrictions on puir weak human nature.

Ae braw day, when the sun was shinin' wi' a fine warm autumn glint, Maggie proposed that we would gae up to the Twasome Linn to gather the rowan berries that grew there. Naething laith, I 'greed on't, an' up the bonnie glen we flitted, as blythe as twa
weans out for a holiday. Eh! but the linn was a grand sight that day—the water tum'mlin' down frae the rocks in a braid sheet o' silver, an' the spray tossin' an' sparklin' in the sunlight like showers o' many-coloured gems. The rowans were thick wi' their beautiful coral-red berries, an' we gathered them in rich ripe clusters. I was pu'in hard at a branch wi' a big bunch on't that I coveted, but I couldna richtly bend down, when a strong hand caught at it owre my head, and when I looked to see who was the owner o't, there stood Colin himsel'. Afore I could speak a word his arms were round me, an' I was sobbing on his breast, amaist daft wi' delight, and half vexed wi' him for makin' me break my promise no to meet him.

An' where was Maggie? The gude, kind, graceless body had contrived the haill business wi' Colin, an' after betrayin' me intil my lover's arms she had just run awa' and left me to make the best o't. I didna find it very hard to forgie her; neither were Colin's caresses sair to thole. It was no by ony fan't o' mine that we had for gathered; and ance the mischief was done, there was nothing for it but to "whistle o'er the lave o't." Colin informed me o' his proceedings, an' tauld how he was makin' a' ready to gae out to New Zealand; and wad I gae wi' him, or let him gae his lane. Duty an' love had a sair fight for the mastery; but in the end love conquered, and' afore we painted I had plighted troth, an' brak' a sixpence on't, that for gude or ill, when the time came, I wad leave my hame an' my faither an' a', an' gang wi' him to the very end o' the world. I might hae resisted temptation sae lang's I didna see him; but his soft, persuasive words
o' affection were owre powerfu' for me—an' I only a wee lassie.

An' now there happened a maist remarkable thing, and one that had a great bearing on this history. We were sittin' cosey, in a snug bield under the rowans, when our attention was attracted tae the linn, which dwynit awa till at last there was nae mair than a wee dribble intilt, an' that o' a strange dirty brown colour, like the moss water. This was sae unaccountable that we got out intil the open, and on lookin up the glen it seemed that the haill mountain was movin' down upon us. The rocks trembled an' tottered an' fell owre a' thro' ither, an' came slidin' down the hill-side wi' a maist awsome grindin', scartin din.—"Eh Colin," I sabbed out, aye haulding the faster till him on account o' the danger—"Eh! Colin it's just a judgment."

"It's no a judgment ava," quo he, "it's a slip frae the hill, sic as I hae seen mony o'."

An' sae it was proven to be. A big moss-hagg on the brae side had sliddered awa' an' brought down the face o' the hill aboon. I minded the carlin's prophecy neist mornin' when ane o' the shepherds came in to Craigiellinn, an' tauld that "the tap o' the mountain had fa'en intil the burn, an' the burn was noo aboon the loch." An' I was thochtless eneuch to repeat it. My taither turned on me, sharp an' angry.—"Where gat ye thae fule's havers?" quo he.—"Aye, aye!" he said mair quietly. "Ae pairt o' the curse has fa'en on us. The linn's a loch, an' the loch's a linn, an whakens—there's a sair chance the rest o't may be fulfilled yet. Weel I an' my house are in the hands o' the Lord. His will be done."
It was just as the shepherd lad had said. The slide had panged up the mouth o’ the upper glen atween the rocks wi’ an immense heap o’ earth an’ stanes, and sae backed up the water that it might wi’ truth be said the hail glen was now a loch for miles. An’ when the water had filled it a’, the linn came boundin’ frae a fearsome height owre the top o’ the dounfa.’

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PART TENTH.

And now the folk began to gather for Maggie’s weddin’. First came Gowanbraes—a fine, weil-kept specimen o’ the auld Scottish gentleman, wi’ silver-white hair an’ beard, maist patriarchal in appearance. Wi’ him came Robin an’ twa of his sisters—very gude, weil-mannered lassies without ony special attractions o’ face or figure. Robin himsel’ was a weil-faur’d laddie eneuch, wha promised to be a sma’-prent edition o’ his faither. He was no over-brisk at the wooin’, an’ I thocht he an’ Maggie wad make a pair o’ decent quiet folk, weil-suited to walk through life soberly an’ doucely thegither. There was sma’ chance o’ her playin’ ony pliskmahoons when she was the Leddy o’ the Braes, as the place was maistly spoken o’. I confessed to mysel’ that puir Colin seemed a bit rough in compare wi’ Robin. But ane maun aye tak’ the ill wi’ the gude, as weans tak’ physic in jam. An’ for my ain pairt I like to see a bit spunk in a wooer. But ilka ane till his ain likin’; an’ Meg was aye for quiet
folk, only at oorra times when the de’il brak’ loose in her; an’ then she wad play high jinks.

Then came Madam Cranston, just as I hae described her, wi’ sharp een, an’ shrill voice, an’ domineerin’ manner, aye denounсин’ the bad roads. “Will ye never mend thae roads?” she skirled out afore she was well in at the door. “There’s no a sound bane in a’ my body, wi’ the touslin’ they hae gien me; ye’re muckle to blame for’t—muckle to blame, Craighielinn, (an’ she shook her gowd-headed cane in my faither’s face), that ye hae no pit them in order. On siccan an occasion too!—Weel, and noo which is’t that’s gaun to be bound owre to lee-lang slavery? Stand up, lassies, till I pit on my glasses and hae a look at ye.”

When she had finished her examination, which she illustrated wi’ many uncomplimentary remarks, she took a parcel frae her pock, and displayed to our dazzled een a grand gowden chain an’ a necklace (a “carat” she ca’d it) made o’ Scotch pearls.

“The chain’s for ye, Maggie Cranston,” said she; “an’ its the maist fittin’ thing for ye to wear in your future position. Dinna glower at me, mon,” she cried, suddenly turnin’ on Robin, who was standin’ by, lookin’, for a’ the world, like a cat caught lappin’ milk in a dairy. “Ye’ll be the reiver that’s to carry aff the ewe-laumnie? I hope ye’ll no repent o’t. Young folk will aye be fules, an’ ye’re no that ill to look at. The carat’s for ye, Janet. Min’ an’ aye wear’t when ye gae wooin’, an’ maybe vanity will gar ye keep the laddies’ airms aff your neck.”

We made a laigh curtsey till her as she had taught us lang syne; an’—“Thank ye, Meddam,” quo Maggie;
an’—"Thank ye, Meddam," quo I. "An’ noo, lassies, shaw me till a chaum’er, and lat me rest my auld banes, a’ bruised an’ brak’ wi’ thae fearsome roads."

The next mornin’ we were fair dazed wi’ the sight o’ a close carriage, wi’ twa horses comin’ prancin’ up the strath. Wha could this be? The laird seemed to be expectin’ somebody mair than ordinar; for he had gotten himsel intil his Sunday claes, an’ went down to the yeit to meet the visitors. First there steppit out a young fellow prinkit up in grand style. Sic a dandy I had na seen in a’ my life afore. He was a sma’ shilpit body, wi’ watery licht blue een, and straight sandit-sugar hair on his heid. There was a bit flull’o’ the same sort aneath his crookit neb, for which he had seemed to entertain great afflection, judgin’ frae the way he was aye strokin’ it. Syne there came down o’ the coach an’ old man. He was a “fine fat fudgeel wight” as Burns says in ane o’ his poems; mair like a tub on twa legs than onything. His neck was sae short that his heid seemed to grow out o’ his breast; an’ his face was just like a fu’ moon, an’ as red as a bubbly-joek’s crab. An’ he had such a wee snippit nose that ye could only ken it by the extraordinar’ fiery tap o’it. This apparition came puffin’ an’ waddlin’ up till the house, wi’ the young man mincin’ by his side in maist laughable contrast; an’ my faither presented them to the company as Bailie Macbuist an’ his son frae Glasco’. The laird had become acquainted wi’ the Bailie, who was a far-awa’ cousin on the mither’s side, in one o’ his business journeys to Glasco’, and he was very proud o’ the connection. "The Bailie," he said, "had done him
the honour to pay his respects to the family on the occasion o' Maggie's weddin'.”

Madam sniffed at the word “honour.”—“James Cranston,” she cried at the tapmaist pitch o' her voice—“Ye're takin' a maist unpardonable licence wi' oor name, an’ it disna become ye as the laird o' the house to dae sae. The Cranstons tak' nae honour frae ony. They gie't when they admit IRTHERS to their acquaintance.”

I think Madam didna tak' kindly to the Bailie frae that out, an' as for the young fallow, she fended him aff in sharp words and dour looks whenever he ventured near her. I mind one time he offered to assist the auld lady wi' her cloak.—“Will I take the liberty—” he began in his mealy-mou'd way. She turned on him wi' wrath—thun'ner settin' on her brow, an' lightnin' flashing frae her een—“Nae, sir, ye will na. How daur ye presume to tak' liberties wi' a leddy?”

But I maunna omit to mention Mr. McGelpen, who was a very important part o' the play, as ye may suppose. The minister rode up on his powney the nicht afore the weddin'. His pleasant kindly auld face, an' his simple manners an' pawky humour made an excellent impression on Madam Cranston, who fairly took possession o' the house, orderin' folk aboot frae the laird doun, an' flourishing her cane like a drum-major's staff. The Minister, an' Madam, an' Gowanbraes just consorted thegither for the maist part, an' the twa Glasco' bodies were left for my faither's special entertainment.
The grandest guest of a’ was yet to come. Early on the weddin’ mornin’ I was wakened by the skirl o’ the pipes, an’ keekin’ out o’ the chamber window I saw a full-dressed Highland piper—wha but he—wi’ kilt, an’ sporran, an’ dirk, an’ a’, come marchin’ up the strath, at the head o’ a lang procession o’ folk, a’ hastin’ till the house. The laird was as muckle surprised as ony, wi’ this demonstration, but the explanation was no far to seek. It seems that Bailie Macbuist had sent for Hector McDougall, the prize piper o’ Ayr—“out o’ compliment till his gude frien’ Craighielinn, and to do honour to the family,” he said, wi’ a vicious glance at Madam Cranston. But it was no possible to pit the grand auld lady aboot. She just took a pinch o’ snuff, wi’ calm deliberation, an’ syne she said—“Weel done, Bailie. I’m glad to find ye hae the gumption to ken where honour’s owin’. Tak’ a sneeshin’ man.”—An’ she held out the mull till him. “The pouther o’ armed neutrality,” Mr. McGelpin ca’d it.

There were many weel-kent faces amang the thrang o’ folk that came to Craighielinn that day; but the one face that I maist longed to see was no there. Maggie an’ mysel’ had wrestled hard an’ lang wi’ the laird to let Colin come wi’ the ither. It seemed mair than ordinar’ cruel that he alane should be forbade when the house was open to a’ the world beside. But my faither was deaf to our entreaties. He was a gude man, an’ a gude faither, but far owre hard at times The wean’s as aften spoilt by heavy layin’ on o’ the rod as by the sparing o’t.
An' now I maun tell ye o' something that happened at the weddin'. When Minister McGelpin had done his bucklin', an made a' fast sae that nane could unbind, we came forrit wi' our congratulations. The McDougall body played up "Galla Water," and the folk gie'd a cheer that was answered by the glens. Just then Mr. Renwick, whom we thocht far awa, came up, and kissing the bride on her forehead, presented her wi' a real braw cairngorm brooch set in solid gowd, an' bracelets o' the same to match. "May your days be lang in the land," quo he, "and ilka ane happier than the day afore."

"Wha's this?" ca'd out Madam Cranston. "Wha's this? I wad ken that voice frae a thousan'. Stan' aside, a' o' ye, and let me see his face."

We all made way, and she and Mr. Renwick stood for a moment silently facing each other. "I kent it," she cried. "It's my dainty Davie—my ain bonnie bairn that I hae mourned sae mony weary years."

She cast awa her cane intil the air, and I was no sorry to see it fa' on the bald shinin' head o' the Bailie wi' a crack that, as Jock Howieson said, "gart him claw whaur it was no yuckie."* Then she threw hersel' into Mr. Renwick's arms. "Welcome hame, my bonnie wean," quo she—an' she kissed him with the warmth o' a mither's affection.

The heart whiles takes no account o' time. The auld leddy's heart just began wi' him again where it left aff lang syne. To her he wasna the muckle man in his prime that he was to our een. As a laddie he had left a void in her breast, and though sae mony

* Made him scratch where it was not itching.
years had gane by, it was just the same laddie that
was ta'en back again to fill his auld place.

My faither took her by the hand to lead her away,
for he didna wish onything said afore folk; and Mr.
Renwick, in a voice wi' a break in't said—"Not now
—not here, dear madam." And saw the three went
awa thegither and took counsel in private.

PART ELEVENTH.

Next mornin' Maggie, now Mrs Grant o' Gowan-
braes, if you please, went awa' wi' her new guidman,
in a perfect shower o' auld shoon, and of course the
lave o' the Gowanbrae family departed wi' her. The
prize piper played himsel awa' wi' "Lochaber nae
mair," and the thrang dispersed to their hames. The
Bailie and his pernickety son were to bide a while,
having some business wi' the laird, and Madam had
nae thocht o' leavin' for a time. Mr Renwick also
stayed on. 'Deed the auld leddy wad nae bide to hae
him lang out o' her sicht. And Mr McGelpen was to
stop at Craigieinn the week, as was his custom when
he made his rounds.

Maggie had gien Madam Cranston a hint o' how
matters stood atween Colin and mysel'. But I didna
ken o't till one day when she marched me intil her
ain room and bade me gae doun on my knees an' lay
my heid in her lap. "Noo," quo she, "I maun ken
a' aboot Colin Davidson. Dinna be feart. Speak oot as though ye were speakin' till your ain mither; an' dinna think ye'll hae hard words frae me. Eh, lassie! I was young mysel' langsyne. Sae speak out, my dawtie."

Encouraged by her kind words an' the softened accents o' her voice, I unfaulded a' my sorrows wi' mony tearfu' sos atween, and besought her to ettle her best to win owre the laird, sae that he wad accept Colin for his son.

When a' was said she lifted me up, and, lookin' straight intil my een, as though she wad read my very soul, she said,—"Ye'll hae tauld your story vera weel, Janet; an' I'm wae for ye that trouble should hae come till ye sae sune. Ye're owre young for sic a burden. But ye maunna speer at me what I will dae. Young folk see things through a fause glimmerin' mist o' excited feelin' maistly; an' I maun see Colin Davidson an' judge for mysel'. Frae what ye tell me, an' what I hae sifted oot o' ither, he's a proper lad eneuch, though no' in a worldly position to wed wi' a Cranston. But I'll see aboot it, lassie—I'll see aboot it; an' I wadna say but gin he's as braw an' as gude's ye pent him we may mak' a weddin' o't yet."

Ye may be sure this heartened me, and a' the mair when I heard her bid Mr Renwick send for Colin to come up to Craighelinn. He didna seem very willing to dae this; but Madam Cranston wasna a woman to hae her will disputed. (Colin sometimes says I'm a true Cranston in respect o' that; but it's only when he's wrang himsel' that I winna give way till him.) "Nane o' your 'ifs' an' 'buts,' noo, Davie," said she,
settin' doun her cane on the floor wi' a very determined manner. "It's my pleasure to see Colin Davidson; an' surely ye wadna hae me gae doun till the Shaws to seek him."

"I'll no send for the lad, Meddam," quo Mr. Renwick. "There's nae need to acquaint the haill strath wi' oor affairs. "I'll just gae till the Shaws mysel'; and I'll gie him Meddam Cranston's compliments, an' say she wad be proud to hae the honour o' his company."

An' wi' a hearty laugh he escaped out at the door just sune eneuch to jink the stroke Madam aimed to chastise his impudence.

Colin came as Madam ordered it early next mornin', and had a lang crack wi' her and Mr. Renwick; an' I wasna allowed to see him only to say "good bye!" in the face of a' folk. But the tender glance o' his een warmed my heart an' keepit the lowe o' luve alicht. My faither an' the Bailie folk were awa aboot the farm, an' the minister was owre at Gowanbraes, sae that nane kent o' his coming, but oursel's, and Madam bade us say nought o' his visit to ony till she gave us liberty. Eh! but she was a douce auld body. "King Solomon wrote that in the multitude o' counsellors there is wisdom," quo she; "but gin he was livin' noo he wad ken better than to pit his hand to ony sic fule sayin'!"

That nicht I gat a bit line frae Colin. There were only three words intilt—"Aye be leal!"
The Bailie and my faither didna appear very able for settlin' the business he came upon; for he stayed on several days an' there was nae hint o' his gaein'. What the business was nane o' the ither's I think had any notion. Young Duncan Macbuist seemed no to hae any hand intilt, for after the first day the twa auld folk—that's my faither an' the Bailie—keepit maistly to theirsels'; an' for want o' haein' onything better to employ his time, the daft body took to hoverin' round me like a bum-bee in a clover field. He arrayed himsel' in a' his glory, an' he prink't his puir pasty fingers wi' rings eneuch to set up a jeweller's shop. It was 'Miss Janet' here, and 'Miss Janet' there, an' him bowing and smirkin, an' shawin' his teeth, as though he was settin' aff his faither's ribbons for sale. I couldn'a bide him an' his ways; and when Madam Cranston was awa I sought shelter in the company o' Mr. McGelpin, who liked him about as weel's mysel'; only it didn'a behove him to say sae, he being Minister. In fact he rebuked me ane time when I was rinnin' Duncan doun as a bald-faced chatterin' monkey. "For," quo he—"Ye should respect him a' the mair for that, Janet. He's a maist convincin' illustration o' the origin o' species."

However, at lang an' at last the plot was revealed. One mornin' I heard Madam an' the laird engaged in high controversy;—his bass voice growlin' like distant thunder in comparison o' her shrill pipings. When he came out o' the chamber she skirled after him—"Dae
your best, James Cranston! Ye’re far wrang, but ye can try. I freely permit ye. But if the lassie disna come oot o’ the fire as true as steel, I’ll ne’er pit faith in ane o’ my ain sex again.”

Sae it was aboot something in which I was concerned nae doubt. An’ I could only think o’ ae thing. I soon kent what was in the wind. It seems that Maister Duncan—set him up!—the puir, schanchled, miserable apology for a man that he was—had taken a notion intil his head o’ gettin’ me for a wife. An’ what was o’ mair consequence, his faither an’ my faither had agreed atween themsel’s on the conditions o’ the bargain. ’Deed it was settled afore I was made acquaint wi’ the proposal; but when it was mentioned to me, I wouldn’a bide to think o’t. I just burst out laughin’ in my faither’s face. “Na, na, faither,” quo I; “I obeyed ye in the matter o’ wha’ I shouldn’a hae, but I canna dae the same in regard o’ wha’ I should hae. Gin I maunna get Colin, I’ll hae nane. But its just preposterous. That silly, shilpit, jabberin’ body to think o’ me for a wife for the like o’ him! What wad I dae wi’ sic a thing, but just chain him in the yairdie, and shaw him at saxpence a heid? There wad be nae ither way o’ making ony profit oot o’ him, unless a body gaed till the extra expense o’ an organ.”

And now my hame became a place o’ contention. My faither urged me sair, but I turned a deaf ear to all his arguments. An’ he was muckle vexed himsel’. Whiles his love for me pulled him ane way, an’ syne his interest drave him the ither. He didna conceal frae me that he was indebted till the Bailie for large sums of money, an’ that unless I wad wed wi’ Duncan, it wad
he ca'd in, and the mailin' and the stock would be roupit. He besought me, wi' tears in his een, no to bring ruin on the family: an' maybe he might hae prevailed—I canna tell—had I no seen the kind o' husband he designed for me. But I couldna awa' wi' sic "a similitude o' man" as the Minister ca'd him. An' then—was I no promised to Colin?—"Aye be leal," he had said; and leal I wad be, if I dee'd for it. I wasna able to seek comfort, where I might hae found it, frae Madam; for my faither bound me not to mention the state o' his affairs; sae I had to bear my burden alane.

The business was brought to an end in a maist unexpected manner.

One mornin' the strath was flooded wi' a thick white mist through which the sun forced his way in fiery splendour. The herd laddies, taking the hint, were awa' till the braes early. The laird cast mony anxious looks owrehead, and hurried out afore the porridge was weel aff the table. As the day drave on, the mist gathered intil the hill-tops, and melted awa' afore the heat which made itself felt by man and beast. At noon there was a dead silence in the air, as if nature was waiting on some by-ordinar' event. The song-birds faulded their wings and became mute; but the swallows dartit to and fro, skimming close to the bosom o' the burn, where the midges were swarming. The kye in the pastures shifted uneasily aboot, and lowed in a moaning way as if they were feart o' they kent na what. Ower the braes the sheep, wi' the wonderful instinct o' nature, came trooping down frae the hills—the ae ewe ca'ing on the tither, and a'till their lammics, an' whiles bleatin' mournfully a'thegither
as they fed down the lang green slopes. The dogs lay pantin' in the shade, an' the fowls creepit intil their cavies. The very burns seemed to rin their way wi' a saftened murmure; but we could hear the roarin' o' the linn, when the winds rushed out o' the glen in sudden sharp blasts, to die away as suddenly, makin' the unnatural silence that followed maist painfu' to endure. Everybody went aboot in a dazed kind o' way; for the influences o' the day an' the hour were upon us a'.

A' at once, big black clouds came swellin' aboon the braid tops o' the Carricks, and rapidly spread owre the lift. The hoarse bellowing thunder growled in the distance. Onward drive the storm, and soon clap after clap rattled and echoed amang the hills and glens like the roar o' battle. Big braid draps o' rain plashed and pattered on the streamin' earth. The winds broke loose frae their prison-houses, and a' the demons o' the tempest rade riot. Deep darkness—a darkness that could be felt, as the Book says—fell upon the earth. Flashes o' forked blue lightning darted doun, quiverin' in their passage like the arrows o' death. the thick walls o' Craigielinn trembled wi' the thunder shocks. Doun came the rain in ae big braid sheet as if the fountains o' Heaven had been opened. The terrified maids flocked intil the spence regardless o' ceremony, an' even Madam Cranston daur'd na rebuke them. Minister McGëlpin took the Book in his hands, and motioned us to gae doun on our bended knees.

"We are a' in the hands o' Him wha made Heaven an' earth, an' a' that therein is," he said, liftin' his voice like a trumpet aboon the din o' the elements. "Let
us offer up prayer to Him, that if it be his Holy will, 
nae harm shall be suffered by his servants here 
assembled."

I hae aften thocht owre that scene. The minister 
controlled the frighten the folk, as a captain controls his 
crew and passengers in danger at sea. And wasna he 
a captain, having our lives and souls in charge that 
day?

Weel, the storm went past and we began to gather 
our senses an' look aboot us. Whaur was Duncan 
Macbuist? First we fear'd the silly airf might hae 
been left out in the dounfa'. But he! he kent fine 
how to take care o' his precious body. Tibbie found 
him in ane o' the chambers, smoor'd owre head an' 
ears wi' blankets. She had much trouble to satisfy 
the creature that the danger was gane by. "The puir 
thing was in an awfal swither," said Tibbie. "He's 
mair fit for cloutin' than cuddlin'." But afterhend he 
came ben, an' bowed, an' bowed; an', quo he, "I hope 
ye were na frighten the, leddies."

"'Deed then we were," cried Madame Cranston. 
"We were unco frighten the for ane, Maister Duncan 
Macbuist. It wad be a sair loss if sic an ornamental 
member o' society had come till ony harm."

The fule-body snickered, but said nought. The 
Bailie, however, spak' for him. "Ye're aye vera keen 
for my son, Meddam," quo he.

"Eh!" quo Madam. "What's that ye say? 'Deed, 
then, he wants a' the assistance he can get in that 
way. He's no owre keen for himsel'. Tak' a pinch, 
Bailie."

And now we thocht our troubles were a' owre; but 
we only at the doornstep o' what was to come.
In the dead hour o' nicht I was wakened by a maist terrific crash—I couldna tell o' what; but frae afar off there came a dull, ominous, boomin' sound, such as I hae often heard sin-syne, when the sea, fleein' afore the wind, comes loupin' like a mad beast at the land. I laid and listened till it for a time, wi' a sort o' dumb curiosity. But suddenly a confused tumult arose in the house. 'Maidens an' men ran up an' down the stairs and passages, shouting and ca' in on ane anither; lichts flitted aboot; there was shuttin' and slammin' o' doors within; and frae below men knockit at the outer doors; and a cry went up, "The spate! the spate!"—and aboon a', a hoarse sullen roar, like the voice o' approaching doom. Somebody—I kent it was my faither after—brak intil my chamber, and hastily hoppin' me in some wraps, took me up bodily and awa' wi' me out intil the open, never resting till he had pit me safe on the knowe where the byre stood. "Get ye in tae the byre, Jenny," quo he, "and bide there as ye care for your life." And wi' the word he sped awa' again intil the black nicht.

Ane after anither the folk frae the house came up to the knowe, and one o' the first, ye may be sure, was Duncan Macbuist, trem'ilin' an' chitterin' wi' evendoun fright.—"Are we safe here, Miss Janet,"—he stammer'd out. "Do ye think we are quite out o' reach o' the flood?"
I pitied the puir mannikin, an' bade him gae an' hide himsel amang the kye in the byre, as he wasna owre weel clad for lassie's company; an' he just thankit me an' got himsel out o' my sicht. Thocht I, it will no be a compliment to the kye's discernin' if they dinna take him for a calf.

As I stood in the door, I saw through the mirk a white wall o' water come tum'mlin' bodily doun the glen, roarin' like a hungry creature seekin' its prey. It was in sic grand volume, that its borders amaist reached me where I was standin'; and I kent weil that nae livin' thing could bide the brunt o't and live. By this time maist a' the folk had gathered round the byre, ready to flee intil the hill-taps if the spate raise ony higher. Some o' the men had spunks, and under the lee o' the auld walls my faither an' Mr. Renwick went round to see if a' were safe. "Madam's no here," cried they, baith in ae breath. "She's no awa frae the house."

A death-like chill took hold o' us as the words rang out aboon the awfu' din o' the torrent, an' for a moment we were a' dumb-stricken wi' fear. Then out o' the gloom strode a man. He spak' no a word tae ony, but went straight doun the face o' the knowe intil the very thick o' the seethin' waters. A cry rase frae the men, an' a shriek frae the women—"Colin, Colin!—come ye back, Colin. It's sure death ye're gaun tae."

Aye, it was my Colin who had gane to succour the auld leddy, or dee in the doin' o't. My faither ordered me intil the byre, an' sought to lead me awa; but no a foot wad I stir. I was deaf to a' entreaties, I kent
one thing only;—Colin, my ain leal Colin, had gone on that rash venture, an' I wadna be moved frae the spot where I stood till I kent what came o't. In my anger I turned on the men around, an' denounced them, an' an' a', as cowards that didna daur gae till his assistance; but they paid sma' heed to my flytin'. Silent an' fearfu' we a' stood an' watched. An' the waters roared an' the winds raved, in maist dismal concert thegither.

There was a whisper an' a stir amang us when the mair keen-sichted ca'd out that something was movin' in the strath, awa' to the right, where the ground was higher than at the burnside. Spunks were lichted and dry sheaves brought frae the sheds in the byre, an' set on fire for a beacon to guide his steps, for it was Colin ma' dout. Nearer an' nearer he came. By the licht o' the lowe I watched him climbin' wi' difficulty up the steep bank. Then the haill body o' men ran forrit to aid and greet him. Mair straw was piled on the breeze, an' sune— a' wet an' reekin', but wi' the proud licht o' triumph shining on his face an' sparklin' frae his een—he set down Madam Cranston in our midst, seawless an' weel, clad in a' her silks an' lace, an' carryin' her cane, just for a' the world as if she had arrived on a visit. In my great joy I fairly cast a' restraint to the winds, and, casting mysel' intil Colin's arms, I kissed him again an' again in sicht o' them a'. And the warm-hearted laddies round gave cheer upon cheer for "the brave man and his fond lassie."

It seems that when a' the lave were skelpin' aboot in fricht at the first hint o' danger, the auld lady had quietly dressed hersel', no' forgetting a pin or a tie
By the time she was fully clad a' the folk were awa', an' the waters had risen four feet or mair inside the house. Sae she lichted a' the candles she could find in the chambers, an' placin' them at the window she sat hersel' doun at the bedside, calmly waiting, she said, "Till it pleased Ane aboon to send deliverance." Colin laughed when he tauld how she looked sae grand an' stately, sittin' there her lane in the midst o' desolation, that he actually asked her pardon for intrudin'. He couldna' help it, he said. Madam got up very quietly, an'—"Sae ye're come for the auld body at last," quo she. "Ye'll hae to carry me, I'm thinkin', for the water's owre deep, an' I dinna' care to be droukit. An' min' ye dinna' tousel my claes.' Sae, hoppin' her in his maud, he bare her through the flood safe an' dry as if she had rode in a covered coach. A' she said till him when he set her doun was—"Thank ye, laddie." An', shakin' oot her claes an' bobbin' a curtsey a' round—"Gude e'en, gude folk!" quo she. "It's a saft nicht! Ye needna' hae gane till the cost o' an illumination on my account. I'm no that proud; but it was weel meant, an' I thank ye for't."

The way Colin gat till her was by his weel kenning the lie o' the land, combined wi' muckle coolness an' presence o' mind. Keepin' aye on the edge o' the waters he crossed the Birkburn, that ye'll mind ran doun ahint the house. The far bank bein' some higher than the ground on the upper side, turned aside the warst o' the flood, an' made still water ahint. Colin easily waded through this, an' winnin' in at the
back door, the lighted candles guided him to Madam's room.

That nicht we a' lay in the byre—Madam an' I in the sma' chamber owre the door and the rest in the sheds, frae which the puir beasties were turned out to find their ain shelter. Next mornin' we found the maist o' them huddled thegither aboot Craigielinn House, an' some were in the spence itsel'. And sae the second paint o' the auld witch's prophecy was fulfilled.

PART FOURTEENTH.

Now I maun tell ye the cause o' the spate. The thunder storm brought down sic a volume o' rain frae the mountains as filled the loch to overflowin', and loosed the earth that had fa'en intil the burn. Then the big body o' water, pent up back in the glen, burst through, an' sweepin' a' afore it, came down wi' owre muckle force. When daylight brak the burn was wimplin' alang in its auld peaceful manner and the linn was dancin' an' loupin' in the sunlight as if it had ne'er done aucht else since it first began to rin its course.

But our end o' the strath was a wide-spread scene o' desolation, what wi' the raxin' an' rivin' o' the spate, an' the sand and earth covering the pastures. Ithers had suffered loss, but nane sae muckle as oursel's, owin' to our lyin' mair near to the outburst. The house o' Craigielinn was just a heap o' stanes. The spate had struck the upper side wi' a' its concentrated fury, and the walls bein' undermined had fa'en doun. Only
the spence an' twa-three rooms were left standin'. Madam's chamber was clean gane. There was no a vestige o't left. "Aye," quo she, "and I would hae gane tae, only for the braw callant that warsled oot wi' me yon nicht. I canna ca' his name, but it wasna Duncan Macbuist. Hae a pinch, Bailie."

My puir faither was sair grieved an' wadna be comforted. What would words dae for him when ruin ginned in his face? Minister McGelpin minded him o' how his ain life an' the lives o' his dochter an' kinsfolk had been mercifully preserved frae destruction. But he only shook his heid. "Wherefore is licht gien to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?"—"Aye," quo the Minister, "Job said that in his tribulation; but wha was it said—'Gird up now thy loins like a man?':—Dinna lose faith in the Lord's providence, Craigielinn. Nae matter what ither things may be taken awa, be sure that ye haud fast to that faith as a drownin' man wad grapple wi' a tow." It was sound counsel, but eh! the laird was sair forfoughten, and couldn'a pit trouble aside wi' as muckle ease as ane might cast awa a pack.

Robin Grant came owre and carried Madam Cranston and mysel' to Gowanbraes. And takin' compassion on the Bailie an' his son—feckless bodies—he brought them awa wi' us. The Minister came on his powney; an' my faither and Mr. Renwick, wha seemed to be ane o' the family noo, stayed to set aboot pittin' things straight as weel's they could, an' came owre in the gloamin'.

And now comes the last scene o' the play.

We were a' assembled in Gowanbraes' parlour that
o'en; an' Bailie Macbuist, after shifting about an' about many times in a maist uncomfortable manner, an' blawin' as muckle as he could grip o' his neb in a wheezy sort o' way, said—"Weel, weel; this is a sair mischance, Craigielinn, an' I maun awa till Ayr the morn's mornin'. Sae I'll be wantin' your answer the nicht. Matters are no the same as they were yestreen; but I hae had a crack wi' Duncan an' he's a wilful laddie. We'll no draw back frae oor offer. What say ye laird? Gie's your answer."

The laird, who was thrang wi' thocht o' his ain losses, heaved a weary sigh that was amaist a sob, an' liftin' his head frae his hands he gied me a sorrowfu' glance. "Janet maun answer," said he.

I kent fine what a' this was about. And I plucked up spirit an' spake richt out. "Gin ye want to ken, Bailie," quo I, "will I wed wi' your Duncan, I'ze tell ye 'No,' an' 'No,' an' 'NO'—ance an' for aye."

"What's this?" ca'd out Madam Cranston. "Wha talks o' weddin'? Speak oot, James Cranston. I demand it o' ye. What is't the Bailie's seekin'?"

"Nae great thing, Meddam," quo the Bailie, afore my father could find words—"Nae great thing. My son, Meddam Cranston, has askit the honour o' Miss Janet's hand in marriage, an' I hae gi'en my consent."

Madam came up out o' her chair. I never saw sic a fine expression o' scorn on a human countenance as she showed then. Her een darted fire, an' her lips fair quivered wi' wrath. "How daur ye, mon—how daur ye? Ye hae gi'en consent! Then on the pairt of Janet Cranston, since the heid o' the house disna speak, I hae the muckle honour to refuse consent.
Man! how daur ye even ane o' your kith to Craigielinn's dochter? Oor Jenny to wed wi' sic a thing as yon!" she cried, an' the look she gied Duncan made the puir wee thing shiver in his shoon. "Na, na; when Janet weds, she'll be wantin' a man, an' no a meal-pock. Whaur's the laddie that brought me through the spate? He shall hae my Jenny."

Grippin' me by the hand, she glowered defiance at the Bailie and a' his kin. I looked ower till my faither, an' I saw his countenance clear like the lift after a mist. "Bailie," said he, "I canna dae mair. It's gane oot o' my hands."

Then up raise Bailie Macbuist, his face evendoun purple wi' rage. "Vera weel," quo he. "Then ye'll just pay back what ye're owin', Craigielinn. I canna be fash'd wi' folk that dinna ken their ain minds. Ye're a fair man to deal wi'; I'll no deny that. But when ye lat a wheen lassies an' auld wives meddle wi' your affairs, ye're tint athegither. I'll say nae mair. There's nae need. Pay me the siller, an' there's an end o't. But tak' tent, Craigielinn—tak' tent. Gin I haena the bawbees in my hand afore neist Monday I'se be laird o' Craigielinn, an' no ye."

"Ye! Ye'll be laird o' Craigielinn! I began Madam Cranston, shakin' her cane in the Bailie's face. But just then Mr. Renwick spak' out.—"Ye'll be nae sic thing, Bailie," quo he. "Folk shouldna threaten till they hae the power——"

"But I hae the power, I tell ye——I" cried Mr Macbuist.

"Sit ye doun, man, and dinna make sic a stramash. I'll take a pinch o' the sneeshin, Meddam.—Ye see,
Bailie—mind me noo, Jamie—there’s nac wadset or any debt owin’ on the lands o’ Craigielinn. Gae back to Ayr, man, an’ speer at Maister Mucklegrab, the writer, an’ ye’ll find it discharged, wi’ a’ fees and charges. Sae, ye ken, ye canna hope to buckle oor braw Janet wi’ your ain puir wean.”

‘Deed then ye maun just picture the scene for yersels. Madam flourishin’ her cane, an’ denomincin’ the hale tribe o’ Macbuists; the Bailie reamin’ an’ splutterin’ wi’ wrath; Mr. Renwick fair demented wi’ pleasure at the Bailie’s discomfiture; my faither lookin’ on wi’ astonishment an’ gratification shavin’ in every line o’ his features; auld Gowanbraes an’ Robin soberly sitting out the din; an’ Maggie an’ mysel hau’din’ till ane anither for mutual protection.

In the midst o’ the tumult young Duncan uplifted his pipin’ voice.—“Let there be nac mair o’ this,” quo he. “If Miss Janet prefers ony ither man, I’m no desiring to press my claims on her hand. I confess to muckle respect and admiration for the young leddy, and would hae been baith proud and happy to hae made her my wife. But if she’ll no take me, I can dae very weel without her. There’s as gude fish in the sea as ever cam’ out o’t. Come awa, Bailie.”

And wi’ the word he led the angry auld man out o’ the room, mutterin’ as he went aboot the impudence o’ cock-lairds an’ auld wives. “Aye,” quo Minister McGelpin, when they were gane,—“this is a maist satisfactory climax, Craigielinn; and ye should be weel content. The mornin’ was a thocht cloudy, but the e’en has set fair. Nae dout the Bailie is a maister o’ the art o’ vituperation, but he’s no equal to Madam
Cranston in logical demonstration. And the young man's no gifted wi' pairts o' a nature to win the affections o' sic a braw lassie as Janet; but I am bound to say that he showed a certain sense o' self-respect in his latter words."

"'Deed ye're no far wrang there, Minister," quo Madam. "I'm thinking there must be a drap bluid frae the mither's side in his veins."

"And now," said Mr. Renwick, "I think this is a gude time, Madam, to explain to these lassies and to Gowanbraes, who is now in a manner ane o' the family, who I am."

Madam nodded her head; and accepting this as a token of approval, he began his story—first takin' my father's hand intil his ain.

MR. RENWICK'S STORY.

"Lassies, I am your father's ae brither. In my young days I fell intil evil company, and I suffered for't. I had been trusted wi' a drove o' cattle to sell, and take payment; and in place o' doin' my wark and accountin' for the siller, I allowed mysel' to be enticed to a game wi' cards. That was my ruin. I sune lost a' that I had o' my ain, and then, moved by the de'il, or my ain evil inclinations, I played wi' my maister's money. I was in the hands o' sharpers—they plied me wi' whisky—I played blindly—the end o'it was that it nearly a' went. Vexed at my losses, I got fairly demented, an' in my drunken wrath I gied one o' the players sic a blow owre the heid that he fell doun and lay for dead on the floor. Then a great fear took possession o' me. I escaped out o' the house, but to gae hame I
didna daur. Like Lamech o' auld, I had 'slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt,' an' the curse o' Cain was upon me. My only thought was to flee anywhere out o' the country. Sae I went down to Greenock, and took ship in the first vessel leavin' the port, which happened to be bound for Boston; an' frae that day till the day I came back I hae been, as the Scripture says, "a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth." But I gathered gear in many ways, for Providence was aye gude till me, and maistly wi' sheep an' cattle in Australia. I didna' dae sae weel in New Zealand. There are owre mony o' my ain kintra folk there. But one way and anither I pit by a fair sum o' money, and then I ventured hame. My first business was to find the man I had wronged o' his gowd, and to return it till him twa fauld. Still the guilt o' blood stickit to me. I had repentit o' my great sin in sackcloth and ashes, sae to speak. But a' the tears that mortal een could shed wadna wash awa the stain o' blood. Think, then, lassies, an' a' o' ye, what a weary burden was lifted aff my shouthers when, on makin' mysel' known to Jamie, that first nicht at Craigielinn, he tauld me that the man I thocht I had slain was livin', and keepin' a store in Glasco'. An' then, think o' the pleasure wi' which I forgathered wi' him, and grippit his hand, and found he bare nae malice for the past. He's a councillor now, and bids fair to be a Bailie afore lang. All my troubles now fell awa like the bitter pack o' Bunyan's pilgrim at the foot o' the Cross, and I felt a free man ance mair. But while I was at Craigielinn I had gathered frae Jamie that he was owin' money to Bailie Macbuist...
who had named Janet's hand for his son as the price o' his release frae the bondage o' debt. And I kent that there was a wadset owre the lands when they came intil Jamie's keepin'.

"What's that ye're sayin', Davie?"—cried Madam Cranston. "Dae yae mean to say that my brither—that's yer ain faither and Jamie's—daur'd to dee wi' the ancient heritage in danger frae thae accursed money-changers? Why was I no made acquent wi' this? I wad hae painted wi' the buckles frae my shoon afore it should hae gane oot o' the family. Sae lang as a Cranston lives, nae stranger shall ever haud Craigielinn"

"Weel, it's a' done and owre noo, Meddm," quo uncle David, as I maun now ca' him,—an' we maun e'en settle to keep things richt in the future. I was seekin' to invest my savings in good securities that wad gie me eneuch to live upon for the remainin' portion o' my life, an' I thocht I couldna make a better investment than one that wad free my brither and the family frae debt, an' our faither's hame frae encumbrance. Sae I just paid ourc the sum that the Bailie and ither's had on wadset o' Craigielinn; and now I am a puir man again and shall hae to depend on Jamie for a hame."

"Nae, nae!" my faither cried. "It's a' your ain noo. Tak' it Davie—tak' it, an' let me be your servant a' the rest o' my life, as it's nae mair than fittin' I should be, no bein' able to haud the lands when I had gotten them."

Aye, but there were wet cheeks that e'en. But Madam stirred us a' up. "Hoots, toots!"—quo she—
“I’ll hae nane greetin’ aboot sic things the nicht. Pit awa a’ that’s gane an’ past. Gowanbracs—gie’s some heit toddy to drown it in; an’ as we’re lettin’t down we’ll drink till the repentance o’ Bailie Macbuist an’ his cockered wean, afore auld Nick comes to claim his ain—no that I wud grudge e’en that misguided creature his just dues.”

AE MATR PART, & THE LAST.

I had no gay Highland piper at my ain weddin’, but the lads and lassies gathered round us; and as some o’ them could play a spring or twa, what we were short o’ in music, we made up in noise. Mr. McGelpin performed the ceremony in a maist impressive manner, and when it was a’ o’er he said to us—“Janet and Colin—Colin and Janet, I hae been the the chosen instrument o’ couplin’ twa honest hearts in the unbreakable circle o’ matrimony. See till’t that ye gang through life wi’ mathematical exactitude, and ye’ll solve a problem that the wise men o’ the earth hae perplexed themsel’s owre for ages. For if ye canna aye square the circle, it needs but a wee giein’ and takin’ on either side, to circle the square.”

And now what think ye o’ Colin? “Jenny,” he said till me afore a’ the folk, “ye’ll tint your snood for gude an’ a’ noo; but I hae a snood that ye tint lang syne, when ye rin awa’ frae me up the yairdie wi’ kilted coat an’ legs as Nature made ’em.” And pittin’
his hand intil his breast, he pu'd oot the blue ribbon
that got cast awa when he and Mr. Renwick came to
the burn side the day I tauld ye o' at the commencin'
o' my story. Sae I gat it back when, as I said, it was
o' nae mair use to me.

Jock Howieson, as ye may certify, was at the
weddin'. He had made his peace wi' Maggie, and
gi'en his word—"sure's death"—he wadna contrive
ony mair puddock pies. An' to dae me the mair
honour he had gotten a special song for the occasion.
Minister McGelpin ca'd it—

AN EPITHALAMIUM IN THE DORIC.

Far ye're gaein, Colin, Colin;
Far awa ayont the sea;
Mony a heart that lo'es ye, Colin,
Sair will at the partin' be.

Wha's that wi' ye, Colin, Colin?
Wha's the bonnie, blushin' bride?
Blossom o' the muirlands, Colin,
Fairest flower o' Carrickside.

Wear it brawly, Colin, Colin—
Wear it brawly in your breast;
No a thorn upon it, Colin,
No a thorn to gie unrest.

Peace gae wi' ye, Colin, Colin,
Peace and joy your steps attend,
Health be yours, and pleasure, Colin,
Fortune aye her favours send.
Other Janets, Colin, Colin—
Other Colins by your knee,
Time will gather round ye, Colin,
In your hame ayont the sea.

Tak' the heather, Colin, Colin—
Tak' the heather in your hand;
Plant it whaur ye're gaein, Colin,
Emblem o' the fatherland.

Gae your way, then, Colin, Colin—
Gae your way ayont the sea;
In the fresh young far-lands, Colin,
Other Scotlands there shall be.

Jock's song was suited to the occasion, for Colin aye held to his notion o' comin' out to Otago, and I bless the day when we did sae. We sailed oot o' Greenock in November, in the Philip Laing, wi' Captain Ellis as commander, and Mr Burns gaed wi' us as minister, just as Colin had said. And in April following we landed at Port Chalmers, after lang weary wanderin' owre the pathless ocean. Colin richtly considered that there was mair opportunity for a steady strivin' man in a new country than in an auld ane, and that there is sae we hae abundantly proven. And as I tell Maggie—that's Mrs Grant o' Gowanbraes—we hae no yet experienced ony inconvenience frae stan'nin' on our heids.

I maun tell ye that the cost o' our passage and outfit was liberally paid by Madam Cranston. And my uncle Davie came doun till the ship ane day, just afore we started, and presented me wi' a fine plaid o' the auld clan-tartan—thistle-green an' blue. "I couldn'a gie ye a mair useful thing," quo he. "There's
naething like a plaid for settlin' matrimonial difficulties. If ever ye hae a dispute wi' Colin, just hap him in the plaidie, and dinna let him oot till ye 'gree."

The day we went on board the Philip Laing, Madam Cranston put her last gift intil Colin's hand. "It's only a common tinder-box," quo she. "Spunks are no aye to be gotten in the wilderness, an' ye'll find the means o' gettin' a lowe at orra times wi' the help o' this." When Colin opened it he found banknotes for fifty pounds intil't; and paint o' the lands we haud noo were bought wi' the tinder the kind auld Madam provided.

My faither and his brither biggit a fine new house at Craigielinn on the site o' the auld byre; and they lived there thegither in peace and security till they were ca'd awa'. Davie was the first to gang through the gowden gate, but my faither was no lang ahint. Madam Cranston died in the full possession o' a' her faculties to the very end. Her last words were—"Dinna fash me aboot my will. I'm gaein whaur there's an honest Judge, an' nae lawyers; and pit by the physic, for my body's past mendin', an' my soul's ayont curing now."

And Colin and Janet hae travelled doun the stream o' life in comfort and happiness—

"Contented wi' little and canty wi' mair.'

No often hae the plaidie been ca'd intil requisition; for baith o' us hae aye held fast by the auld motto—

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